

ROLE OF GIANI KARTAR SINGH IN PUNJAB POLITICS

A

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CHAPTER 1

Contemporary Political Milieu and the early life of Giani Kartar Singh

The sacred land of the Punjab has made a unique contribution to Indian history. It has given birth not only to Gurus and *Avtars* but also to the courageous warriors and political leaders. After the period of Guruship, Banda Bahadur was appointed to carry on Guru's mission. He became the political leader of the Sikhs. Thousands of Sikhs gathered under his banner to fight against the Mughals. The Sikh army under Banda Bahadur succeeded in ravaging and capturing places like Kapuri, Samana, Sadhaura and Sirhind. The Faujdar of Sirhind, Wazir Khan, who had troubled Guru Gobind Singh throughout his wandering and was responsible for bricking his two sons alive, was defeated and killed.

The victory of the Sikhs in Sirhind inspired the Hindus and the Sikhs to revolt against the Mughal rulers. Wherever the atrocities of the rulers crossed limits, there the public revolted and sought Banda Bahadur's help. Banda Bahadur and his followers did not lose time in giving maximum possible help. The Hindu and Sikh subjects of Deoband in the Pargana of Saharanpur were fed up with the atrocities of Jalaluddin, the Governor of Jalabad. Sikhs under the command of Banda Bahadur revolted against the tyrannical rule of Jalaluddin. In the battle that ensued at Saharanpur, the Sikhs came out victorious. Banda Bahadur established his authority over the important places like Dehat, Ambetta, Nanauta and with his support Sikhs asserted their Independence in Jullundur Doab, Majha, Riarki, Amritsar, Batala, Kalanau, Lahore, Bharat, Kotla Begam

and Bhilowal.¹ These military victories of the Sikhs created a terror in the minds of Mohammedans.

But the dazzling victories of Banda Bahadur proved temporary. He was defeated in the decisive battle of Gurdas Nangal in December, 1715 A.D. Banda Bahadur along with 740 Sikhs, was arrested, all of whom were executed. To quote Ganda Singh, "Banda's name shall ever remain writ on the roll of immortality for his selfless sacrifices in the sacred cause of the persecuted humanity and for his martyrdom with unflinching devotion to God and the Guru."²

After 1716, began the period of execution of the Sikhs. Hundreds of Sikhs became martyrs, the most notable being Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh and Buta Singh.

The above-mentioned notable events of Sikh history exercised a great influence in molding the personality of Giani Kartar Singh. Giani Kartar Singh had drawn considerable inspiration from all these martyrs. He had an unflinching faith in Sikhism and Sikh Gurus, and had also great reverence for those Sikhs who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of religion. He himself sacrificed his life for a noble cause for the Panthic democracy.

It was during the Afghan invasions (1747-1769) that the Sikhs rose to Power.³ They plunged into the struggle for supremacy going on in the Punjab between the decadent Mughal Empire and the invading Afghans. Under their brave and courageous leaders, they sometimes successfully resisted Ahmad Shah Abdali, who invaded Punjab many times only to plunder and enslave its inhabitants; their resistance irritated the Durrani Chief. The Ahmed Shah Abdali invader defeated the Sikhs but could not crush them.⁴ During these years of struggle against the Mughals and Afghans the Sikhs evolved a constitutional

¹ For details see Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1990, pp. 32-121.

² *Ibid*, pp. 256-57.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Narendra Krishna Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A Mukherjee and Co. Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1951, p. 2.

peculiarity of their own. Since every Sikh looked upon himself as a Sardar (Chief) the only organization he was willing to accept was one in which his independence and equality was guaranteed. They formed bands called 'Misals' (from the Persian 'Misal' meaning like or equal), each under a Misaldar, chosen by virtue of his courage and sense of daring.⁵ In all twelve Misals emerged.⁶ The Misals grew larger as the area in which they operated increased. They divided most of the Punjab among themselves and undertook to defend the people in their zones on payment of protection tax called 'Rakhi'. The Misals led by courageous leader's occupied vast areas in central and eastern Punjab and laid the foundation of the first Sikh Rule in India. The brave Sikh contingents inflicted defeat after defeat on the corrupt and badly demoralized Muslim Subedars and their mercenary armies. Their fierce enthusiasm in the days when Sikhism was a living faith emboldened them to conquer the Punjab. It was their faith that made them strong."⁷ For a long time these Misals remained the only stabilizing factor in the country-side guaranteeing a peaceful life to the people.⁸ In the Malwa or the Cis-Sutlej areas only the formidable Phulkian Misals was of significance. It was obvious that if Punjab was to be saved from being splintered into little kingdoms and was to be unified and made strong, one of the Misals would have to merged into the others. The contest was really between the five important Misals; out of these, the Sukerchakias gradually forced their way to pre-eminence.

⁵ Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh: Maharaja of the Punjab*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1962, p. 19.

⁶ See Narendra Krishna Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power* (Third Edition), A Mukherjee and Co. Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1960, pp. 57-61. These 12 Misals were: (1) Bhangi Misal (2) Ahluwalia Misal (3) Fyzallpuria Misal (4) Ramgarhia Misal (5) Kanhya Misal (6) Sukerchakia Misal (7) Nakai Misal (8) Karora Singhia Misal (9) Nihang Misal (10) Dalewalia Misal (11) Nishanwalla Misal and (12) Phulkian Misal.

⁷ Lepel H. Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, Reprinted in Low Price Publications, Delhi, 2000, Preface, p. V.

⁸ Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Eurasia Pub. House, New Delhi, 1964, pp. 62-63.

An English traveler, William Forster, who witnessed the Misals squabbling for power, wrote in 1783: "Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sikhs to maintain the existence of Empire and religion, we may see some ambitious chief led by his genius and success and absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their common wealth the standard monarchy."⁹ Such ambitious Chief was Ranjit Singh.

The situation in Punjab changed radically when Ranjit Singh became the leader of Sukerchakia Misal in 1799. He amalgamated most of the Misals to establish his empire, which he did in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore on 16th July 1799 with the help of all his allies, and even the citizens of Lahore were in his favor.¹⁰ The occupation of Lahore is a land-mark in the career of Ranjit Singh. It being the political capital of Punjab, its importance at that time could not be exaggerated.

"A king had now appeared among the lions. Lahore was ever after left in his undisturbed possession. In the year 1801, he formally assumed the title of Maharaja, going through the Hindu equivalent of a coronation ceremony, proclaimed that he was now to be styled 'Sarkar' signifying power and State, he established a mint and issued in token of sovereignty a coin in his name bearing the inscription, 'Hospitality, the sword, victory and conquest unfailing from Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak'.¹¹ Thus the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh had reached the nationhood. The time was not far off when the Khalsa would be a territorial power and the Afghan of invasions would be rolled back across the Indus, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the martial Guru Gobind Singh. Of the other conquests of Ranjit Singh, mention may be made of Attack, Multan, Kashmir, Derajat and Peshwar. The greatest aim of the Maharaja was to unite the Sikhs,

⁹ George Forster, *Travels: A Journey from Bengal to England*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 295.

¹⁰ G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Prakash Brothers, Ludhiana, 1962, pp. 32-34.

¹¹ J.H. John Gordon, *The Sikhs*, Languages Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 86.

both living in north and south of the river Sutlej under his banner. But this ambition of his failed to materialize, because of the opposition of the British, who had become a dominant power in Delhi. Consequently, Ranjit Singh had to sign the Treaty of Amritsar with the British in 1809, according to which the river Sutlej was fixed as the boundary line between the two powers. This treaty restricted Ranjit Singh's activities to the north of the Sutlej and placed the Sikhs of the Malwa region under the protection of the British. It was his mistake not to have fought out the issue during his life-time when he had the means to do so. Unfortunately, he postponed the war to the times of his incompetent successors. Hence the Sikh kingdom came to an end. For this Ranjit Singh was responsible to a great extent. Like many other great men, Ranjit Singh so completely centralized everything pertaining to his Government in himself that his disappearance caused not a vacancy but a void in which the entire structure of Government was submerged.¹² The army considered itself the visible embodiment of the Khalsa or the commonwealth.¹³ Unfortunately Khalsa was not destined to enjoy the fruits of political freedom for long. The glory, peace and prosperity which Punjab enjoyed for forty years under Ranjit Singh were again on the verge of peril soon after his death in 1839.¹⁴ Love for righteousness and devotion to the creed of the Gurus, had given place to the avarice and greed for power at the expense of the others. In this race of power almost all the Sikh Chiefs who mattered unknowingly and innocently fell prey to the British diplomacy.¹⁵

Members of Ranjit Singh's family, both male and female, son and father, brothers, real or reputed, were all impatient to usurp the throne. The royalty and the chiefs were thus competing with one another in losing the priceless freedom for which the Khalsa had paid so dearly over the centuries. During this period two Anglo-Sikh wars took place between British Government and the Sikhs. The

¹² Narendra Krishna Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power* (Third Edition), p. 190.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 191.

¹⁴ M.L. Ahluwalia, *Bhai Maharaj Singh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

first Anglo-Sikh war broke out on 11th December, 1845 when the Sikh forces crossed the river Sutlej. The seeds of this war were sown during the last few years of the reign of Ranjit Singh. Indeed, the first Anglo Sikh war was the natural consequence of the policy of imperialism of the English. In this war the British came out victorious. Joseph Thackwell writes, "It is due mention in favour of the Sikhs that they fought bravely though broken and defeated, they never ran, but fought with their *talwars* to the last end. I witnessed several acts of great bravery in some of their Sardars and men."

Then came the second Anglo-Sikh war in 1848-49 A.D. In this war also the British Government came out triumphant. As a result of these two wars, Lord Dalhousie summoned a general meeting of the Lahore Durbar and declared the annexation of the Punjab on 29th March, 1849. Maharaja Dalip Singh was granted pension and Punjab was included in the British Empire. As a matter of fact, the annexation of the Punjab was nothing more than a dacoity. Now Punjab was placed under the new administration. There is a general belief that the Sikhs shed all their feelings of nostalgia within a few years of the annexation and quickly adopted themselves to the new order of things.¹⁶ But this was not really so.

The struggle for freedom among the Sikhs started soon after the annexation of Punjab. The person who revolted against this new regime was Bhai Maharaj Singh. He aimed at first, creating hatred against the English, second, inciting the Sikhs to disrupt the British administrative machinery and third, re-establishing the Sikh raj in the Punjab. With these aims in view he planned to take away Maharaja Dalip Singh from the British hands, but his scheme failed to abduct the Maharaja.¹⁷ Bhai Maharaj Singh was arrested by the British Government. But this did not end the Sikh flight for freedom. Stray

¹⁶ Fauja Singh, *A Brief Account of Freedom Movement in the Punjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 2.

¹⁷ K.S. Talwar, *Early Phases of the Sikh Renaissance and Struggle for Freedom*, The Panjab Past and Present, Vol. IV, Part II, Punjabi University, Patiala, October, 1970, p. 288.

instances of the struggle continued and the British found that their rule in the Punjab had not yet taken roots.

Bhai Maharaj Singh sacrificed his life for the sake of the country. He did not want to leave Punjab in the hands of the British. His sacrifice had great effect on the mind of Giani Kartar Singh, who himself was a great patriot. Though there was a gap of about a century between the two martyrs and both operated under different circumstances, but both had got inspiration from the Sikh heritage; both were deeply religious minded Sikhs. But more than the sacrifice of Bhai Maharaj Singh, it was the socio-religious movements of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Punjab which exercised profound influence on Giani Kartar Singh.

Of the various socio-religious movements which took birth in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Kuka or Namdhari movement ranks as the first, and in a way, the important one, for it brought a great political consciousness among the Sikhs. This movement was started by Baba Ram Singh. It was originally a socio-religious movement directed towards inculcating strict morality and high religious values among the Sikhs but it had significant political implication. In religious sphere, Kukatism preached worship of one formless God with utmost devotion and opposed the worship of gods and goddesses. Baba Ram Singh said, "Idols and Idol worship tantamount to insulting God, and will not be forgiven."¹⁸ Ram Singh considered political freedom as the part of religion. The Kukas eagerly wanted to win back the freedom that had been lost by the Punjab passing into hands of the British; their hostility to the British was intensified by the zeal of Christian missionaries in converting the people into their religion and refusal of the British authorities to ban cow-slaughter. From the very beginning, the Kuka movement, observed Dr. Fauja Singh Bajwa, was to be run on the lines of Guru Gobind Singh who had first created and militarized Khalsa and then employed it in his prolonged

¹⁸ Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Kuka Movement*, 2nd Edition, Vishav Namdhari Sangat, Sri Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 2017, pp. 23-24.

struggle against the Mughal imperialism of Aurangzeb.¹⁹ Kukaism spread rapidly in Ludhiana and Ferozepur districts of the Punjab and the Phulkian States of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. The movement left deep impact on the consciousness of the people of the Punjab. Barbaric punishment inflicted on the Kukas in Malerkotla went deep into the hearts of the rural masses.

The next move for the amelioration of the poverty and uplifting of the status of Sikhs was the result of the Singh Sabha movement which had started during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In 1873 a remarkable event took place which came as an eye-opener for the Sikhs and provided immediate cause for the emergence of Singh Sabha Movement. Under the influence of Christian missionaries, four Sikh students named Aya Singh, Attar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh, offered themselves for conversion into Christianity.²⁰ This alarmed the Sikhs. In order to devise ways and means for protecting the Sikh religion some prominent Sikhs including Baba Khem Singh Bedi,²¹ Kanwar Bikram Singh, Thakur Singh Sandhawalia²² convened a meeting in Amritsar in 1873 and organized a movement on a broad socio-religious basis, known as Singh Sabha Movement.²³ The movement marked a turning point in the history of the Sikhs.²⁴ Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia was elected as the first President of this organization.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 39.

²⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Asia Pub. House, New York, 1964, p. 139.

²¹ Baba Khem Singh Bedi was a direct descendent of Guru Nanak. He belonged to Kallar, a small town in Rawalpindi District.

²² Thakur Singh Sandhawalia was a son of Lehna. He was born in 1873 at the village Rajasansi. He was only six years old when his father died. The British annexation of the Punjab created hatred in the mind of Thakur Singh for British and he wanted to bring reforms in the Sikh community.

²³ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Lehar* (in Punjabi), Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1974, pp. 11-13.

²⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 138.

The main objects of Singh Sabha Movement were to remove the defects and shortcomings that had crept in the Sikh community, to revive the basic philosophy of Sikhism, to interpret truly the teachings of Sikh Gurus as given in Adi Granth and other sacred books, to demolish false doctrines and improper customs that had developed into Sikh faith and to maintain separate communal existence of the Sikhs.²⁵ Apart from this, one of its main aims was to attract the interest of highly placed Englishman in, and ensure their association with the educational programme of the Singh Sabha.²⁶

A Singh Sabha was also established at Lahore where Professor Gurmukh Singh was working more zealously with the purpose of organizing the Sikhs.²⁷ After the death of Bhai Gurmukh Singh and other prominent leaders of the Lahore Diwan in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Lahore party seems to have steadily lost its popularity and influence. The attention and activities of the Sikhs centered more and more in the Amritsar Party controlled by Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia. He made persistent efforts for unity of the Lahore and Amritsar Diwans but could not succeed.

After the prolonged consultations and discussions between the leaders of the Amritsar Diwan and the Lahore Diwan, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was founded at Amritsar on 2nd October, 1902. Thus, came into existence the historical organization of the Sikhs which was destined to play a momentous and laudable role in uplifting the Sikh community in every sphere- religious, social, economic and educational. Bhai Arjan Singh was selected its President and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia as the first Secretary of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. It was after many years that the Sikhs were united to solve their problems.²⁸ With the

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 140.

²⁶ Ganda Singh, *A History of the Khalsa College Amritsar*, On the Occasion of its golden jubilee, Amritsar, 1949, p. 2.

²⁷ Teja Singh, *The Singh Sabha Movement*, The Panjab Past and Present, Vol. VII, Punjabi University, Patiala, April 1973, p. 32.

²⁸ D. Petrie, *Development in the Sikh Politics 1900-1911: A Report*, Published by Chief Khalsa Diwan, Delhi, 1911, p. 14.

establishment of Chief Khalsa Diwan at Amritsar, the Singh Sabha Movement entered into a new phase, and there ushered in a new era of progress and reform in the Sikh community. The Chief Khalsa Diwan assumed a heavy responsibility of the management of the Singh Sabhas which existed all over the country. Under the stewardship of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, the Chief Khalsa Diwan made great progress and played a significant role in the overall betterment of the Sikh community. The main aims and objects of the Chief Khalsa Diwan were the protection of political rights of the Sikhs and redressed of their grievances through constitutional means.²⁹ The sponsors of Chief Khalsa Diwan founded Sikh Educational Conference in 1908 and this Conference set up Khalsa School in every town where it was held. The States could receive only indirect advantage of this movement. The Singh Sabha movement not only revived ancient religious sentiments but it also encouraged them to fight for the rights of the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha in Punjab played the role of religious and social reform movements in implanting political consciousness among the Sikhs.³⁰

Different writers and poets started publishing writings and poems in Punjabi which had great effect on the Sikh community, and the Sikhs again started taking pride in their history and religion.

It brought the Sikhs out from the clutches of the evils and gave them the necessary courage to face the difficulties and opposition.³¹ Many steps were also taken by Chief Khalsa Diwan for the propagation of religion. The Khalsa Tract Society, originally founded by Bhai Kaur Singh in 1894, was later on affiliated to the Diwan which under the guidance of the great Sikh poet, Bhai Vir Singh, flooded the land with religious literature of a high order. The writings of the honorable Bhai Sahib had their miraculous effect and went a long way in

²⁹ Gagandip Cheema, *Chief Khalsa Diwan: Fifty Years of Service 1902-1951*, The Panjab Past and Present, Vol. VII, Punjabi University, Patiala, April 1972, p. 60.

³⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 147.

³¹ Ganda Singh, (ed.), *Punjab*, Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth, p. 40.

bringing about the required transformation.³² The missionary programme of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was full of vigor and enthusiasm.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan not only brought about religious reforms but also paid attention towards the social upliftment of the Sikhs. It introduced the ceremony of Anand-Karaj among the Sikhs at the time of marriage, it removed the evil practices of caste system, killing of the girls at the time of their birth, it also removed the evil practice of marrying the girls in childhood; it provided the means of women education, it improved the position of women in society. The leaders of Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Singh Sabha also made efforts to eradicate social evils and practices such as gambling, drinking, litigation and smoking, which were also prevalent among the Sikhs especially in the rural areas. The Sikhs not only became aware of their distinct social identity but also set the ball rolling for the eradication of the social evils.³³

In 1907 the Sikhs along with Hindus and Muslims agitated against “Land Colonization Bill” by which for the first time they had come into direct conflict with the British Government. The prominent leaders of the agitation were Sardar Ajit Singh and Syed Hyder Raze; they made associations at Lyallpur and Rawalpindi. In the end, the British Government had to yield before them. Gradually there grew up a section among the Sikhs who, apart from maintaining their separate entity, longed to see the Sikh rule in the Punjab re-established soon.

The Rikab Ganj Affairs

The Gurudwara known as Rikabganj marks the spot where Guru Teg Bahadur’s headless body was cremated in the 1675 A.D. with the transfer of the capital to Delhi in 1911, preparations began to be made to build the Vice regal

³² Gagandip Cheema, *Chief Khalsa Diwan: Fifty Years of Service 1902-1951*, The Panjab Past and Present, Vol. VII, pp. 62-63.

³³ Harjit Satia, *The Chief Khalsa Diwan- A History*, Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, p. 74.

Lodge opposite to the place where the Gurudwara was situated. The Government considered that the old six-cornered enclosure wall of the Gurudwara was too ugly to stand in front of the Viceroy's palace and proposed that it should be demolished. In 1912 under the Land Acquisition Act, the Government acquired from an accommodating Mahant the whole land lying between the Gurudwara and the outer wall. Early in 1914, a part of the wall was pulled down. The Chief Khalsa Dewan, which was consulted as the only representative body of the Sikhs seemed inclined to accept the Government's position. There was, however, a great Sikh agitation against the Government and even Chief Khalsa Diwan became unpopular. A voice of protest was raised by Sardar Harchand Singh of Lyallpur even in the educational conference held in April 1914 at Jullundur, but it was immediately hushed up.³⁴

But within a few months of this happening, there broke out the First World War. As the Sikhs formed a considerable proportion of the British Indian Army, the Government could not afford to disregard the Sikh sentiments at that time. Sikh leaders also gave up the agitation as they wanted the Sikhs to offer whole-hearted cooperation to the Government during the war.

Komagata Maru Incident and its effect

Sikhs like other Indians have gone abroad but they prefer those countries where respectable life was possible. In 1913, there were about eight thousand Sikhs in America. Their Chief centre of business was Vancouver, where they had got their temple with a Khalsa Diwan and trade and agriculture business, Immigration laws were passed by the Canadian Government to prevent Asians from entering Canada, which affected the Indians. The steps were taken to deny Indians the right to move the courts against the decisions of the Canadian Immigration Department. In January, 1912, the general discontent was given a strong fillip, when the Immigration Department refused to admit the wives of two

³⁴ Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, 3rd Edition, Secretary S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 2000, pp. 55-56.

prominent members of the Indian community at Vancouver, named Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh. The Immigration Department had laid down two conditions for Asians, they should come directly from the country and every passenger would have at least 200 dollar with him to meet his initial expenses. The Indians felt the need of making shipping arrangements for meeting the condition of continuous journey. In order to meet this demand, Gurdit Singh decided to charter a ship on 24th March 1914. A Japanese Vessel, the Komagata Maru was chartered by Gurdit Singh through a German Agent.³⁵

The ship left Hong Kong on the 4th April, 1914. It reached Shanghai on the 8th April, where it picked up 111 more passengers. It steamed off the Shanghai port on 14th, reaching Moji Port (Japan) on the 19th April. It reached Yokohama (Japan) on the 20th and the total number of passengers was 376. It reached Victoria port on the 21st May, where it arrived at Vancouver during the dark on the 22nd May, 1914.³⁶

Before the ship arrived at Vancouver, the Canadian Government had made up its mind not to allow the passengers of the Komagata Maru to land. Neither Gurdit Singh nor his subordinates were allowed to get down at the harbor without the submission of a true and full report of the ship immediately at the master's office. He asked for permission to seek legal advice, but it was likewise refused. The passengers were not allowed even to see their fellow countrymen at Vancouver. The passengers suffered very much due to shortage of food, drinking water and other necessaries and also the absence of medical aid, which further added to their difficulties in execution of their plans. The attempt on the part of the authorities to force the passengers to commence their journey back without the provisions angered the starving passengers, who all belonged to the Punjab. They locked the captain of the ship in his cabin and

³⁵ Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1969, p. 88.

³⁶ Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata Maru or India's slavery abroad*, Unistar Books, Chandigarh, 2007, p. 45.

refused to set sail. A steam boat came ashore on 18th July, 1914 carrying a large contingent of police force. The unarmed and semi-starved passengers fought against the police using lumps of coal as weapons.

After remaining for two months in the Canadian waters, the ship left Vancouver on the 23rd of July 1914 at 5 a.m. The ship left Kobe on the 3rd September and reached Singapore on the 26th September. On 29th September, 1914 at 11 a.m. the ship was moored at Budge Budge, 17 miles from Calcutta. A special train was arranged to take the incoming passengers to the Punjab and they were ordered to enter the train. The passengers refused to return and fire was opened on them by the police. The passengers used American revolvers. Fifteen passengers and three police men were killed. Most of the passengers were rounded up in a few days, but thirty of them, including Gurdit Singh, escaped. Komagata incident brought a lot of political awakening among the Sikhs living in India and abroad.

The Ghadar Movement

The Ghadar party was formed in 1913 under the leadership of Lala Hardayal. Jawala Singh and Hardayal took the initiative in organizing the immigrants at Stockton and set up a body named the Hindustani workers at the Pacific coast. The party bought premises in San Francisco and began publishing a weekly paper called 'Ghadar' in Urdu and later many others Indian languages..... the largest issue being in Gurmukhi. Therefore, the organization came to be known as Ghadar party.³⁷

Within a few months, the 'Ghadar' began to circulate among the Indian settlers in Canada, Japan, the Phillipines, Hong Kong, China, the Malaya States, Singapore, British Guiana, Trinidad, the Honduras, South and East Africa and other countries where there were Indian communities.³⁸ Then took place an

³⁷ Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, p. 88.

³⁸ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, pp. 176-177.

incident which drew the attention of the world to the plight of the Indian immigrants to Canada, this was the arrival of the Komagata Maru in Canadian waters.

Leaders of the Ghadar party had prepared themselves for struggle during the war. A week after the war was declared, a mass meeting of Indians took place at San Fran Sacraments. The first band of revolutionaries, led by Jawala Singh sailed from San Francisco in August 1914 by the 'Korea'. At Canton another 90 volunteers joined the 'Korea'. As soon as Korea docked at Calcutta, the British Government got the information and the ring leaders including Jawala Singh were arrested. The Ghadrites discovered to their chagrin that the atmosphere in India was far from conducive for revolution.³⁹ The Ghadrities made desperate efforts to secure a footing amongst the peasantry. They went to religious festivals at Amritsar, Nankana Sahib and Tarn Taran and openly exhorted the people to rise.

Ever since the rising of 1857, the Sikhs had formed a very substantial portion of the British army. When war broke out, Sikh recruitment was speeded up. The number of Sikhs in the services rose from 35,000 at the beginning of 1915 to over 100,000 by the end of the war,⁴⁰ forming about a fifth of the army in action. Over 60,000 men from Patiala, Jind, Kapurthala, Nabha, Faridkot and Kalsia went to the front. The maharajas of Patiala, Jind and Kapurthala offered their personal services, and all the princes made generous contributions in cash and equipment of the 22 military crosses awarded for conspicuous gallantry to Indians, the Sikh won 14. The war was the chief cause of the Ghadarite's return home.

Of course, the Komagata Maru episode also contributed towards the homeward move of the Ghadarite's in August, 1914. If the Komagata Maru incident had not occurred, there would not have been such an awakening

³⁹ Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, p. 89.

⁴⁰ M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, The Superintendent, Govt. Printing Punjab, Lahore, 1922, p. 44.

among the Indians in Canada and the United States.⁴¹ Immediately on the outbreak of the war, the Ghadarites started making preparations for a homeward move through mass meetings and the 'Ghadar'. The British Government got the news of the coming Ghadarities as early as on the 13th August, 1914. An Ingress ordinance was issued on the 5th September, 1914, which empowered the Government to restrict the liberty of any person entering India after the 5th September, 1914. Thus, the sponsors of this Ghadar movement were arrested first on landing on the Indian soil. Most of the leaders were interned in jails, especially, Sohan Singh Bhakna, President and Kesar Singh and Jwala Singh, Vice-President's of the party. This meant a great setback to the Ghadar movement. In spite of the strict screening some Ghadarites managed to either slip through unobserved ports or failed to report at the appropriate enquiry office or escaped through wrong reports. Prominent among them were Kartar Singh Sarabha, V.G. Pingle, Pandit Jagat Ram, Kanshi Ram, Prithvi Singh and Jagat Singh.⁴²

Early in 1915, Ghadarites made contacts with terrorist organizations in other parts of the country. In January, Rash Bihari Bose arrived in Punjab and took over the general direction of the revolution. On receiving favorable reports from all corners of the Punjab, he fixed the night of February 21, 1915, for a general rising of the Indian troops. Factories to manufacture bombs were set up at Amritsar, Thabewal (near Ludhiana), and Lohatbadi. The revolutionaries were supplied with instruments to cut telegraph wires and derail the railway trains.

These carefully laid plans were foiled by the police, who succeeded in extracting information from one of the captured revolutionaries. Bose advanced the date of the rising from the 21st to the 19th of February. Information of change was also conveyed. Disaffected regiments were disarmed, suspects were court-martialled and executed. Rash Bihari Bose left the Punjab in disgust. By the summer of 1915, the Ghadar uprising had been virtually smashed.

⁴¹ Gurdev Singh Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, p. 96.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 106.

The Ghadar movement failed for a variety of reasons, lack of arms, lack of experience; bad leadership; the inability of the revolutionaries to keep secrets,⁴³ tension between the Germans and the Ghadarites, the efficiency of the British intelligence service, which planted spies in the highest councils of the revolutionaries; the stern measure taken by Punjab Police, which compelled many of the leaders to inform against their colleagues.⁴⁴ Above all, it failed because the Punjabi masses were not ready for it. Even the peasants were more concerned with the war than with revolution. The eruption of the Ghadar Movement brought about a radical change in the political outlook of the Sikh Community. It marked the beginning of the end of three quarters of a century of unquestioned loyalty to the British Raj. Akali terrorists known as the Babbars were largely recruited from the ranks of the Ghadar party. Muscovite Ghadarites joined hands with the Babbars, a paper known as *Kirti* was started and in 1926 the party came to be known as the Kirti Kisan party.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, April 13, 1919

The Sikh contribution to the war both in men and material was bigger than that of any other community of India. It was not altogether surprising that they exaggerated their role in the allied victory and expected to be specially rewarded for their services. They were consequently pained to find that local officials and the police continued to treat them as common rustics instead of heroes. They heard for the first time the full story of the maltreatment of Sikh emigrants by Canadian and American whites and of the Ghadar rising urban population was further hit by the imposition of a special income-tax. To cap it all, an epidemic of influenza raged across the entire country taking a heavy toll of life.

Restrictive measures introduced during the war were not withdrawn; on the contrary, legislation of a more drastic nature was planned. Sir Micheal O'

⁴³ Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*.

⁴⁴ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, p. 189.

Dwyer, lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, scorned the notion of self-Government for India as a preposterous figment of the mind of the urbanite babus. He prohibited nationalist leaders from entering the province and took stern measures to repress agitation against the Rowlatt bills intended to combat the revolutionary crime.

Meanwhile the local Congress had already announced a meeting at Jallianwala Bagh for the Baisakhi fair. From the early hours of the morning, Sikhs for whom the first of Baisakh was also the birth anniversary of the Khalsa, started arriving at the Golden Temple. As soon as General Dyer received news of the meeting, he marched a platoon of Infantry to Jallianwala Bagh. He occupied the only entrance and exit to the place and without giving any warning to the people to disperse opened fire. He killed 379 and wounded over 2,000. He imposed a curfew on the city. When the news was conveyed to Sir Michael O' Dwyer, he fully approved of the action.

Hartals and black-flag processions to protest against the Rowlett bills had taken place in most of the cities of the Punjab and in some the police had made passive resisters disappear by opening fire on them. After Jallianwala Bagh, the demonstrations took an extremely violent form. Bridges, churches, post offices and other public buildings were burnt, white men assaulted. The army took over the administration and whatever vestige of a civilized government had remained also vanished.

The effect that Jallianwala Bagh and Martial law administered had on the people of the Punjab can hardly be exaggerated. Racial tension, reminiscent of the most savage days of the mutiny when every white man looked upon the colored as his enemy, was re-created. General Dyer after the massacre of hundreds of men, women and children in the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy visited Golden Temple, the same day. The Government appointed manager of Golden Temple, offered him a *Siropa*. That could not be liked by the Sikhs in general and Sikh intelligentsia in particular. This gave rise to another movement among the Sikhs which went by the name of Gurdwara Reform Movement.

Early Life

Giani Kartar Singh was born on 22nd January, 1902 in Chak no. 40 Jhang Branch, also called Nagoke, in the Lyallpur District. His father was Sardar Bhagat Singh. Kartar Singh's grandfather, Sardar Amar Singh had performed distinguished service in military in Rasala No. 12. In recognition of his services in the Frontier wars, he was allotted two squares of land in the chak. When Giani Kartar Singh, one of the most selfless and intelligent of the Sikh leaders, was to take birth he had "three Sisters and one brother, but his brother had died in infancy due to Influenza epidemics in 1918 and Giani was destined to grow as the only brother of the three doting Sisters. As he was the only male child in the family, all his elders in the family loved him and treated him with great affection. He was not allowed to do manual work as he was very feeble and weak".⁴⁵

When he was six years old, he was sent to the village Gurdwara for his early education in Punjabi. A little later he was sent to a primary school in his village but that was only for a while. Much to his good luck, no sooner he had finished his primary; a high school was established at Chak No. 41. Giani Kartar Singh was admitted there by his grandfather there and it was from that school in the neighboring *Chak* that Giani matriculated.

Giani Kartar Singh showed his flair for politics even as a child. He took keen interest in the development of the Singh Sabha movement, the peasant movement in Lyallpur district and the activities of the Ghadar heroes. "He read Punjabi newspapers and was especially impressed by the writings of Bhai Parmanand, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri and Lala Lajpat Rai." It was while hearing a speech delivered by one of them that, he heard the popular Punjabi song '*Pagri Sambhal Jatta*' and got initiated in an anti-government mood then prevalent among the people of the Punjab. All this evoked political, social and religious consciousness in his tender heart.

⁴⁵ File No. ORL-103, Statement of Giani Kartar Singh, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.1-2.

Giani Kartar Singh Family

Major Amar Singh
(Grand Father)

Sardar Bhagat Singh (Father)	Rasaldar Major Jagat Singh (Uncle)	Bibi Bhan Kaur (Bhua Ji)
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Bibi Jewan Kaur (Mother)	Bibi Pal Kaur (Step mother)
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Mukhtar Singh (Real Brother)	Nishan Singh (Step bother)
Mata Tej Kaur, Bibi Paro and Mata Parsin Kaur (Real Sisters)	Bhai Satnam Singh (Step bother)

Harnam Kaur
(Wife)

When General Dyer fired on a peaceful gathering at Jallianwala Bagh to enact one of the most ghastly tragedies of the Indian history, he gave a new turn to the Indian politics. People started cursing the British Government for its atrocities and high handedness. Giani Kartar Singh then only seventeen was deeply affected by the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. It was indeed a turning point in his life. He decided to plunge into the freedom struggle and work for the emancipation of the people of India.

The young Giani Kartar Singh was then at Amritsar. He was at the moment the student of 9th class and studying at Chak 41 School as mentioned above. After appearing in the annual examination, he had come to Amritsar where his uncle, Jagat Singh, was working as a clerk in the Army office. His uncle would not allow him to move about too freely in Amritsar but Giani Kartar Singh would manage to do so between 9 A.M. and 4.30 P.M. when his uncle would be in his office. During this interval he would run to the city and be back home before the arrival of his uncle.⁴⁶ It was during one of such escapes to the city that Giani Kartar Singh witnessed a huge procession moving towards the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow. That was on 7th April, 1919. The processionists were protesting against the arrest of their two beloved leaders, Dr. Saffudin Kitchlu and Dr. Satya Pal. Giani Kartar Singh joined the procession for sometime but later went back home to be there before the arrival of his uncle from office at 4.30 P.M. Later he heard there was severe (*lathi charge*) and firing of the processionists, he had earlier joined and that the people had got angry and attacked the British policemen in retaliation. His curiosity got aroused. Now he visited the city everyday and attended one protest meeting or the other. On the fateful day Baisakhi of 1919 he passed through the '*Jallianwala Bagh Street*'. In spite of his very keen desire to attend the meeting, he had to run towards the Cantonment to reach home before arrival of his uncle from the office. After hearing about the sufferings of the people as a consequence of General Dyer's orders of firing on the peaceful people of Jallianwala Bagh, he wept profusely

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

and stopped doing that only after making up his mind to avenge the high-handedness of General Dyer and his stooges. He went in for an *ardas* and took a pledge before Sri Guru Granth Sahib that from that day onwards, he would devote his whole life to national cause and would not take rest till the British were turned out of India with their bag and baggage. When his close friends, Bhagat Singh and Ganga Singh, heard of his pledge, they followed suit and took a similar pledge. His presence at Amritsar at this historic juncture of the city's history put his parents in distress. His grandfather came to Amritsar to enquire about his welfare and whereabouts and took him back to the village in Lyallpur. Due to enforcement of martial law, Giani Kartar Singh had to spend a night in the company of his grandfather at Gurdwara Sahib Ganj in great danger. The grandson and the grandfather had to cover more than forty-four miles on foot. The return journey completely changed Giani Kartar Singh.⁴⁷

Giani Kartar Singh lost all interest in the mundane activities of an average man and cut himself off from the whole world. His oath to serve the nation always haunted him. He jumped into his new career of service whole heartedly and never looked back. Of course, he was still too young to leave his home. He, however, started getting soon after when he heard the appeal of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, the most respected of the national leaders, then, for funds to help the Jallianwala Bagh sufferers, Giani Kartar Singh secretly collected Rupees five hundred and sent the money to the revered Pandit through local Congress leaders."⁴⁸

Giani's initiation into collecting funds for national purposes soon attained momentum. Later in 1920, when he was a student of 10th class he collected one thousand rupees for the historic session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta. Late Lajpat Rai, a great Punjabi, who had just returned from America, was to preside over this session. Mahatma Gandhi had appealed for one crore volunteers and collection of a large fund for the Congress party. As a young

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p 5.

volunteer Giani Kartar Singh contributed a substantial amount. He collected and sent a handsome amount for his age and circumstances. This was his first important political undertaking.

During those very days, a political conference was organized by Jathedar Lachman Singh who later became a famous martyr of Nanakana Sahib Tragedy, at village Dharowali. Giani Kartar Singh attended the conference along with twenty young volunteers and heard fiery speeches of Mohammad Sardar of Sialkot, Malik Lal Khan, Dr. Saiffudin Kitchlew, Master Mota Singh, Bhai Teja Singh Chuharkhana and Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuria, Now Kartar Singh was an enlightened and well informed young man. It was during these days that Gurdwara Reform movement had started with full force. The famous Jhabbal brothers, S. Amar Singh and S. Jaswant Singh, had started a Morcha to free Gurdwara '*Babe De Ber*' in Sialkot district from the clutches of greedy Mahants.

In 1920, Giani Kartar Singh took another plunge. He actively participated in a student's conference held at Gujranwala in 1920. He attended this conference along with the other young friends from Lyallpur area. The popular national leader, Lala Lajpat Rai, addressed this meeting and exhorted the people to unite in a concerted effort to free the country. Giani Kartar Singh was especially impressed by this appeal to the Sikhs possibly because he had said, "If the Sikhs always keep the sacrifices of Guru Gobind Singh and great Sikh martyrs in their hearts, the word fear will have no meaning for them." This conference created a great awakening. It aroused the sense of sacrifice of the Sikhs. It opened up a vast field for young men to work in the political and Gurdwara Reform movement. It helped Giani Kartar Singh to reaffirm his resolve to dedicate himself to the service of the people.

Giani Kartar Singh was an intelligent young man with a deep practical insight. His approach to the problems was always practical. His teachers and parents were chiding him for his plunge into the political field and blamed him for instigating the other young man of the area. It speaks for Giani Kartar Singh's vision that despite hectic activity, he did not neglect his education. He knew the

value of education. Though he wanted to join a national institution, he did not want to harm his own school for which he had constantly collected funds by organizing village meetings and Akhand Paths. He passed his matriculation examination with credit.⁴⁹

Giani Kartar Singh was still at his village, when he heard about the Nanakana Sahib's holocaust. Mahant Narain Dass was in possession of the historic Gurdwara of Sikhs and the latter had decided to eject him from the Gurdwara by all means. "On February 20, 1921, a Jatha of Sikhs led by Lachman Singh Dharovali and Bhai Dalip Singh entered the Gurdwara but they were mercilessly butchered and burnt on a pile of logs." More than 130 Sikhs lost their lives.⁵⁰ The news of the outrage spread like wild fire and thousands of Sikhs from the whole of the Punjab began to rush towards Nankana Sahib. There spread a wave of indignation all over India. Even Mahatma Gandhi came out with an observation on the martyrdom of Bhai Dalip Singh. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Country that can give birth to martyrs like Dalip Singh cannot be suppressed by any power on earth.

This tragedy had occurred at a place very near to the area of activity of young Giani Kartar Singh. Next to the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Nanakana Sahib's holocaust affected Giani Kartar Singh's young mind the most. Even more than before he was now determined to jump into active politics and that at an age when he was too young to defy his parents who wanted him to join Khalsa College Amritsar for higher studies.

The grandfather and the parents of Giani Kartar Singh were anxious that he continue his education beyond the matriculation stage. In 1921, soon after Giani Kartar Singh had matriculated, they sent him to Amritsar Khalsa College. It was as a student there that he was especially impressed by the religious fervor, political consciousness and impressive personality of his tutor Bawa Harkishan

⁴⁹ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, p. 199.

⁵⁰ P.L.C.D. 1921, p. 304, *The Tribune*, Lahore, 3 March, 1922, King V/S Narain Das and others.

Singh who later played a great role in Sikh politics. He spent two years at Khalsa College, Amritsar. During his college days, he was an eye witness to two most important events in the development of Akali Movement, the '*Key Affairs*' and the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. The former concerned the holiest of the holy Sikh shrines, the Darbar Sahib. It arose because "The Government was suspicious of the bonafide of Baba Kharak Singh, the new President of Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee in (S.G.P.C.)" and so the Deputy Commissioner decided to hand over the keys of treasury of the Golden Temple to his own nominee. All the important leaders including Baba Kharak Singh, the President of S.G.P.C. were arrested and sent to Jail under the seditious meeting Act.⁵¹ Later when the Government had to hand over the keys back to S.G.P.C. Mahatma Gandhi described it as the 'first decisive battle won.'⁵²

Whenever these leaders were brought to the courts and then to jail, hundreds of Sikhs, and Hindus would follow them in a large procession. Giani Kartar Singh participated in many such processions and heard lectures in meetings at the jail gate. He was highly moved by the sacrifices of Baba Kharak Singh "the uncrowned king of Punjab." Some of the other leaders of this time who left a lasting effect on the mind of Giani Kartar Singh and made him enter Sikh politics in a big way were Master Bhagh Singh, an Advocate of Gurdaspur, Teja Singh Summundri, Hari Singh of Jalandher, the Jhabbal Brothers, Giani Sher Singh and Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh.

By now Giani Kartar Singh had lost all interest in his studies and had plunged deep into the Gurdwara Movement. During the second year of his college career, the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha started. He made it a point to follow jathas to the Guru Ka Bagh frequently and to attend all the political meetings held in the city or at Khalsa College Amritsar. The revolutionary poems of Bishen Singh at college meetings particularly impressed him. The Principle of

⁵¹ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, pp. 201-202.

⁵² M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, cited by Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, p. 202.

the college, the famous Wathena, was sympathetic towards the Sikhs cause and never interfered into the anti-Government and pro Sikh activities of his students, Giani Kartar Singh took full advantage of this somewhat unusual attitude for a British principal and became one of the main leaders of the agitation. He organized students to help the volunteers who were injured during the merciless beating and lathi charge at Guru Ka Bagh and attended to them at different hospitals.

Three prominent lecturers at Khalsa College, Amritsar, Prof. Bawa Harkishen Singh, Prof. Niranjana Singh and Prof. Teja Singh were members of the newly formed Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. They were in charge of publicity. Giani Kartar Singh was always at their beck and call. Their sincere efforts had attracted the attention of the leaders of All India Fame.⁵³ C.F. Andrews personally visited the Guru Ka Bagh and appreciated the noble, Christ like behavior of the Akalis.⁵⁴ Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni sent his report to the Congress leaders and the Punjab Government. For nineteen days, the passive resistance continued and was observed by many Indian leaders including Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The leading news papers flashed the news of the unique Non-violent resistance being waged at Guru Ka Bagh. Like the rest of the world, it affected young Giani Kartar Singh, a good deal. The Guru Ka Bagh agitation continued and lasted till Sir Ganga Ram intervened, purchased Guru Ka Bagh and handed it over to the Akalis. Giani Kartar Singh felt his heart filled with pride when in his *Young India*, Mahatma Gandhi described the event of the Guru Ka Bagh as the second decisive battle won against the Government.⁵⁵

Giani Kartar Singh had good reasons to do so. The Mahants in possession of the several historic Gurudwaras approached the S.G.P.C. and

⁵³ File No. ORL-103, Statement of Giani Kartar Singh, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 15.

⁵⁴ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, p. 204.

⁵⁵ Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India 1919-1922*, S. Ganesan, Madras, 1924.

settled their disputes with the only representative body of the Sikhs then in existence.

During Christmas holidays, Giani Kartar Singh went to his village Chak No. 40. When he came back to Sri Guru Hargobind hostel in the college, he fell seriously ill. Actually, he had an attack of smallpox. His condition had taken a serious turn. His tutor Bawa Harkishen Singh sent a telegram to his father. His grandfather Risaldar Amar Singh and grandmother came to Amritsar and took him to his village. He was confined to bed for more than two months. For some of the days he was ill, he was quite senseless and there was no hope of recovery.⁵⁶ But by the grace of God, he ultimately recovered and once again continued taking keen interest in the political and social activities. Now he decided not to go back to his college and became an active political worker.

Giani Kartar Singh showed his flair for politics even as a child. He took keen interest in the development of the Singh Sabha movement, the peasant movement in Lyallpur district and the activities of Ghadar heroes. All this evoked political, social and religious consciousness in his tender heart. Giani Kartar Singh then only seventeen was deeply affected by the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. It was indeed a turning a point in his life. He decided to plunge into the freedom struggle and work for the emancipation of the people of India. Later on in 1920, when he was a student of 10th class he collected one thousand rupees for the historic session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta. During those very days, a political conference was organized by Jathedar Lachman Singh who later became a famous martyr of Nanakana Sahib Tragedy, at village Dharowali. Giani Kartar Singh attended the conference along with twenty young volunteers. In 1920, Giani Kartar Singh took another plunge. He actively participated in a student's conference held at Gujranwala in 1920. Next to the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Nanakana Sahib's holocaust affected Giani Kartar Singh young mind the most. During his college days at Khalsa College,

⁵⁶ File No. ORL-103, Statement of Giani Kartar Singh, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 10.

Amritsar, he was an eye witness to two most important events in the development of Akali Movement, the '*Key Affairs*' and the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. Now he decided not to go back to his college and became an active political worker. Giani Kartar Singh had drawn considerable inspiration from all the martyrs. He had an unflinching faith in Sikhism and Sikh Gurus, and had also great reverence for those Sikhs who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of religion. He himself sacrificed his life for a noble cause for the Panth democracy.



ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ

CHAPTER 2

Role in Punjab Politics 1920 to 1946

By the beginning of the year 1922, Giani Kartar Singh was fully prepared to become an active political worker. The sacrifices of Akali volunteers in the Gurdwara Reform Movement, mainly Guru Ka Bagh Morcha, had inspired him to choose his own field of activity as a political worker. He decided to enter Sikh politics as a selfless Akali volunteer. His grandfather and parents did not come in his way. They had reconciled themselves to his wishes with grace. No doubt, Giani Kartar Singh was a married young man and was the only surviving son of his parents but he had become indifferent to family life and was bent on devoting his entire time to the political and religious work. According to the standards of those days, he was both well-educated and enlightened enough to do so.

Among his very first acts as a social and political worker, was to persuade Surat Singh, a *Numbardar* of his village and a staunch *Singh Sabha* worker to organize a social organization. It was to be a dynamic organization for social reform. According to *Zamindar Sudhar Lehar*, "The main aim of this organization was to eradicate social evils from among the farmers and to simplify the social customs which were hitting the poor peasants very hard from the economic point of view."

Soon, however, the circumstances forced Giani Kartar Singh to divert his attention from the social reform to the political activity. That was inevitable. The political situation in Punjab was becoming more and more tense than even before and the relations between the Sikhs and the Government were had become so strained that these were beyond repair. That was particularly so after the Nankana Sahib Tragedy and the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha launched with full militant determination by the Akalis.

Some of the Akali workers were induced to organize an underground terrorist movement. These terrorists were largely drawn from the Ghadar party

and from soldiers on leave. Two of the most active members were retired Hvaldar Major Kishan Singh Bidang and Master Mota Singh. Ultimately it resulted into Babbar Akali Movement. The Government fell heavily on the Babbar Akalis. It sentenced some Babbar Akalis to death. The *Kar Sewa* at Amritsar which resulted in the participation of a large number of the Sikhs in clearing the *Sarowar* inculcated a further sense of unity and sacrifice among the Sikhs.¹ During those very days when a rumor spread that Government had decided to remove Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha from the State, there spread a wave of indignation among the Sikhs. Soon the Maharaja was forced to abdicate in favor of his minor son. The S.G.P.C. passed a resolution exhorting the Sikhs to observe 9th September, 1923 as a Nabha day.² Later, when a non-stop recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was held at Gurdwara Gangsar at Jaito and that was interrupted by the police, a new Morcha was launched and batches of Akali volunteers began to arrive at Jaito daily. The Government declared the S.G.P.C. and Akali Dal illegal and the latter took it as a challenge. The Shahidi Jatha of 500 members each started marching towards Jaito from every corner of Punjab. Firing and *lathi* charge failed to deter these Jathas committed to the Supreme sacrifice of marching to Jaito.

The 5th Shahidi Jatha for Jaito was to set off from Lyallpur. The Akali workers rushed to the villages and enlisted volunteers for this Jathas. Jathedar Sewa Singh, who was the President of the Akali Dal, belonged to chak 33 Jhang Branch near the village of Giani Kartar Singh, Jathedar Sewa Singh directed the youthful Giani Kartar Singh to reach the main Gurdwara at Lyallpur and help him in arranging ration and the other necessities for the Jatha. Giani Kartar Singh reached Lyallpur well in time and accompanied the Jatha upto the Chak No. 204 Rakh Branch. He served the Jatha to the best of his capacity and met Daljit Singh Bhagowalia, Bhagat Singh, Hakam Singh and Bhai Buta Singh who later

¹ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p. 205.

² Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 208.

on became his lifelong friends.³ All these young men became active workers of the Akali Dal. Bhai Buta Singh later on became the Assistant Manager of Gurdwara Nankana Sahib. They did their best to preach Sikhism and Giani Kartar Singh was inspired by their sense of sacrifice and devotion.

Giani Kartar Singh and his companions had collected ration and cooked meal etc. at Chak No. 204 and were waiting for the arrival of the Shahidi Jatha on its way to Jaito. A strong contingent of police swooped on them and confiscated all the material. But this did not deter the people like Giani Kartar Singh from serving the Jatha. They cooked meals at homes and their providing timely food to the Jatha by them enabled it to march forward. Hundreds of people followed it with cheers on their lips for miles on its leaving Chak No. 204. All Shahidi Jathas moved according to a well laid out plan. At the head of each Jatha there would be placed a Bir of Siri Guru Granth Sahib and there was *Kirtan* and religious discourse at the halting places. The Deputy Commissioners retaliated on seeing the enthusiasm with which the Shahidi Jatha that had passed through Chak No. 204 was welcomed by people around that *Chak* under the guidance of Giani Kartar Singh. The Deputy Commissioner got a number of Akalis arrested and for a moment that weakened the Akali Dal beyond repair. All the same, a deputation of some devoted Akali workers was sent to Amritsar by the people around Chak 204 under the leadership of Bhai Niranjana Singh of Kandowali, Maghar Singh of Chak No. 232, who was then a member of S.G.P.C. from Lyallpur district also joined this deputation.⁴ They were advised by the S.G.P.C. leadership to call a general meeting of the workers of the district. That was done and this brought Giani Kartar Singh to a political office. Bhai Mal Singh of Chak No. 338 Ghogera Branch, Tehsil Samundri was appointed Jathedar of the district and Giani Kartar Singh appointed general Secretary of the district Akali Jatha.⁵ It was indeed a great occasion in the

³ File No. ORL-103, Statement of Giani Kartar Singh, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 8, 13.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 8,14.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 15.

political career of Giani Kartar Singh. He had been entrusted with great responsibilities and was a source of great encouragement to him in carrying on with his political career. He of course fully realized that in the career he was choosing for himself, he would have to face innumerable difficulties in future. He accepted the General Secretaryship of the district Akali Jatha, with gusto, though he was still young and could well have shuddered at undertaking that difficult office under the then trying circumstances.

Giani Kartar Singh, who had taken the new assignment seriously, established his office at Gurdwara Singh Sabha Lyallpur. Giani Kartar Singh had chosen a good place for his office. Bhai Hari Singh, the Granthi of the Gurdwara was a learned man and had rendered monumental of service. He was of great help to the Giani Kartar Singh in mobilizing the support of the shopkeepers particularly of Gol Bazar and getting financial aid for the Akali Jatha. After some months when 13 Shahidi Jatha for Jaito, that included fifty Sikh volunteers from Ganda and United States of America, arrived at Lyallpur, Giani Kartar Singh and his Akali volunteers, organized in a well-knit team, gave them an enthusiastic welcome. Giani Kartar Singh was on the occasion deeply impressed by the sacrifice of a young Sikh woman. She was accompanying the Jatha along with her little son. She was indeed a remarkable lady. She subsequently gave Rs. 5,000/- as her donation to the Jatha. Her little son later rose to become a member of the Rajya Sabha in free India and was well known as Raghbir Singh Panj hazari.

Giani Kartar Singh was ever ready to face situations of all sorts and had mentally prepared himself for such eventualities. He knew what was in store for him. It could be a visit to Jail every now and then. It could well become a characteristic feature of his future life. Giani Kartar Singh was far from wrong in feeling that way. After the departure of the 13th Shahidi Jatha, warrants of arrest were issued against him and when Giani Kartar Singh came to know of it, he went underground. It was with some difficulty that the police managed to arrest him at Narmal Bangala. He was made to sit in a tonga. While he was being

taken to Lyallpur Jail, he shouted to people about his arrest and asked them to make all arrangement to welcome the Jatha at Lyallpur. His exhortations proved effective. The Jatha was given an enthusiastic welcome after Giani Kartar Singh was put in judicial lock up at Lyallpur.

It was Giani Kartar Singh's first experience of life to be lodged in jail, but he endured it with patience. Many Akali workers came to see him in jail. A case of anti-Government activities was registered against him after a few hearings. Giani Kartar Singh was sentenced to six months imprisonment and was removed to notorious Cambelpur Jail. There, he had a fruitful opportunity of coming in close contact with Jathedar Kesar Singh, President of the Akali Jatha, Lyallpur district, Sant Hazoor Singh Namdhari of Bhani Sahib and Baba Naraina Singh of Raipur Gujjarnwala. They infused real Sikh spirit in him and enriched his knowledge of Sikh religion and theology. While in jail, Giani Kartar Singh read *Tarikh-i-Hindi* written by Bhai Parmanand. It was a publication which preached revolution and had been declared a proscribed book by the Government of India. He delivered twenty lectures on history of the freedom movement in India to the Sikh prisoners and others and aimed at widening their outlook.⁶ The writings of Bhai Parmanand had a profound effect the young Giani Kartar Singh. Throughout his long political career, he continued seeking solution of the Punjab problems in their all India context.

By the beginning of 1924, Government had started giving second thought to the Sikh problem. The Army authorities were seriously perturbed by the sympathy for the Akali in the services. In March, 1924, General Sir William Birdwood opened negotiations with the Akali leaders, many of whom were also tired of their long struggle against the Government. After some none too serious negotiations, the Government allowed the Sikhs to perform Akhand Path ceremony at Jaito. Earlier a draft of a 'New Gurdwara Bill' was sent to the Akali leaders imprisoned in Lahore Fort. Ultimately, this Bill was passed into a law in 1925. The implementation of this law split the Akali party into two groups. One of

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16.

them came to be looked upon as anti-government and the other as pro-government. Giani Kartar Singh who favored the stand of Baba Kharak Singh, and Master Tara Singh did not like the attitude of the Pro-Government leaders of the Akali Dal. In the meantime, he was released from the jail as he had completed the six months in prison by then.

The Act provided for the elected bodies to replace the Mahants. The Central body, S.G.P.C., was to consist of 155 members who were to be elected, 12 nominations to be made by the Sikh States, 14 to be co-opted and 5 to represent the four Chief Shrines of the faith.⁷

By the time, the S.G.P.C. so envisaged came into existence; Giani Kartar Singh was prominent enough to become a member of this body. He was elected from the Dijkot constituency of Lyallpur district. During the election, 50 members of the group of Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh and 70 of the Akali party were elected. Both the Government and the Akali were generally satisfied after sometime. All the Akali prisoners were released from the Lahore fort. The released leaders, however, did not include the most popular leader among them. He had passed into the unknown lands. Jathedar Teja Singh Samundri had died in the Lahore fort after a long illness before the release of the Akali prisoners had been ordered.

Giani Kartar Singh who had attained Punjab wide fame due to his active participation in the Akali Movement after his election to membership of S.G.P.C. often visited Amritsar and to other important places. By now, his outlook was wide and his influence great. As before, he wanted to see the Akali party as a well-knit united organization. He was extremely much pained at the internal dissensions, specially, the rivalry that raged furiously between the blind scholar Giani Sher Singh and the dominant political leader Master Tara Singh. This dissension was harming the Sikh political interest and was helping the other communists though in an indirect way. Giani Kartar Singh decided to create

⁷ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 205.

unity and bring compromise among these two prominent Sikh leaders.⁸ He was soon provided with an opportunity to do so. He fell ill at Amritsar and both Giani Sher Singh who was member of the Executive Committee and Master Tara Singh who was President of the S.G.P.C. came to enquire about his health. Giani Kartar Singh made the proposal and requested them to patch up in the interest of the Panth and also in the interest of the Akali Dal. Both of them agreed to Giani Kartar Singh's proposal in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Then, on the initiative of Giani Kartar Singh both visited each other's houses, this unity, proved lasting. It continued till the death of Giani Sher Singh. After his recovery from illness, Giani Kartar Singh became the chief Lieutenant of Master Tara Singh. He was always on the Master's Side in organizing the Sikh masses under the banner of Akali Dal. He was motivated with an earnest desire to make the Akali Dal movement a part of an all India freedom struggle. He created a cell around himself for studying the problem of Sikh and devise means by which they could be solved in the context of the situation prevailing in India as a whole.

Giani Kartar Singh had a rural background and like rural persons he was ready to make sacrifices. In those days a member of the Akali party could also be member of the Indian National Congress and in early 1920 he was chosen for Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement of 1922-23. He continued his membership of the Congress even after Chauri Chaura. In 1927, he took an important part in a protest meeting against Simon Commission at Lahore. This meeting was addressed by Maulana Abdul Qadir Kamri and Dr. Mohammed Alam, Then the President of the Punjab Congress Committee. Giani Kartar Singh also participated in the historic procession at Lahore in which Lala Lajpat Rai was severely wounded by a Lathi-blows.

Giani Kartar Singh did not allow his interest in the Indian National Congress to forget that he was primarily an Akali committed to safe-guard the Sikh interests. He got a memorandum prepared to be presented to the Simon

⁸ File No. ORL-103, Statement of Giani Kartar Singh, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 20.

Commission demanding 30% representation in the proposed Legislation Assembly of the Punjab. He further helped Master Tara Singh to make the Akali Dal side with the Indian National Congress in the controversial issue of the separate electorate.

In February, 1928 the Indian National Congress appointed a committee to prepare the draft constitution and called a conference of the members of all the important parties to consider and determine the principles of an agreed constitution for India. The conference was held at Bombay. Giani Kartar Singh represented the Sikhs in this conference together with Mangal Singh Gill and Jaswant Singh Danewalia. Giani Kartar Singh also attended a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Calcutta and asked for the reservation of some general seats for the Sikhs. Moti Lal Nehru agreed to the proposed of Giani Kartar Singh.

In 1930 Giani Kartar Singh took part in the civil disobedience movement and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. He was sent to Multan Jail where he was given 'C' class in the beginning but later on as recognition of his place in Punjab politics offered a better class. Soon after he got this new class, however, he was transferred to Gujarat Jail where he chanced to meet the leaders enjoying all India fame. Among the leaders of stature that he now met were Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlu, Raizada Hans Raj of Jalandher, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Ansari. Future political set up for India was often discussed in jail. One day when Giani Kartar Singh spoke for 45 minutes in favor of the proportional representation, Dr. Ansari patted him on the back. Dr. Ansari said in all sincerity though in a somewhat humorous vein to Giani Kartar Singh: "You talk so intelligently and with such a great confidence."⁹

When he was out of Gujrat jail after serving his full term of imprisonment, Giani Kartar Singh began enjoying great reputation both in the Sikh and the

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 22.

Congress circles. He, in fact, now began to be regarded as the brain of the Akali Party.

Giani Kartar Singh's simplicity, rough dress and selfless attitude had by them made him a leader as much of the Sikh masses as of the youth of the Punjab. His status in the political arena of Punjab was by now unique, partly that was because his outlook had widened much more than that of many of his Akali colleagues. He was by now fully prepared to play a great role in the freedom struggle of the country as a whole. He considered Sikh problems as a part of all India problems. He studied the constitutional development taking place in the country very carefully. His approach and suggestions came to be generally appreciated and given due weightage.

Showing Concern for the Future of Sikhs

By 1930 Giani Kartar Singh had attained an important place in Sikh politics. Along with Mangal Singh, he had expressed and represented Sikh ideas on the Nehru report. He had participated in Civil Disobedience Movement started by Mahatma Gandhi. Later on when a call was given by Master Tara Singh for an all-party conference that was held at Lahore on 14th April, 1930, Giani Kartar Singh participated in it as a representative of Shiromani Akali Dal. A war council consisting of Maulana Abdul Qadir and Master Tara Singh along with others was constituted and Shiromani Akali Dal offered 5000 volunteers to Mahatma Gandhi. Many important leaders of the Sikh religion anticipated satyagraha and were sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Among them were Master Tara Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. Giani Kartar Singh was also among such revered leaders.

The first-round table conference was held at London and deliberated from 12th November, 1930 to 19th January, 1931. The Indian National Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal boycotted it. For this conference, the Indian Government nominated Tara Singh of the Punjab High Court (not to be confused with Master Tara Singh) to represent the Sikh cause. Though a Non-Akali, he explained the

position of the Sikhs in a manner which was quite satisfactory “Sir Macdonald the Prime Minister of England, outlined the Simon Commission Scheme for ‘Federal India.’ The question of communal representation was the biggest hurdle in solution of the constitutional problems. The Sikh delegates agreed to joint electorates with the reservation of seats for minorities but he strongly opposed communal majorities based on separate electorates.”¹⁰

By the end of 1930, the British had realized that without conciliating the Congress, whose influence had proved to be all pervading, “no settlement was possible.” *The Times* correspondent had warned- “No Indian delegation without Gandhi, the two Nehrus, Malviya or Patel could possibly be looked on as representative.”¹¹

On 26th of January, 1931, Gandhi Ji and other members of the working committee of the congress were let out of prison. Along with them, the Akali volunteers including Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were also released from the notorious Gujrat Jail in Punjab. Mahatma Gandhi met Lord Irwin and a pact was signed between the two on March 5, 1931. Mahatma Gandhi agreed to attend the second Round Table Conference and went to London to do that as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress.

The Shiromani Akali Dal also accepted the basic principles of Gandhi Irwin pact and announced that Master Tara Singh would attend the second-round table conference in London as the representative of the Sikhs. But his main political rival Giani Sher Singh opposed his nomination tooth and nail. The Government of India took advantage of the bickering among the Sikhs. Instead of Master Tara Singh, it nominated Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh to do so. They were both looked upon as pro-British but no Sikh came forward to oppose them from the other side. That was in sharp contrast to the Muslims. They had opposed the inclusion of Dr. Ansari and he was dropped.

¹⁰ Simon Commission Report; Indian Statutory Commission Report II, p. 71.

¹¹ Pattabhi, Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Padma Publications, Bombay, 1947, pp. 687-91.

Maharaja Patiala approached Sikh leaders including Giani Sher Singh and leaders of Khalsa Diwan to sponsor his name as representatives of the Sikhs. But Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were deadly against him. Before Mahatma Gandhi left for England, a deputation of the Sikh representations including Master Tara Singh, Sir Jogindra Singh, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Ujjal Singh, Mangal Singh, Sampuran Singh and Giani Kartar Singh met Gandhi ji. They did that on 20th March 1931 and demanded that either communal representation should be discarded outright or the Sikhs given 30% representation in Punjab. Mahatma Gandhi assured them of his best consideration. The deputation placed a charter of demands of the Sikhs to Gandhi which included 17 main demands of the Sikhs; Giani Kartar Singh played a prominent part in preparing this memorandum. The memorandum spelt out the following demands:

1. No communal representation for any community.
2. The Sikhs be given 30% representation in the Punjab legislature council and Government Services.
3. The Sikhs be given at least one-third (1/3rd) representation in the Punjab Cabinet and the Punjab Public Service Commission.
4. The Muslim majority districts in the Punjab are annexed to the North-Western Frontier province and in the remaining Punjab joint electorate system without any special representation is implemented.
5. In case an acceptable solution was not found the Punjab Government is put under the Central Control.
6. Punjabi in Gurmukhi script should be accepted as the official language in Punjab.
7. Sikhs be given 5% representation in the Central Assembly.
8. The Central Cabinet to include at least one Sikh Minister.
9. Sikhs get representation in war council whenever it would be constituted.
10. Sikhs be given special representation in the Indian Army.
11. Sikhs also to get representation in Central Public Service Commission.
12. All the residuary power of the State to stay with the Centre.

13. The Central Government to have special powers to safeguard the interest of the minorities.
14. Sikhs be accepted as a special minority community in the other provinces also.
15. The provincial and Central Government to function on secular lines.
16. Special arrangements for teaching Gurmukhi should be made.
17. The constitution to be never amended without the consent of the Sikhs.¹²

In April 1931, the annual conference of Central Sikh league was held at Lahore under the chairmanship of Master Tara Singh and was attended by important Sikh representatives and was attended by the important Sikh representatives and Congress leaders. On 23rd of May, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi declared: "I am ready to accept the demands of the Muslims but I cannot overlook the interests of the Sikhs."¹³

The second-round table conference continued its proceedings from 17th of September, 1931 to 1st December, 1931. "The Sikh delegates to the Round Table Conference suggested a territorial rearrangement which would take away from the Punjab the Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions (excluding Montgomery and Lyallpur districts)."¹⁴

They also emphasized that "unless the communal question which in the Punjab means the Muslim Sikh question is settled, it is not possible for the Sikhs to commit themselves to a federal scheme in which the Punjab was to be an autonomous province."¹⁵ They demanded for the Sikhs 30% representation in the Punjab and 5% at the Centre, which implied at least one Sikh member in the Central Cabinet.

¹² *The Tribune*, Lahore, 27 March, 1931.

¹³ *The Akali Te Pardesi*, Lahore, 25 May, 1931.

¹⁴ Memorandum of S. Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh Indian Round Table Conference, Govt. of Indian publication 1932, Vol. III, p. 1400.

¹⁵ Second Round Table Conference, Minorities Committee, Vol. I, p. 89.

In the absence of the agreement among the Indian delegates and especially due to the adamant attitude of the Muslim delegates on communal issues the second round table conference ended as a dismal failure. The result was that Sir Ramsay Macdonald assumed the right to adjudicate on joint versus separate electorates and proportions of communal representations in the various legislative assemblies to be set up under the proposed Act. Mahatma Gandhi who had a soft corner for Akali leaders said in appreciation of the Akalis "Had I been accompanied by friends and advisers like Master Tara Singh I would not have failed in finding some amicable solution of the communal Tangle."¹⁶ Gandhi Ji could have as well included the name of Giani Kartar Singh in his statement.

Sir Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, gave his famous or better infamous communal award on 17th of August, 1932. As the Sikhs had already expected such a decision, they organized an all party's conference on 24th of July, 1932 at the mausoleum of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. About 500 representatives attended this conference. They included Sant Singh, M.L.A., Ujjal Singh, Sampuran Singh, Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh, Giani Sher Singh, Amar Singh Sher-i-Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh and many others. Giani Kartar Singh played a leading part in the organization of this convention.¹⁷ This convention rejected the communal award outright and an action committee of 17 members including Master Tata Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Giani Sher Singh, and Sunder Singh Majithia was formed. While the Sikh leaders were thus busy, the Governor of Punjab went on leave and Sir Sikander Hayat Khan took over as the acting Governor of Punjab for a period of four months. To gain popularity among all the communities of Punjab and thus to impress the British Government, he called four representative of the Sikhs- Ujjal Singh, Sampuran Singh, Giani Sher Singh and Giani Kartar Singh- to Simla on 4th of August, 1932.

¹⁶ Durlab Singh, *The Valiant Fighter: a biographical study of Master Tara Singh*, Hero Publications, Lahore, 1942, p. 118.

¹⁷ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, 2nd Edition, Sikh University Centre, Belgium, 2000, p. 124.

He assured the Sikh leaders that by putting pressure on Muslim leader, he would be able to arrive at a Sikh-Muslim compromise that would be favorable to the Sikhs. As a shrewd politician he had invited a British Press Correspondent to his meetings with the Sikhs. On the suggestion of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the reporter sent a telegram to the British newspapers that the Sikhs had accepted the Muslim majority in the Punjab Legislature. This created a favorable atmosphere for the Muslims in England but the Sikh leaders felt cheated as they had never accepted such a suggestion.

The award of Ramsay Macdonald, it would be worth remembering, was based on a dangerous theory. The Award was based on the British theory that India was not a Nation but a Country of special, religious and cultural groups, castes and interests.¹⁸ This was a dangerous theory and the Sikhs under the leadership of Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh opposed the communal award vehemently.

The Award gave recognition to the following minorities.

- (1) Mohammadans
- (2) Depressed classes
- (3) Backward Classes
- (4) Indian Christians
- (5) Anglo Indians
- (6) Europeans
- (7) Commercial and Industrial classes
- (8) Land holders
- (9) Lahore
- (10) Universities and
- (11) Sikhs.

A fixed number of seats were allocated to each minority and separate electorates were assigned to each. The federal legislature was to consist of 250

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

seats where in the Muslims were allotted 82 seats or 30%. They received the share which they were demanding but the Sikhs were given only six seats in the Federal Legislature Assembly and 4 out of 150 in the council of states.¹⁹

In Punjab the Muslim population was 57% of the total but they were given 49% seats i.e. 84 seats out of the total of 175; the Hindu were 27% of the population and were allotted 27% seats i.e. 42 seats, 8 for the scheduled castes, and the Sikhs who constituted 13% of the total population each were given 18% i.e. 31 seats as against their demand of 30% seats.

The award was a bitter blows to the Sikhs. Sampuran Singh and Ujjal Singh issued a joint statement strongly criticizing the award and as a protest withdrew from the conference.²⁰ A meeting of the council of action was held to take stock of the situation. A resolution was passed to condemn the communal award and to organize a *Guru Khalsa Darbar* to start agitation against the award. A political conference of the Sikhs was arranged on 15th October, 1932 under the chairmanship of Harnam Singh. Giani Kartar Singh spearheaded the opposition to the communal award with the active support of Bhagat Jaswant Singh, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Udham Singh Nagoke and Sunder Singh Majithia. Soon however, the differences cropped up among the important Sikh leaders like Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh and the movement against the communal award was slackened. The Sikhs could not get it amended in any way though all the sections of the community were united against the award. That was of course for no fault of Giani Kartar Singh.

The communal award was greatly resented by the Hindu and Sikh leaders. Muslim nationalist leaders like Maulana Shaukat Ali and Abdul Kalam Azad initiated the move to bring about an agreement among the communities which would replace McDonald award by some agreed arrangement. An all-party Muslim conference was called at Lucknow on October 16, 1932. It left the

¹⁹ Tara Chand, *History of the freedom Movement in India*, Vol. IV, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1961, pp. 182-183.

²⁰ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 232.

question of joint electorate to the committee appointed to negotiate with the other communities.²¹ It was, thereby, only being discreet. The Lucknow conference committee and a number of Hindus and Sikh leaders led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya held preliminary consultations at Allahabad on November 1, 1932 and decided to call a unity conference of all the communities at Allahabad. In the first session of the conference held on November 3, a committee was appointed to thrash out the proposal for a settlement.

The conference was attended by 63 Hindus, 11 Sikhs, 39 Muslims and 8 Indian Christians. Among the Sikh leaders who attended the Unity Conference at Allahabad were Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Ujjal Singh, Gopal Singh Quami, Baba Gurdit Singh, Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, who was the main spirit behind this unity effort, was trying his best to find an amicable solution acceptable to the main communities and as an alternative to the communal award. All those Congress leaders including Abdul Majid Sindhi and Maulana Shaukat Ali, who were out of jail attended the conference. Giani Kartar Singh, though still a junior Akali leader seriously tried to settle Muslim-Sikh question in the Punjab and in this connection had several meetings with Maulana Zaffar Ali, editor of the *Daily Zamindar* Lahore and Asaf Ali of Delhi. Some important decisions were taken at the conference with Giani Kartar Singh playing an active role in the proceedings. Gopal Singh Quami and Jathedar Teja Singh Chuharkana, the pro-congress Sikh leaders who also give moral support to the Giani's effort. They, however, did not agree to walk out in case of a decision unfavorable to the Sikhs.

In the communal Award the Muslims had been given 52% representation in the Punjab Legislation Assembly but at Allahabad it was decided to give 51% weight age to the Muslims and 20% representation to the Sikhs. It was also decided that in case 3/4th of the Hindu and Sikh members expressed that a particular law was prejudicial to their interests it was not to be passed by the legislature. About the percentage of different communities in the army, the

²¹ Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. IV, p. 194.

representation was given to be purely on the basis of merit and historical background, The Central Assembly, it was agreed, would consist of 300 members with the Sikhs having 14 members in it. The Central Cabinet would include at least one Sikh member. In regard to the system of elections it was decided that they would take place through joint electorate. It is a pity that the Muslim leaders like Fazal-i-Husain disapproved of the proposals of the committees of the Unity Conference, Allahabad. The British Government which always believed in divide and rule policy did not appreciate the efforts of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya to solve the national problems on a secular basis. He had persuaded the nationalist Muslim leaders to accept the joint electorate but Sir Samuel Hoare made a sudden announcement in which he declared that His Majesty's Government had decided to reserve for the Muslim 33 1/3 share in the central legislature. This was slightly in excess of what was mutually agreed upon by the Indian leaders then deliberating at Allahabad. But the concession was enough to wean the Muslims away from the Unity Conference, which had broken up unnecessarily like several previous conferences.²² The suggestion of joint electorates was also rejected outright by and the Muslim Communalists were further alienated from the agreed solution by the British agreeing to separate Sind from the Bombay Province.

In the meantime, Mohammad Ali Jinnah came back from England and met the important leaders of Indian National Congress and of Hindu Mahasabha to find out an amicable solution of the Hindu Muslim angle. He offered a formula to Dr. Rajinder Prasad, the then President of the Congress, under which the Muslims could accept joint electorate if they were assured of proper representation both in the legislatures and the services but no satisfactory solution could be worked out. Speaking at the Delhi College, Jinnah declared, "If I can achieve this unity (Hindu Muslim) believe me, half the battle of country's freedom is won... so long as the Hindus and Muslims are not united, let me tell

²² Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 1994, p. 174.

you, there is no hope, for India and we shall both remain slaves of the foreign domination.”²³

Sir Fazal-i-Husain, who was a member of the Viceroy's executive council also entered politics and tried to solve Hindu-Muslim question in the Punjab. He suggestion to Sir Gokal Chand Narang and Sir Jogindra Singh that if the Muslims were given a majority in the Punjab as laid down in the Communal Award, he would compromise on the question of separate electorates. On the instigation of the Governor of Punjab, Sir Gokal Chand Narang did not accept the proposal of Sir Fazal-i-Husain.

In these developments, Giani Kartar Singh had been playing a very prominent role. He actively participated in Allahabad Unity Conference with other Sikh Leaders. He specially emphasized the special position of the Sikhs in the army. He demanded 20% Sikh representation in the future army of free India and cited examples from Sikh history that the Sikhs belonged to a martial race. Giani Kartar Singh did that inspite of vociferous opposition to what he said. Dr. Sayyid Mohammad, Dr. P.C. Ghosh and Sh. Hirdei Nath Kunzru opposed the notion of martial and non-martial races. Dr. P.C. Ghosh expressed views that all those people who helped the British in 1857 rebellion were declared martial and all those who opposed them were denied entry into the defense services. Hirdei Nath Kunzru stated that before Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs did not have any military training. Giani Kartar Singh emphasized that the sacrifices of the Sikhs had given ample proof of their bravery and valiant fighting spirit. Ultimately it was decided that merit and the other things were being equal, martial races and especially Sikhs be given special preference in the defense services.

The third Round Table Conference was called in London and held its meetings between November 17th and December 24, 1932 only 46 Indians were invited to this conference. In spite of strong opposition from the Shiromani Akali

²³ Matlubul Hassan Syed, *Muhammad Ali Jinnah: A Political Study*, Anmol Publications, Delhi, 1986, p. 231.

Dal, Zora Singh of Ferozepur attended this conference. He pleaded for weight age for the Sikhs in services, in the federal legislature and Sikh representation in Sindh. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who attended the conference emphasized that, "Unless he and his colleagues are able to convince, the Congressmen, the chances of making a wide appeal to the country is very limited."²⁴

The political situation for the Sikhs from the year 1933 to 1937 was very critical. They were quite distressed with the indecisive and vacillating policy of the Congress leadership on the question of communal award and separate electorate. The internal bickering among the Sikhs was adding to their already great difficulties. At that time, Giani Kartar Singh tried his best to unite the two factions of the Akalis led by Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh so as to work together for a solution favorable to the Sikh community. A new organization, under the name of 'Central Akali Dal' was organized under the leadership of Baba Kharak Singh. Giani Kartar Singh organized his own 'Khalsa Darbar'.²⁵ At the time of Gurudwara elections, all these groups accepted Baba Kharak Singh and Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna as mediators. Sikh Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee elections were fought under a joint front. Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh did not fight this election but later on the former was co-opted to the committee, along with Master Tara Singh and Mangal Singh.²⁶

In 1934-35, the dispute of Gurudwara Shaheed Ganj and the question of Gurudwara Kot Than Singh strained the relations of Sikhs and Mohammadans beyond repair. During the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Shaheed Ganj Gurudwara was constructed to commemorate the memory of all those Sikh martyrs, especially women, who were executed there on the order of Mir Mannu. In July 1935, the Muslims claimed it as an old mosque and there was great

²⁴ H.N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register 1932*, Vol. II, Gian Publishing Centre, New Delhi, p. 246.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 257.

²⁶ *The Akali Patrika*, Lahore, 7 April, 1936.

tension and even bloodshed. An action committee consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Amar Singh Sher-i-Punjab, Harnam Singh, Advocate and a few others represented the Sikh case to the masses and fought the case in the court. Ultimately, the Sikhs won the case. All these events, including ban on wearing Kirpan, further accentuated the doubts of the Sikhs of the Muslims intention and the bonafide of the British Govt. They were bitter, possibly also because they found themselves helpless.

In 1936, elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly were held. The Sikhs were then divided into factions that included among others, Khalsa National Party led by Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and Sir Jogindera Singh sided with unionists. In the beginning the Shiromani Akali Dal decided to fight these elections, single handed, but due to efforts of leaders like Giani Kartar Singh the Khalsa Darbar and the Shiromani Akali Dal decided to fight the election jointly. On 3rd August, 1936, an all-party Sikh conference was called at Amritsar and it was decided that elections should be fought in collaboration with the Indian National Congress. Ultimately on 14th November, 1936 Akali Dal passed a resolution in support of this suggestion on the initiative of Giani Kartar Singh.²⁷ Negotiations were started with the Congress and a compromise reached. According to this compromise Giani Kartar Singh suggested that Master Tara Singh be elected as delegate to the All India Congress Committee and the Akalis be given Congress tickets. The suggestions were accepted, the Akali leaders who were given congress ticket included Giani Kartar Singh, Baldev Singh, Swaran Singh, Partap Singh Kairon and Kapur Singh. Giani Kartar Singh contested the election from the Samundari Jasharanwala constituency of Lyallpur district and “elected with a thumping majority.”²⁸ The Akali Dal interestingly issued its own election manifesto which was prepared mainly by Giani Kartar Singh. “It aimed at the opposition of communal representation and exhorted the Sikhs to fight for freedom in collaboration with nationalist parties

²⁷ *The Akali Patrika*, Lahore, 18 November, 1936.

²⁸ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, 2nd Edition, p. 148.

like Indian National Congress. Indianization of the army and the safeguard of special Sikh rights were specially stressed upon by Giani Kartar Singh.”²⁹

After the elections, the compact group of the Akalis under the joint leadership of Giani Kartar Singh and Sampuran Singh merged itself in the Congress Legislative party to form a strong opposition to the then Unionist Party.

On 17th February, 1937, the Governor of the Punjab invited the leader of the Unionist Party, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan to form the Punjab ministry. Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, the leader of the Khalsa National Party was taken as a minister in Sir Sikander Hayat’s Unionist ministry. Giani Kartar Singh along with Partap Singh Kairon took special delight in criticizing Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. On 14th March, 1937, Giani Kartar Singh led a big protest march of the thousands of peasants against Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. Giani Kartar Singh who was heading the procession said, “Acceptance of the communal Award is a great treachery to the Sikh Panth.”³⁰ Giani Kartar Singh always teased Sir Sunder Singh Majithia by putting awkward questions to him in the legislative council. The idea was to ruffle Sir Sunder Singh but the latter was old and could not be easily upset. Giani Kartar Singh moved a resolution in the Assembly requesting the Government to allow the use of ‘Jhatka’ meet in police lines, Railway Stations and government hostels. By doing this, he was able to put Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and his fellows in a difficult position. Their opposition could harm and diminish their popularity among the Hindus and the Sikhs and ultimately when the resolution was put to vote, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia remained out of the house and thus lowered his prestige. Giani Kartar Singh very cleverly tried to build Maharaja of Patiala as a counterpoise to Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. In a move designed to give importance to the Maharaja of Patiala, Giani Kartar Singh said, “Maharaja Patiala is the real spokesman of the Sikh cause visa-vis the Muslim community.”³¹ Under the circumstance, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia,

²⁹ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 20 June, 1936.

³⁰ *The Akali Patrika*, Lahore, 16 March, 1937.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Revenue Minister became very vindictive towards Giani Kartar Singh. On the basis of a dispute concerning Nankana Sahib Trust, he got a warrant of arrest issued against Giani Kartar Singh. He also got issued the attachment of Giani Kartar Singh's property. Giani Kartar Singh evaded arrest till the death of Sir Sunder Singh in 1941.

In 1939, new elections to the S.G.P.C. were held. The results of these elections were declared in February, 1939. Giani Kartar Singh was once again elected a member of its Executive Committee. The Akali Dal organized a volunteer force named, 'Akali Regiment.' Master Tara Singh was nomination as its first commander and Giani Kartar Singh as its first Secretary.³² He took great pains to bring rural youth in the Akali Regiment. But the whole atmosphere in the country changed when the Second World War began on 3rd September, 1939. On the 1st October, 1939, a big Sikh conference was held at Amritsar. Master Tara Singh presided over the conference. "It was resolved in this conference that the Sikhs under the leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal would help the Government of India in its war efforts provided the Sikhs were given more representation in the army, a Sikh member added to the Viceroy's executive council and the Sikhs given proper representation in the civil services."³³ Some British army officers like Major Short Bull tried to enlist support of the Sikh leaders and they secretly met leaders like Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh. In the last week of September, the Viceroy of India called representatives of the important political parties including National Congress and Muslim League. When no Sikh representative was called, Giani Kartar Singh met Subash Chander Bose, the then Congress President. Master Tara Singh joined Giani Kartar Singh in meeting the Congress President.

In January, 1944, Khalsa Defense of India League under the chairmanship of Maharaja Patiala was organized to set up recruitment.³⁴ Jaswant Singh

³² *The Tribune*, Lahore, 31 July, 1936.

³³ *The Akali Patrika*, Lahore, 2 October, 1940.

³⁴ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 240.

Danewalia, Kartar Singh Diwana, Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh took special interest in bringing Maharaja Patiala in the forefront. In their heart of hearts, the Akali leaders were pro-congress but they could not sacrifice the interest of their community. They wanted to get an assurance about the leading position of the Sikhs in Army of free India. Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke were specially sent to Allahabad to meet the Congress leaders. The meeting of the Congress working committee was going on and Mahatma Gandhi was also present. Giani Kartar Singh told Gandhi Ji that Sikhs had then 20% representation in the Indian Army but if they were opposed the Sikh recruitment now taking place on a large scale, their proportion will naturally decrease. Giani Kartar Singh enquired whether the Congress Government of free India would restore the ratio or not . Mahatma Gandhi was elusive and gave a reply which was most unsatisfactory. His reply was "In my opinion the free India will not keep armed forces, so question of my assurance does not arise."

Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke were greatly disappointed with the attitude of the Congress leaders. After coming back, they called a meeting of the Sikh leaders and exhorted the Sikhs to enlist the maximum Sikh recruits in the Indian Army. It was felt that the non-participation in the war efforts would decrease the percentage of the Sikhs in the army which would not only be detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs but also to the national interests. The natural consequence of co-operation in the war efforts was the pact, then known as the Sikandar-Baldev Singh pact. Though the Viceroy's effort to enlist co-operation of the Indian political parties in the execution of the war failed, the loss, the British rightly thought, was not as great. The Sikhs came forward to join the army in large number. Soon the new developments took place on the Indian political scene necessitating new orientation in the Sikh politics. The Muslim League passed what is called the Pakistan Resolution in March 1940 and that put the Sikhs in very critical position. Raja Ji's offer, made soon after of partition of India to appeased the Muslims, but it added fuel to the fire and the Sikhs became very restive. At such a critical time, Giani Kartar Singh stepped into it to play an important role. He

exhorted the Sikhs to act independently of both the Congress and the Muslims league. The decision to help the government in its war efforts and organization of the Khalsa Defense League was a major step in this connection. Lord Linlithgow, the viceroy of India also gave second thought to the Sikh demands and in July 1941, enlarged his Executive Council from seven to twelve numbers of whom eight were Indians. Sir Jogindra Singh was invited to take over the education portfolio in the Executive Council and the two Sikh dignitaries, the Maharaja of Patiala and Naurihal Singh Mann were nominated to the Defense council. Meanwhile the Sikh political scene suffered a change. Sir Sunder Singh Majithia died in 1940 and there was no Sikh leader to whom Sikh masses could look up to as an alternative to the Akali leadership. The defeat of his son, Kirpal Singh, at the hands of Gurbaksh Singh of Gurdaspur was the last nail in the coffin of the Unionist influence among the Sikhs. It was under such atmosphere that Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader, met the Governor at Khalsa College, Amritsar in March, 1941.³⁵ Major Short played an important role in bringing Akalis nearer to each other. Dasondha Singh who had succeeded Sir Sunder Singh Majithia in the Punjab Cabinet was a very weak parson. Baldev Singh, a rich industrialist from Ambala, took advantage of the situation. He met Giani Kartar Singh and Giani Sher Singh and somehow managed to get Sikander Baldev Singh pact signed on 5th June, 1942 and himself became the Development Minister, the main items of the Sikander-Baldev Singh pact were:-

1. Permission to use Jhatka in Government hostels and police lines.
2. Teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script in Government Primary and High schools.
3. Religious freedom to the Sikhs, especially for wearing of Kirpan by the Sikhs.

³⁵ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, U.C. Kapur and Sons, Delhi, 1970, pp. 63-64.

4. Special representation of the Sikhs in services both in Punjab and at the Centre. Sikhs were to be given 20% representation in services both in Punjab and at the Centre.³⁶

The Sikander-Baldev Singh pact and the cooperation of the Akali party with the Unionist Party were stoutly opposed by the Congress Party and the Hindu circles throughout the country. The Hindu Press even used abusive language in its condemnation of this pact. Giani Kartar Singh and Giani Sher Singh strongly resented the hostile attitude of the Hindus towards the Sikhs. Under the circumstances, the Sikh frustration increased and their resentment against the Congress increased by leaps and bounds. "They observed that when Hindu Maha Sabha encouraged by Vir Savarkar joined Muslim League Ministries in Bengal and Sind, the Punjab Press was silent and now they should not have unnecessarily made the Sikhs the target of their antipathy and venom."³⁷ The Sikander-Baldev Pact gave independent position to the Akali Dal and the British Government recognized Akali Dal as one of the parties to the Committee in political discussions. The Sikhs were in quite a strong position when the Cripps Mission arrived in India on 26th September, 1943. When Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan died, this pact lost its limited significance and the Sikh leaders had to struggle with major political matters which would seriously affect their future. Giani Kartar Singh played an important part at this juncture. Among the other things, he got S.G.P.C. Act (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee) suitably amended in the Punjab Legislative Council in 1944.

The role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Punjabi politics between 1940 to 1944 would appear to be a case of *Volte face* by a 'nationalist' if not viewed in the light of a very big thing that had taken place in the Indian politics in March 1940. On the 24th of that month, the Muslim League at its annual session held at Lahore had formally adopted the Pakistan resolution. The operative part of that resolution ran as follows:-

³⁶ Udham Singh Nagoke, *Sikh Dharm and the Present Politics*, p. 40.

³⁷ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, p. 65.

“Resolved that it is the considered view of the session of All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz. that Geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute, Independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.”³⁸

There had been a great consternation among the Sikh circles on reading this resolution. The Khalsa National Party had passed a resolution in protest. The resolution of the Khalsa nationalist party registered its anger in the following words:

“It would be the height of audacity for anyone to imagine that the Sikh would tolerate for a single day the undiluted communal Raj of any Community in the Punjab which is not only their homeland but also their holy land.”³⁹

To the Sikh community in general, the league resolution had come as a violent shock. “Dismemberment of India and their homeland, the Punjab, forming part of a Sovereign theocratic Muslim State were proposals utterly unacceptable to them.” They had unanimously disapproved of the Muslim scheme of Pakistan.⁴⁰ The assurance of Lord Linlithgow, the Governor General, to Muslim League in his August, 1940 offer had added fuel to the fire and created a lot of resentment and frustration among the Sikhs. The Governor General had pronounced: “It goes without saying that they (The British Government) could not contemplate transfer for their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly

³⁸ Anil Chandra Banerjee, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. IV, A Mukherjee and Co. Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1961, p. 149.

³⁹ H.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 178.

unacceptable to large and powerful elements in India's National life nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such Governments."

With all this back-ground when Sir Stafford Cripps (Cripps Mission 1942) had arrived in India, on 23rd March, 1942, the Sikh leaders like Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh had become quite conscious of their responsibilities towards their community. That was natural Cripps seemed to have moved towards accepting the Muslim demands of Pakistan. His declaration did not include any assurance to the Sikhs though it was very important minority community concentrated mainly in Punjab. The Prime Minister of England was as callous to the Sikh future as Cripps. That was clear from his declaration made then. It ran as follows:-

"His Majesty's Government having considered the anxieties expressed in this country in India as to the fulfillment of promises had decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of the self-Government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any respect to its domestic and external affairs." It made no mention to the most dangerous provision in the Cripps Plan, from the point of view of the Sikhs. "The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the New Constitutional position to secede from the Union subsequently if it so desires."

To counteract this indirect acceptance of Pakistan proposed by the British Government, Master Tara Singh, Sir Jogindera Singh, Ujjal Singh, Baldev Singh had been chosen to represent the Sikh Community. An all-party Sikh conference had been convened at Delhi on March 26, 1942, to brief the representatives. The Shiromani Akali Dal submitted a memorandum which rejected the Cripps Mission's proposals out rightly. The main points of the petition were elaborated in the representation in the following words:-

Why should a province that fails to secure three fifth majority of its legislature in which a religious community enjoys statutory majority be allowed to hold a plebiscite given, the benefit of a bare majority. In fairness this right should have been conceded to communities who are in permanent minority in the legislature. Further, why could not the population of any area opposed to separation is given the right to record its verdict and to form an autonomous unit? We are sure, you know that the Punjab proper extended up to the banks of the Jhelum excluding Jhelum and Multan districts and the Trans-Jhelum area, was added by the conquests of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and retained by the British for the administrative convenience. It would be altogether unjust to allow extraneous Trans-Jhelum population which only accidentally came into the province to dominate the future of the Punjab proper.

We have given below the figures which abundantly prove our contention. From the boundary of Delhi to the banks of Ravi river the population was divided as follows:-

Muslim= 4,505,1000; Sikhs and other Non-Muslim= 7,064,600. To this may be added the population of the Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot which is about is 2,600,000 of this the Muslims constitute barely 20%. This reduces the ratio of Muslims population still further.

We do not wish to labor the point any further. We have lost all hope of receiving consideration. We shall resist however, by all possible means, separation of the Punjab from the all India Union. We shall never permit our motherland to be at the mercy of those who disown it. We strongly resent this instead of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of India, specific provision has been made for the separation of provinces and the constitution

of Pakistan and the cause of the Sikh community has been lamentably betrayed.⁴¹

On 8th April, 1942, another All Party Sikh conference had been held at Amritsar. It was attended by Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Harcharan Singh, Baba Labh Singh and Darshan Singh Pheruman. This conference had strongly condemned the provision for right of provinces to separate from the Indian Union as given in the Cripps plan. The conference had warned the Government that Sikhs would make supreme sacrifices to oppose the creation of Pakistan.⁴² All this was a prelude to the Azad Punjab Movement and Partition of the land of the Five Rivers. On 24th July, 1942 an All India Akali Conference was held at Wehla (Lyallpur district) Kalan and again on 26th September, Giani Kartar Singh organized a big Akali Conference at Lyallpur to decide about the further course of action to be adopted by the Sikhs though Cripps proposals were taken back by the Government on 11th April, 1942. The Sikh leader Giani Kartar Singh had realized about heir weak position of the Sikhs and seriously thought about their new line of action. The offer made by C. Rajagopalachari in 1944 to the Muslim League had caused deep perplexity among the Sikhs. His scheme completely ignored the Sikhs and the Sikhs had called a special convention representing all section of opinions to record their protest.

In the light of the development between 1940 and 1944, it is clear that Giani Kartar Singh was being driven to the course adopted by him by the action of Muslim League and its intentions to dominate the Punjab without caring for the future of the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh was a clear headed who was committed to safeguarding the interests of the Sikh Panth. He was without doubt one of the most selfless leaders among the Akalis.

⁴¹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, 2nd Edition, p. 78.

⁴² *The Tribune*, Lahore, April 1942.

Acting As the Brain Trust of the Sikhs

Giani Kartar Singh changed over to Azad Punjab Scheme as a solution of the Sikh problem. That was in 1943. It was a natural step. The history of the movement for Azad Punjab, however to which the Giani Kartar Singh was now a convert goes back much further than Giani Kartar Singh adopting it as the solution of the Sikh problem. For the first it was spelt out during the second Round Table Conference. Ujjal Singh, the Sikh representative presented a scheme for a territorial readjustment of the Punjab wherein he proposed that that Rawalpindi and Multan Divisions excepting the districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery should be separated from the Punjab and attached to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) which would make the communal proportions in the Punjab of 43.3% Muslims, 42.3% Hindus and 15.4% Sikhs.⁴³ The support to this idea of demarcating the existing boundary stronger among the Sikhs after the Muslim League had passed the Pakistan resolution. The Khalsa National Party of which Sir Sunder Singh Majithia was the leader, passed a resolution against the Muslim League's resolution of March 1940 with the emphasis that "it would be the height of audacity for anyone to imagine that the Sikhs would tolerate for a single day the undiluted communal raj of any community in the Punjab which is not only their motherland but also their holy land."⁴⁴ The idea got a further fillip after Cripps spelt out his proposal on coming to India on his mission in early 1942. The reaction to Cripps proposals which indirectly supported the creation of Pakistan at appropriate time among the Sikhs was crisp and strong. Master Tara Singh pressed the idea of partition of Punjab in his letter to Sir Stafford Cripps dated May 4, 1942. He said, "I thought I had convinced you at Delhi that you could give the Sikhs substantial protection by dividing one present Punjab into two parts and giving the right of non-accession to each part. Why the Non-Muslim majority of the central and eastern Punjab should be forced to go out of India against their wishes. If you can create

⁴³ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 231.

⁴⁴ H.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register 1940*, p. 357.

province separate from India for the domination of the Muslim, how can you refuse to separate a big area from the protection of the Sikhs from the rule of a single community.⁴⁵

Master Tara Singh again advocated the partition of Punjab into two provinces, one dominated by the Hindus and the Sikhs and the other by the Muslims, in a press statement on December 2, 1942.⁴⁶ The Akali demand for a Sikh State, he seems to have felt was the only way to counteract Pakistan demand. The proposed Sikh State was to consist of the territories of Central Punjab with Division of Lahore, Jalandher, Ambala and Multan Divisions and adding it to the area comprising of Sikh States and Malerkotla with certain hills in the North and North East.⁴⁷

Giani Kartar Singh, the brain behind the Akali party had propounded the Akali party's concept of the Sikh State declared, "If Pakistan is foisted upon the Sikhs with the help of British bayonets, we will tear it into shreds as Guru Gobind Singh tore up the Mughal Empire."⁴⁸ He sharply reached to C. Rajagopalacharia's formula to divide India on the communal lines to appease Muslim league when he explicitly stated: "Let us give up now the practice of looking up to Mr. Gandhi for the protection of our interest." According to Raja ji formula "the Muslim majority areas were to be given the right of self determination and they were not to be compelled to join the centre."⁴⁹ All this alarmed the Sikhs and the Shiromani Akali Dal adopted the Azad Punjab Scheme, as its official policy.⁵⁰ Giani Kartar Singh explained the details of the Azad Punjab Scheme to the public and the press and said that, "the Azad Punjab Scheme was a counter blast to Pakistan. He explained that in the Azad

⁴⁵ Copy of a letter of Master Tara Singh, Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, No. 1815.

⁴⁶ Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of Punjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Justice Harnam Singh, *The Idea of Sikh State*, 21 August, 1944.

⁴⁸ *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 21 August, 1944.

⁴⁹ S.D.I. Vol. II, p. 549.

⁵⁰ Master Tara Singh, *Congress Te Sikh*, (Punjabi), pp. 3-4.

Punjab the boundaries should be fixed after taking into consideration the population, property, land revenue and historical traditions of each of the communities.”⁵¹ If the new demarcations are implemented on the above principles then the Azad Punjab comprises of the whole Ambala division, Jalandhar, Lahore and Lyallpur of Lahore Division and of some portion of Montgomery and Multan districts. According to Giani Kartar Singh, “The proposed Azad Punjab was not to be in independent state but was to remain in the Indian Union.”⁵² In the Azad Punjab the Sikhs were not to dominate any part of the province but at the same time they were also not to be dominated by any other single community.

The proposal for Azad Punjab was staunchly opposed by the Muslim League, whose leaders were determined to grab the whole of Punjab but the Sikh leaders like Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh were pained to know that even the Hindus of the Punjab were its opponents. In spite of all this a manifesto for the establishment of Azad Punjab was issued by some intellectuals at a meeting of the Sikh representatives at Sikh National College, Lahore in 1943. On July 5, 1943 the Central Sikh League called a convention of the representatives of the Sikh parties. One hundred and forty three prominent leaders attended this meeting and an Action Committee consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Harnam Singh Advocate and Giani Kartar Singh was constituted to chalk out the further programme. A Sikh political conference held at Panja Sahib on August 14 and 15, 1943, further endorsed these decisions. Earlier Giani Kartar Singh had organized a special Akali Conference at Amritsar on May 13, 1944. While supporting the demand for Azad Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh declared in this conference: “Punjab is our home land and we shall never tolerate an upper hand of the Muslims in our holy land.”⁵³

⁵¹ H.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register 1943*, Vol. I, p. 298.

⁵² Welcome Address Azad Punjab Conference, Amritsar, 28 February, 1944.

⁵³ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 14 May, 1944.

The demand for Azad Punjab gathered momentum in the second half of 1944. In August an all party's Sikh conference was called at Teja Singh Samundari Hall, Amritsar. It was attended by 561 representatives of the various sections of the Sikh community. Giani Kartar Singh presented the resolution on Sikh State and it was endorsed by Giani Mohinder Singh. The Raja Ji formula was condemned. On September 13 an Akali Conference at Lyallpur decided to send a deputation of the Sikhs to England to oppose the inclusion of the Punjab in the proposed Pakistan.

The venue of Gandhi Jinnah meeting at Bombay was picked by some Sikh young men on September 24, 1944.⁵⁴ On October 2, 1944, Giani Kartar Singh lashed at the then policy of hobnobbing with the idea of Pakistan being followed by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress when he declared that "to get their rights protected the Sikhs will not hesitate to side with the British. The Sikhs are the sword arm of India and the Punjab is their homeland. No one can banish us from our own home."⁵⁵

Giani Kartar Singh's declaration and the Sikh demand began producing repercussions. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Tayakar also made new attempt to solve the communal issue. Unfortunately the Muslims refused to cooperate with the Sapru Committee. A memorandum of the Sikhs' stand was prepared by S. Ujjal Singh and a delegation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Sampuran Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail and Udham Singh Nagoke argued the Sikh case, before this committee.⁵⁶

Things moved fast after the end of Second World War in 1945. The Circumstances took a favorable turn for the future of India. Lord Wavel took over as Viceroy and released all the prominent political leaders. On June 25, 1945, he called twenty-one Indian representatives including Master Tara Singh to meet him. Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke accompanied the

⁵⁴ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 25 September, 1944.

⁵⁵ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 9 October, 1944.

⁵⁶ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 253.

Master to this meeting. The conference lasted till July 14. The British Government's proposal for the establishment of an interim Government representing Indian Political parties was considered. Though the Muslims were less than 25% of the Indian population, they were offered the same number of seats as the Hindus on the proposed interim cabinet. Maulana Abu-UI-Kalam Azad, the President of Congress stressed his right to nominate some Muslims as representatives on the proposed cabinet, but M.A. Jinnah the president of the Muslim League insisted on all Muslim members of the Government being the nominees of the League.

The Sikhs offered a penal of three names consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh and Partap Singh Kairon for inclusion in the new Viceroy's Council to be now called 'interim cabinet' but after the mediation of Mangal Singh, the Akali Dal and the Indian National Congress agreed on the name of Master Tara Singh. The conference was deadlocked due to Congress-League differences. On July 14, 1945, Lord Wavel reluctantly announced the failure of his efforts.

In the meantime, General elections were held in England on July 25, 1945. They were dully held and the results declared on July 26. The Labour Party having the independence of India as one of the issues in its election manifesto won the elections and its leader C.R. Attlee took over as Prime Minister of Great Britain.⁵⁷

That led to a new move by the Governor-General on August 1, 1945, Lord Wavel convened a conference of the Governors of the provinces who advised the desirability of holding fresh elections to the central Legislative Assembly and the provincial Legislatures. Both the Muslim League and the Congress also wanted general elections without delay and in pursuance of the general approval, the Viceroy of India and the Secretary of State in England

⁵⁷ Herbert Morrison, *Government and Parliament: A Survey from the Inside*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 222.

announced on August 21, 1945 that the elections would be held in the coming winter. The elections to the central legislature assembly were held in December, 1945 and two Akali representatives Sampuran Singh and Mangal Singh were elected to it.

By the beginning of 1922, Giani Kartar Singh was fully prepared to become an active political worker. He decided to enter Sikh politics as a selfless Akali volunteer. He decided to enter Sikh politics as a selfless Akali volunteer. After some months when 13th Shahidi Jatha for Jaito, Giani Kartar Singh and his Akali volunteers, organized in a well-knit team, gave them an enthusiastic welcome. After the departure of the 13th Shahidi Jatha, warrants of arrest were issued against him. It was Giani Kartar Singh's first experience of life in jail, but he endured it with patience. In 1930 Giani Kartar Singh took part in the civil disobedience movement and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. By 1930 Giani Kartar Singh had attained an important place in Sikh politics. Along with Mangal Singh, he had expressed and represented Sikh ideas on Nehru report. Maharaja Patiala approached Sikh leaders including Giani Sher Singh and leaders of Khalsa Diwan to sponsor his name as representation of the Sikhs. But Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were deadly against him. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan took over as the acting Governor of Punjab for a period of four months. To gain popularity among all the communities of Punjab and thus to impress the British Government, he called four representative of the Sikhs- Ujjal Singh, Sampuran Singh, Giani Sher Singh and Giani Kartar Singh- to Simla on 4th of August, 1932. Giani Kartar Singh spear headed the opposition to the communal award. At that time, Giani Kartar Singh tried his best to unite the two factions of the Akalis led by Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh so as to work together for a solution favorable to the Sikh community. Negotiations were started with the Congress and a compromise reached. Giani Kartar Singh moved a resolution in the Assembly requesting the Government to allow the use of 'Jhatka' meet in police lines, Railway Stations and government hostels. In 1939, new elections to the S.G.P.C. were held. Giani Kartar Singh was once again elected a member of its

Executive Committee. Giani Kartar Singh changed over to Azad Punjab Scheme as a solution of the Sikh problem. According to Giani Kartar Singh, "The proposed Azad Punjab was not to be in independent state but was to remain in the Indian Union." The demand for Azad Punjab gained momentum in the second half of 1944. Things moved fast after the end of Second World War in 1945. Lord Wavel took over as Viceroy. On June 25, 1945, he called twenty-one Indian representatives including Master Tara Singh to meet him. Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke accompanied the Master to this meeting.



Giani Kartar Singh 'Intellectual among Sikh leaders' bitterly wept before Mr. Jenkins after partition had been decided



CHAPTER 3

As President of Akali Dal 1946-1948

In the elections to the Punjab Legislature in 1946, the Sikhs went to polls realizing their Stake in it. They were to register their strong opposition to Pakistan in it. A *Panthak Pratinidhi Board* was constituted to fight the elections. The relative strength of the various parties in the Punjab Legislature as a result of this election reflected it. In the new Assembly Muslims League was to have 79, the Congress 51, *Panthak* Candidates 22, Unionists and independents 10, members each.¹ To gain strength, influence and prestige, the Shiromani Akali Dal started negotiations for joining a coalition Government formed either by the Congress or the Muslim League, but as the Sikh leaders were not ready to compromise on the question of Pakistan, the talks with the latter ended in a failure. While these talks were going on, Giani Kartar Singh attended a Muslim League convention at Delhi between 7th and 9th April, 1946. Ultimately the Akalis joined a coalition ministry with the Congress and the Unionist party. Its representative Baldev Singh became the Development Minister in the Punjab Government headed by Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana. Soon after, however, the Akali leaders met Jinnah at the house of Sir Malik Teja Singh, a retired minister of the Patiala State, Maharaja of Patiala and Malik Hardit Singh were also present in this meeting. Master Tara Singh was accompanied by Harnam Singh Advocate. The interviews did not produce any tangible results, as Jinnah was not ready to accept the Partition of Punjab to the satisfaction of the Sikh sentiments.² The earns efforts had also been put in by the Sikh leadership particularly by Giani Kartar Singh by now considered to be the brain trust of the Sikhs, to evoke a response from the Muslim league circles about the Sikh position in the constitutional set up of their thinking but all such efforts failed.³

¹ Press information Bureau Series No. 22 dated 5 March, 1945. pp. 5,10 and 12.

² *The Tribune*, Lahore, 5 April, 1946.

³ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, U.C. Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1970, p. 80.

Low Stephones, the then Editor of the *Statesman* deplored the callous attitude of the Muslim League leaders towards the Sikhs. He observed, "Had a magnanimous offer come from the Muslim League giving security to the Sikhs on their future set up, it would have been considered by the Sikhs."⁴

On January 19, 1946, Pathick Lawrance announced in the British Parliament the steps which the Government intended to take for the early realization of the independence of India. These steps were:-

1. To hold preparatory discussion with the elected representative of the British India and with the Indian States in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution.
2. To set up a constitution making body; and
3. To establish full self-government in India.⁵

He also announced that a special mission of cabinet ministers consisting of the Secretary of State, Pathick Lawrence, the President of the Board of Trade, Stafford Cripps and the first Lord of Admiralty, A.V. Alexander would go to India to act in association with the Viceroy in getting things cleared up with the Indian political leaders.

Soon after the announcement of the proposed Cabinet Mission was made by the Prime Minister, Attlee who observed in a debate in the Parliament on March 8, 1946. "We are mindful of the rights of the minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand we cannot allow a minority to place a Veto on the advancement of the majority."⁶ That created hope in the minds of the leaders of Indian National Congress. On the other hand, Jinnah reacted sharply against the views of the Prime Minister's

⁴ Ian Stephens, *Pakistan*, Ernest Benn, London, 1963, p. 141.

⁵ Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. IV, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1961, p. 463.

⁶ Anil Chandra Banerjee, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. IV, A Mukherjee and Co. Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1961, p. 208.

announcement and made a famous statement when he said that the Muslims of India were not a “minority” but a “nation.”

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on March 23, 1946 and started negotiations with the Indian leaders. The Sikh delegation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, Harnam Singh Advocate met the Cabinet Mission on April 5, 1946. The Sikh spokesman, Master Tara Singh stated that he was for a united India but if Pakistan was conceded, he was for a separate Sikh State with the right to federate either with India or with Pakistan. “Giani Kartar Singh stated that the Sikhs would feel unsafe in either of the united India or in Pakistan. They should have a province of their own where they would be in a dominant or almost dominant position. In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, who had asked about the area of the proposed Sikh State, Giani Kartar Singh suggested that it should be the whole of the Jalandhar and the Lahore Divisions together with Hissar, Karnal, Ambala and Simla Districts of Ambala Divisions and Montgomery and Lyallpur districts.”⁷ While Harnam Singh was opposed to the partition of India, Baldev Singh almost supported the views of Giani Kartar Singh. The Cabinet Mission was not impressed by the Sikh point of view. The Cabinet Mission declared its own plan on May 16, 1946.

The Cabinet Mission’s plan accepted the substance of the Muslim claim of autonomy. Three separated zones were proposed, two of which were to consist of Muslim majority provinces. Each Zone or provincial group was to have its own constitution Assembly to draw up its own constitution. A transitional government wholly Indian, except for the Governor General was to be set up immediately at Delhi. This proposal put the Sikhs in a very precarious position. They were not guaranteed any protection against the Muslim majority rule and in the constituent assembly of section B to which Punjab had been assigned, they were to have four seats, the Hindus 9 and the Muslims 23. The Sikhs sharply reacted to this scheme. In his protest letter to the Secretary of State for India, Master Tara Singh wrote at the instance of Giani Kartar Singh, “The Sikhs have

⁷ V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, Orient Longmans, Delhi, 1957, p. 243.

been entirely ignored, though they are as much concerned as the other communities.”⁸

Giani Kartar Singh's declaration was underlined with the Akali being taking to hectic activity. On May 18, 1946 the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan and decided to start a *morcha* against the creation of Pakistan.⁹ On June 9 and 10 an All Party Sikh conference representing Congress Sikhs, Akalis, Nirmals, Namdhari and Nihangs was called at Amritsar. Over one thousand Sikhs drawn from the various organizations and prominent Sikh leaders including Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke, Isher Singh Majhail and Master Tara Singh exhorted the Sikhs to be prepared for making supreme sacrifices for the sake of the community. The main resolution condemning the British Cabinet Mission's proposals was moved by Ujjal Singh and seconded by Giani Kartar Singh.¹⁰ The resolution which was passed unanimously read as under:-

This representative gathering of Sikhs assembled in Amritsar has given anxious and earnest consideration to the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission read with subsequent elucidation and is of the opinion that these recommendations perpetuate the slavery of the country rather than promote the independence of India, These are particularly unjust to Sikhs regarding the matters specified here under:-

- a. That the Cabinet Mission while recognizing that the establishment of Pakistan would in particular affect adversely the position of Sikhs, set up compulsory grouping of the provinces make recommendations which in the words of Pethick Lawrance the Secretary of State for India, “make it possible for Muslims to secure all the advantages of Pakistan without incurring the danger inherent in it.”

⁸ Tara Singh to the Secretary of States, May 1946, Paper relating to the Cabinet Mission Plan in India, p. 61.

⁹ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 19 May, 1946.

¹⁰ Landen Sarsfield, *Betrayal of the Sikhs*, Lahore Book Shop, Lahore, 1946, pp. 102-108.

- b. That the Cabinet Mission while admitting that the cultural, political and social life of Muslims might become submerged in a purely unitary India in which Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominant element and this inspire of the fact that Muslims are 9 crores in population and constitute a majority in several provinces of India have deliberately blinded themselves to the same danger to a greater degree to Sikhs under the Muslim domination which is thought to be aggravated by the proposed constitution. Needless to add that even under the existing constitution, the Sikhs have been reduced to a position of complete helplessness which had already exasperated them to the verge of revolt.
- c. That while admitting that the Punjab is the “home land of Sikhs” the Cabinet Mission has by its recommendations liquidated the position of Sikhs in their homeland.
- d. That the advisory committee set up in paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission’s statement is wholly ineffective to safeguard the first right of the Sikhs.
- e. That while the Cabinet Mission made provisions for the protection of the rights and interests of the Hindus and the Muslims on major communal issues they have made no such provisions for the protection of the rights and interests of Sikhs in the union in the provincial sphere.

Therefore, this *Panthak* gathering expressed strong condemnation of the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission and declares that they are wholly unacceptable to Sikhs. This gathering further affirms that no constitution will be acceptable to Sikhs which does not meet their just demands and is settled without their consent.¹¹

By another resolution the *Panthak* gathering decided to organize a Council of Action with Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill of the I.N.A. as the President

¹¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 1994, pp. 183-184.

to resist the implementation of the British Cabinet Mission plan. A representative association called the Pratinidhi Panthak Board to guide the affairs of the community during that crucial period in the history was also constituted. The Board consisted of prominent Sikh leaders like Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Basant Singh Moga, Ujjal Singh, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Bawa Harkrishan Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Isher Singh Majhail, Sarmukh Singh Chamak, Nidhan Singh Alam and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke.

On June 16, 1946 the Viceroy of India and the Cabinet Mission announced that an interim government consisting of 6 Congressmen, 5 Muslim Leaguers, one representative of the Sikhs and one each of the Parsis and the Indian Christians will be constituted. From the Sikhs, Baldev Singh, Development Minister Punjab was invited to join the government as the Sikh representative.¹²

The Sikhs had rejected the plan outrightly but the leaders of both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were giving a serious thought to the proposals. While the Congress was thinking of accepting it, the Muslim League decided to start a direct action which was almost a declaration of war against the non-Muslim India to protest against the plan which it did not consider feasible to accept without the demand of Pakistan being added to it. In Calcutta, the Muslim League gave a foretaste of the Civil war with which it had been threatening the country. Though the Shiromani Akali Dal was organizing protest meetings against the Cabinet Mission Plan, Giani Kartar Singh, Baldev Singh, S. Swaran Singh and some other prominent leaders persuaded the Panthak Pratinidhi Board to join the interim cabinet which was to be led by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. The board constituted a sub committee consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Colonel Niranjn Singh Gill, Baldev Singh, Sarmukh Singh Chamak, Prof. Mota Singh, Udham Singh Nagoke, Maharaj Partap Singh and Sampuran Singh. This committee started negotiations with Congress and on August 14 Constituent Assembly and the Interim Government was revised.

¹² *The Tribune*, Lahore, 17, 23 June, 1946.

Further, Master Tara Singh did not like this decision but when Colonel Niranjn Singh Gill threatened to resign from the Presidentship of Panthak Pratinidhi Board, he reconciled to it. Baldev Singh was nominated as the Sikh representative to the Interim Government which was sworn in on September 2, 1946. He was appointed Defense Minister of India. Then he wrote to the Prime Minister of Britain seeking his intervention to remedy the wrong done to the Sikh community.¹³ He suggested that a new province may be carved out and an additional provincial unit in the united India be so constituted as to include all the important Sikh Gurdwaras and a substantial majority of the Sikh population of the existing province of Punjab.

The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held on December 9, 1946 and the Muslim League representatives boycotted the meeting though they had joined the Interim Government on October 14, 1946. Four Sikh representatives elected to the Constituent Assembly agreed to take their seats after assurance of full consideration of their views by the Congress as presented by them. They asked for safeguards in the Punjab similar to those extended to the Muslims in the constituent Assembly and they vehemently demanded the partition of Punjab. On January 17, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh explained to the pressmen that the right of "Veto" which they were seeking would mean that "Nothing affecting the Sikhs should be decided upon without the consent of the Sikhs themselves." Giani Kartar Singh along with Ujjal Singh and Harnam Singh met Lord Wavell and asked for the right to veto legislation affecting them in Section B of the proposed group of provinces.¹⁴ Giani Kartar Singh blamed the British Government for its betrayal to the Sikhs. Mangal Singh, a staunch Congress leader, demanded partition of Punjab on a rational basis.

After relisting the hard realities of the serious situation created by the Muslim Communism but more so due to the pressure of the prominent Sikh leaders, Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, the Congress

¹³ V.P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*, p. 291.

¹⁴ *The Tribune*, Lahore, 23 January, 1947.

passed a resolution in support of the partition of Punjab. Opposing the compulsory grouping the resolution announced there must be no compulsion to any province or a part of a province by another province. The Congress cannot be a party to any such compulsion or imposition against the will of the people concerned..... the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardized. In the event of any compulsion a province or a part of a province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary.¹⁵

The resolution further explained, "that the recent tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the Punjab by violence and coercion and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part."¹⁶ There was no doubt that the Congress passed the resolution only under compulsion and that it, now only took note of the strong resentment and frustration in the minds of leaders like Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh in particular and Sikh masses in general against its earlier attitude of indifference to the Sikh fears and apprehensions. Acharaya J.B. Kriplani, the Congress President wrote in his book on Gandhi that "the working committee's decision was forced by circumstances. The members felt that the Pakistan which the Muslim League was insisting upon and which had the backing of the British Government was inevitable."¹⁷

The organized communal riots started by the Muslim League on August 16, 1946 had spread in the different parts of India. Punjab could not and did not

¹⁵ B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution: A Study*, Vol. I, Universal Law Pub. Co., New Delhi, 1967, p. 353 and B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, Padma Publications, Bombay, 1947, p. 823.

¹⁶ Dwarka Prasad Mishra, *Living an Era: India's March to Freedom*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1975, p. 544.

¹⁷ J.B. Kriplani, *Gandhi- His life and thought*, Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1970, p. 279.

remain un-affected. The Muslims started their attack on the Hindus and the Sikhs in the months of December, 1946 in Hazara region where Muslims were in absolute majority. A large number of Sikh villages were destroyed. The atrocities on Hindus and Sikhs in the Rawalpindi Jhelum, Cambellpur and Multan Districts were even more severe. Sikhs were specially pounced upon by the Muslim crowds and slaughtered mercilessly. All this naturally led to retaliations on the part of Sikhs in the East Punjab. The situation was becoming from bad to worse every day. On the other hand, Muslim League leader in the Punjab were pressing Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, the Chief Minister of Punjab either to join Muslim League or to resign and enable the Muslim League to form its own ministry. Pandit Nehru visited the riot-affected area and observed, "If politics is to be conducted in this way then it ceases to be politics and becomes some kind of jungle war-fare which reduces human habitation to the State of desert."¹⁸ In the Interim Government the Muslim League members under the leadership of Liaquat Ali were trying their level best to obstruct the smooth working of the Government machinery.

All this had created a very critical situation. There was a new dead-lock in the administrative machinery of the British Government in India. Under these circumstances Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons the Government's definite intention of transferring power to India without waiting for a settlement of the communal problem. He emphasized that the administration of India would be handed over on a date not later than June 1948, some form of central Govt. for British India or in some areas to the existing provincial Government.¹⁹

Attlee's declaration increased the communal passion. Only two days after Attlee's declaration violent rioting started at Amritsar and Jalandhar. Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana had to compromise with the Muslim League and release all the arrested League volunteers for defying emergency restrictions. On March 3,

¹⁸ D.R. Bose, *New India Speaks*, Calcutta, 1947, p. 133.

¹⁹ C.R. Attlee, *As it happened*, William Heinemann, London, 1954, p. 183.

1947 he tendered his own resignation. The Governor invited Nawab of Mamdot to form a Muslim League Ministry in Punjab but the Shiromani Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh was determined not to allow any such handing over of power to the Muslim League and thus ruin the future of the Sikhs. Coming out of the Assembly Chamber at the head of a small group of twenty-two *Panthak* members on March 3, 1947. Master Tara Singh stood on a platform and started shouting the slogan "Down with Pakistan." Brandishing his sword he said, "O Hindus and Sikhs are ready for self destruction..... If we can snatch the Government from the British no one can stop us from snatching the Government from the Muslims..... Disperse from here on the solemn affirmation that we shall not allow the League to exist..... We shall rule over them and will get the government fighting. I have sounded the bugle..... Finish the Muslim League."²⁰

On the same day, a big gathering of the Hindus and Sikhs was addressed by Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. They exhorted the Sikhs to be ready for making supreme sacrifices to save their honor and self-respect and that the Sikhs would never tolerate Muslim domination in Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh reminded the people that for more than seventy years the *Kesri* Flag of the Independent Sikh Raj had been hoisting in Lahore. Now we will again repeal our glorious history.²¹

Under such critical circumstances, the Governor of Punjab took over the administration of the province under his charge i.e. in his own hands under Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935. Having failed to have the control the Punjab Administration by constitutional methods the Muslim Leagues became desperate and now Punjab witnessed such ghastly scenes as in the words of Jawahar Lal Nehru "would degrade brutes." Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Attock, Muree, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Jalandhar had a blood-bath. According to official sources the casualty

²⁰ Michael Edwards, *The last years of British India*, New English Library, London, 1967, p. 140.

²¹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, Sikh University Centre, Belgium, 2000, p. 197.

figures were 2049 killed and 1103 wounded. Of course, the actual figures especially in the case of Hindus and Sikhs were much more. Lord Louis Mountbatten, a second cousin of the King of England arrived in New Delhi on March 22, 1947 and was sworn in as the new Viceroy of India on March 24. He was avowedly appointed to arrange the termination of British rule in India. It was at his insistence that June, 1948 was fixed for the withdrawal of the British control over India. He started meeting leaders of different parties, as he had to finally decide whether India should be kept united or partitioned to accede to the Muslim League demand of Pakistan. Very soon he was convinced; there was no alternative to the partition of India.

The Sikh leaders now decided to fight their last battle to save as much of Punjab as possible from going under the future territory of Pakistan. The creation of Pakistan had become a reality. Baba Kharak Singh, the old Sikh leader, had said, "I am a staunch advocate of undivided Hindustan. However, should partition become inevitable and unfortunately thrust upon us, I would plead for adequate safeguards and legitimate protection for the non-Muslim minorities living in the territories proposed to be partitioned."

On April 16, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh, by now one of the most prominent Sikh leaders and uniformly acknowledged as the brain trust of the Sikhs, took over as President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, perhaps no other leader was as shrewd and capable as he was to protect the interest of the Sikhs at this critical juncture of the history of India. After consulting other Hindu and Sikhs leaders he called a meeting of the Akali Dal on April 17, 1947 at Lahore and made a concrete proposal for partition of Punjab as the only remedy to end communal strife in Punjab. For the purpose of determining the boundaries, the Akali Dal suggested the appointment of a Boundary Commission.²²

²² H.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register 1947*, Vol. I, Gian Publishing House, Calcutta, p. 244.

More than 300 *Jathedars* vowed at the Akal Takhat to sacrifice their lives for the community and arm the Sikh Youth to protect them from the Muslim onslaughts. A drive was made to collect Rs. 50 lacs for a defence fund.²³

The Indian National Army Sikhs set their Head Quarters at the Majitha House in Amritsar. The British Government blamed leaders like Giani Kartar Singh, Udham Singh Nagoke, Isher Singh Majhail and Mohan Singh for creating this tension.

The political situation in Punjab had become very tense and fluid. After taking over the administration, the new Punjab Governor Sir Evan Jenkins sent a report to Lord Mountbatten. He reported, "Giani Kartar Singh, an influential Sikh leader, had stated that in the absence of any agreement between the Congress and the League acceptable to the Sikhs, the Sikhs must insist on the partition of the Punjab and would resist with all their resources any endeavor to set up a Muslim League Ministry there in the meanwhile."²⁴

On April 18, Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Baldev Singh Defense Minister in the interim Govt. met Lord Mountbatten and put forward a plea for the division of the Punjab, "To ensure as far as possible the solidarity of the Sikhs and to protect their special interests in the farmlands in the irrigation colonies and their religious shrines such as Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, they proposed the Chenab as the boundary line."²⁵

About this meeting of Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh, the former President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, Allan Campbell Johnson in his book, *Mission with Mountbatten*, writes: "Mountbatten gave us an alarming but none-the-less amusing account of his interview with the Sikh leaders. He found himself confronted by some very stuffy old gentlemen with long beards and large kirpans who put on their glasses, looking just like benign professors full of

²³ Alan Campbell Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, Robert Hale, London, 1951, p. 66.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 197.

peaceful intentions but telling a few fibs in the process. They all insisted that he must partition the Punjab and shared that Sikhs were the principal victims in the Rawalpindi riots. Mountbatten little realized that these bearded gentlemen have already convinced Pandit Nehru, the interim Prime Minister, with their views. In a public speech on April 20, Pandit Nehru declared. "the Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not take away other such parts of India which do not want to join Pakistan." Of course the Muslim League was bitter because Jinnah had denounced the proposal for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal as "a sinister one, more actuated by spite and bitterness."

On the initiation of some British Military officers, Chief of these was Pendrel Moon of the Indian Civil Service, the Muslim League Leaders contacted Sant Singh, Prime Minister of Nabha State and made approaches to the Sikh leaders including Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh and Baldev Singh. The League leaders offered to recognize separate unit of Eastern Punjab with a position in Pakistan equal to that of any other unit such as Sind or Western Punjab and special privilege for the Sikh Minority in Pakistan. Giani Kartar Singh and his close associate Bhagat Singh Toba met Jinnah in Delhi and tried hard to bring him round to their views. Jinnah could not be convinced. He agreed to the formulation of Sikh State with its separate military force within Pakistan. He was not ready to accept the demand for a separate Sikh States, "In April, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh also attended the Muslim League M.L.A.'s conference in Delhi and tried to look into the Muslim league attitude towards the Sikhs in case of the establishment of Pakistan. He was told nothing apart from being given assurances of good treatment.²⁶ The Sikh leaders could not be hoodwinked by the Muslim league leaders. Actually the communal riots in Punjab had left no chance of rapprochement among the Sikhs and the Muslims. It would have been nothing better than "mingling fire with water."

²⁶ Ian Stephens, *Pakistan*, p. 140. Pendrel Moon, *Divide and Quit*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1961, p. 37.

June 3, 1947 was a memorable day in the history of India. On that day Lord Mountbatten announced his plan of the partition of India into two independent states Indian Union and Pakistan. There was no alternative to it and he was able to persuade Pandit Nehru, S. Ballabh Bhai Patel, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Baldev Singh to agree to his plan, though everyone accepted it with some reservations. Earlier on June 2, 1947 the Akali Dal working committee had met at Delhi. The meeting was attended by Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Amar Singh Dosanj, Pritam Singh, Mangal Singh Gill, Swaran Singh, Ujjal Singh and Baldev Singh. Moreover, Baldev Singh reported on his talks. The leaders had resolved not only to press on the partition of Punjab but also to maintain the integrity of the community by demanding that the boundary be drawn at the Chenab.²⁷

The Mountbatten plan divided the country into two dominions: India and Pakistan. The procedure was outlined to ascertain the will of the minorities in both Bengal and the Punjab on whether they wished to join the new constituent Assembly or the old one. The provincial Legislative Assemblies of the Bengal and the Punjab, excluding European members were to be asked to meet in two parts- one representing the Muslim majority districts and the other the rest of the province. For purpose of determining the population of the districts, the 1941 census figures were to be taken as authoritative. The member of two parts of each legislative assembly sitting separately were to be empowered to vote whether or not the province was to be partitioned. If a simple majority of either side were to decide in favor of partition, decision of the province would take place and arrangements would be made accordingly.

It was further laid down that, "In the event of partition being decided upon, for the purpose of the final partition of these provinces, a detailed investigation of the boundary question will be needed and to do that a Boundary Commission will be set up by the Governor General."²⁸ The result of voting could have been

²⁷ *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 3 June, 1947.

²⁸ Partition Proceeding, Vol. VI, p. 2.

easily guessed. The decision to partition of Punjab and Bengal was taken by the legislators of the two provinces when sitting the way decided by the Mountbatten Plan.

The reaction of the Sikhs towards the Mountbatten plan was anything but favorable. They felt betrayed and shocked. Even Baldev Singh who had accepted the plan on behalf of the Sikhs mentioned in a statement, "If the verdict of the Boundary Commission was against the Sikhs, they should be prepared to make all sacrifices to vindicate the honor of the *Panth*."²⁹

Even Lord Mountbatten was most distressed about the position of the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh, as the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, called a joint meeting of the Akali Dal working committee and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board. On June 14, 1947 this meeting passed a resolution emphasizing that "in the absence of the provision of transfer of population and properly the very purpose of the partition would be defeated."³⁰

The Sikh leaders tried to build up political pressure and pinned their hopes on the award of the Boundary Commission. Of course, they were playing game, in the second week of July, the Sikhs observed a pledge-taking day and renewed their resolve to spare no effort or sacrifice in the pursuit of their object. On July 15, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh, the president of Shiromani Akali Dal issued a press statement in which he said,

"The Sikhs will not rest content till the boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85% Sikhs in India..... the Panth, in general, and the Sikh political workers, in particular, may well be proud of the completeness with which the prayer of the pledge..... taking day on July 8, was observed all over the province. It is clear that stark realities of the distressing situation have gone home to every Sikh, however cut-off from the usual sources of political knowledge he may have been. Some

²⁹ *The Hindu*, Madras, 16 July, 1947.

³⁰ *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 15 June, 1947.

Muslim League leaders have taken offence at this harmless expression of Sikh agony and have issued exaggerated statement calculated to embitter feelings between the two communities. They have demanded the Sutlej as the dividing line in the Punjab. Only a few weeks back they proposed to fight for every inch of Punjab and now they have retreated to the Sutlej. There are some more weeks to August 15 and their pace of retreat is not slow either.

Everyone knows that the Boundary Commission in the Punjab has been given charge through June 5 statement of the Viceroy, of the task of determining the extent to which the Sikh Community is to be divided. The point for consideration before this commission are contiguous majority and 'other factors' obviously the factor of contiguous majority is only one of the several factors which will claim the attention of the Boundary Commission. If application of the continuous majority principles does not yield suitable results the other factors will naturally overrule it in order that justice may prevail. In the districts of Sheikhpura, Lyallpur and Gujranwala, there are large Muslim majority tracts. This area is also hallowed by the situation in it of a number of historic Gurdwaras like 'Nankana Sahib' and 'Khara Sandz'. How can the Sikhs live away from the springs of their religion? A full share in the Canal colonies belongs to the Sikhs because it was their sweat and toil which has made these areas so coveted. When Ireland was partitioned, were not countries with Roman Catholic majorities attached with the Protestant Ulster for purely economic considerations. The Sikhs will not rest till:-

1. The boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85% Sikhs in India.
2. Both the States of Pakistan and India are committed to facilitate the transfer of the remaining 15% from Pakistan to India.³¹

³¹ *The Hindu*, Madras, 16 July, 1947.

This statement of Giani Kartar Singh was a clarion call to the Hindu and Sikh masses to save as much territory of the Punjab from going to Pakistan as possible. It was also an indirect and pathetic appeal of the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, the only representative body of the Sikhs to the British Government and the people at the helm of affairs. It was a call to do or die. The Sikhs were hoping against hope for a favorable award by the Boundary Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Red Cliff. Some of the British officers actually tried to help the Sikhs. One of them was Major Short, who was personal assistant to the Lord Ismay was an old friend of the Sikhs and both Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh had great faith in him. Even Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab supported the Sikh demands in his letter to the Viceroy.”

“I believe there is quite a lot in the claim of the Sikhs and for a share in the canal colonies of the West, “he wrote,” and Giani Kartar Singh’s idea that the Montgomery district should be allotted to the East Punjab is by no means as ridiculous as it sounds.”³²

Arthur Henderson, the under Secretary of State for India, also emphasized in the British parliament that other factors mentioned in the points of reference to the Boundary Commission special circumstances of the Sikh community, location of their shrines etc. should be considered as special factors.

Giani Kartar Singh made his last desperate attempt to get a favorable award from the Redcliff Commission. He openly threatened the Government of dire and serious consequences. He had an important interview with Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, to emphasize the Sikh point of view. About this meeting the Governor wrote to the Viceroy on July 10, 1947. He observed “Giani Kartar Singh came to see me today..... He said he had come to see me about

³² Leonard Mosley, *The Last days of the British Raj*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1961, p. 212.

the Indian Independence Bill and the Boundary Commission..... He said that in the Punjab there would have to be an exchange of population on a large scale.

Were the British ready to enforce this? He doubted if they were, and if no regard was paid to the Sikh solidarity, a fight was inevitable..... Giani then stated (that) the Sikhs were as much entitled to their own land as were the Hindus and the Muslims. They must have their shrines at Nankana Sahib, at least one canal system and finally the arrangements must be made so as to bring at least three quarter of the Sikh population from the West to the East Punjab. Moreover, Property must be taken into account in the exchange as well as the population, as the Sikhs on the whole are better off than the Muslims. Giani Kartar Singh said that unless it was recognized by His Majesty's government, the Viceroy and the party leaders that the fate of the Sikhs was a vital issue, there would be trouble..... they would be obliged to fight..... that the Sikhs realized that they would be in a bad position but would have to fight on revolutionary lines by murdering officials, cutting Railway Lines, destroying Canal head works and so on..... Finally Giani Kartar Singh appealed to me to do all I could to help the Sikhs during the period of trial. He said I surely could not wish to abandon the Punjab to tears and blood-shed here if the boundary problem was not suitably solved. Giani Kartar Singh was matter of fact and remained quiet throughout our conversation but wept when he made his final appeal. This is the nearest thing to an ultimatum yet given by the Sikhs. They are undoubtedly puzzled and unhappy. I see no reason to suppose they have lost the nuisance value they had in the past possessed for over a century.³³

A perusal of the above letter shows how much love and affection Giani Kartar Singh had for the people of Punjab and specially for his own community whose loss was irreparable. Giani Kartar Singh was clearly foreseeing that the Radcliff Award could not be beneficial to the Sikhs and their position was like a drowning man who holds on to a straw to save himself from drowning.

³³ *Ibid*, pp. 205-207.

The Radcliff Award was announced on August 17, 1947. From the Chenab on which the Sikhs had pinned their hopes, the Indian frontier shrank back with the boundary cutting the fertile Doab between Ravi and Beas. Only thirteen districts comprising the whole of Jalandhar and Ambala Division, Amritsar District of Lahore Division and three tehsils, (Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala) of Gurdaspur district were allotted to the Indian Punjab. V.P. Menon's suggestion to treat Nankana Sahib as a "sort of Vatican" and thus to assuage the feelings of the Sikhs was not accepted by the Viceroy. The Sikh point of view and the notion of other factors were not paid any attention by the Boundary Commission. The Sikhs lost their fertile lands and over one hundred historical Gurdwaras. About half of their population was left on the Pakistan side of the dividing line.

The partition of the Punjab did not solve the minority problem. More than four million Muslims were left in the East Punjab, and about four million Hindus and the Sikhs in the West Punjab. On account of continuous communal riots since March 1947 the Sikhs and the Hindus had been migrating to the districts subsequently included in the East Punjab and Muslims had been migrating after the August riots to the Muslim majority districts included in the West Punjab. The stream of the displaced Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims was converted into a big torrent just after the transfer of power and announcement of the Punjab Boundary Award because the minorities of the Central districts of the British Punjab lost every hope of being included in the newly created province of their choice. Both the East Punjab and the West Punjab Governments therefore decided "to give maximum assistance for the evacuation of the refugees from one province to the other." Since large scale exodus of the minorities was not expected no specific machinery was set up to implement this decision. On the 25th August, 1947 the newly appointed Governor of the East Punjab wrote to the Commander of the Punjab Boundary Force to effect the evacuation of the refugees. He wrote, "My Ministry and general public in East Punjab are greatly concerned over the reports of a large number of non-Muslims stranded in places like Chichawatni, Montgomery, Okara, Arifwala and Pakpattan (in Montgomery

district), Pattoki, Chunia, Raiwind (in Lahore district), Sialkot, Narowal and Pasrur in Sialkot district and Sheikhpura and Gujranwala. I shall be grateful if effective military protection could be ensured for these refugees. I realise, however, that this may not be possible and many refugees would like to evacuate. In that case I would earnestly request you to arrange for evacuation by the road, of the refugees from Montgomery and Lahore districts to Ferozepur and from Sialkot district to Amritsar to Dera Baba Nanak and from Sheikhpura and Gujranwala to Amritsar. If it is not possible for you to evacuate refugees from Sialkot to Amritsar or to Dera Baba Nanak by road, we would endeavor to arrange for a special train.”³⁴

The communal riots flared up once again after the announcement of the award and at the same time exodus of population on religious basis started from both the sides of the divided Punjab. The Punjab boundary force was organized to maintain law and order in the districts on the border between the East and the West Punjab under the operational command of Major General Rees and supreme command of General Auchinlock and a joint Defense Council. Of course, the force provided was quite inadequate for the affected districts in the province. Mass slaughter arson and looting spread over the vast areas and soon the whole countryside in the West Punjab was ablaze.

In this tragic period of turmoil and disturbances, Giani Kartar Singh again came to the rescue of his distressed. He was determined to bring all the Hindus and Sikhs from the West Punjab to the East Punjab and advised them not to go beyond Ambala. He decided to stay back at Lyallpur till all his fellow sufferers had reached India safely. Now he took over another mission: to arrange safe and quick evacuation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from the West Punjab, of course, he had to face many shocks and difficulties in that undertaking. Giani Kartar Singh personally met Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of West Punjab in 1947 at Lyallpur to ensure timely and safe transfer of the Sikhs who had finally decided to leave Pakistan. Naturally this meeting took place when the things had

³⁴ Legislative Assembly Report, File No. LXVI/9/92.

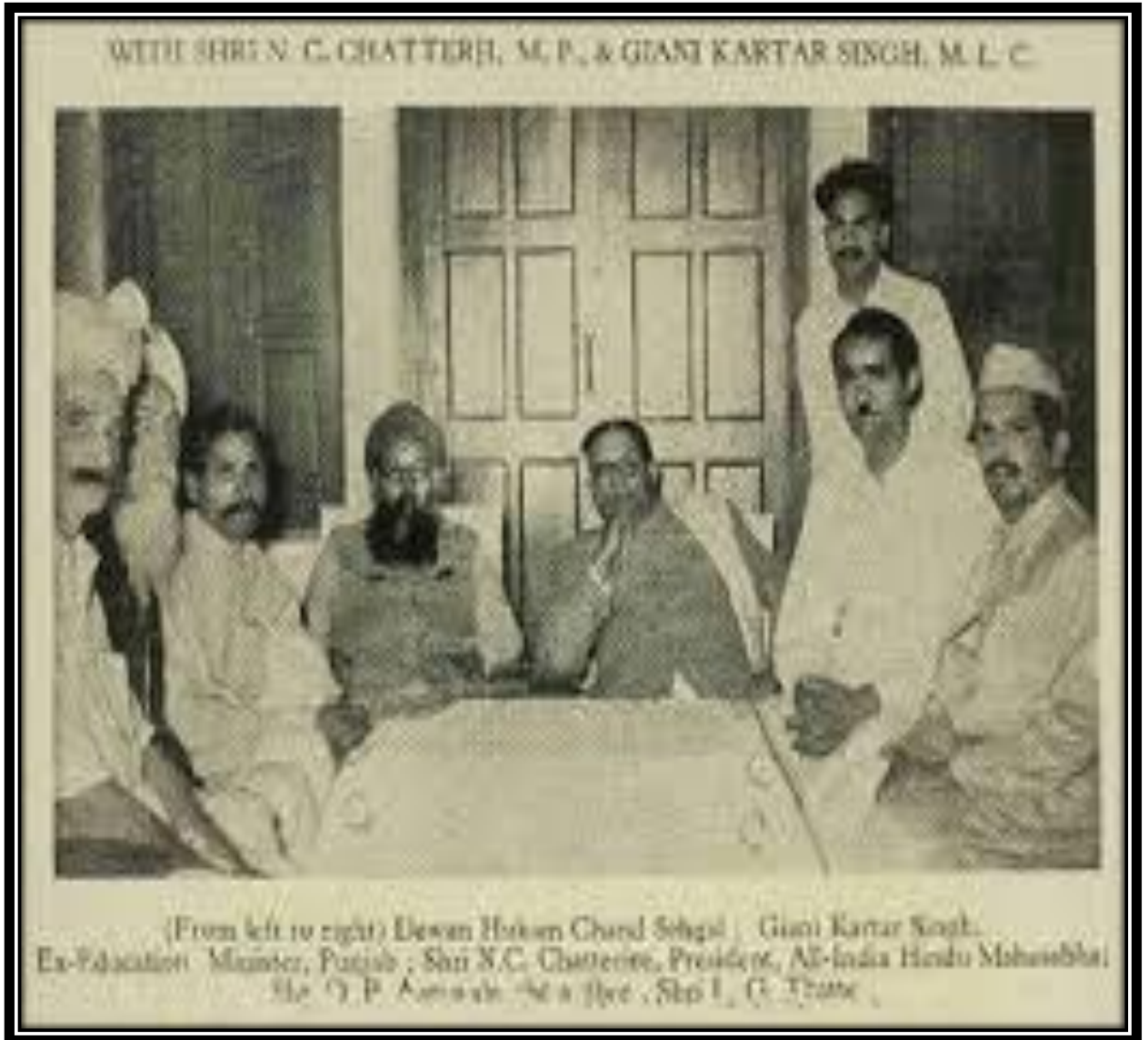
already started going from bad to worse. Giani Kartar Singh had definite information that Mr. Jinnah had instructed the Governor of West Punjab to expel all the Hindus and Sikhs from West Pakistan. That Giani Kartar Singh was right and that the Muslim League was out to expel and eliminate the entire Hindu-Sikh population from West Pakistan is borne out by a letter dated 5th of September, 1947, written by Sir Francis Mudie to Jinnah. Mudie wrote in this letter "I am telling everyone that I do not care how the Sikhs get across the border, the great thing is to get rid of them as soon as possible. There is little sign of 3 Lakh Sikhs in Lyallpur moving but in the end, they will have to go."³⁵ Ultimately the exchange of population from both the sides of the border was complete and total.

The Akalis joined a coalition ministry with the Congress and the Unionist party. The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on March 23, 1946 and started negotiations with the Indian leaders. Giani Kartar Singh shared that the Sikhs would feel unsafe in either the united India or in Pakistan. In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, who had asked about the area of the proposed Sikh State, Giani Kartar Singh suggested that it should be the whole of the Jalandhar and the Lahore Divisions together with Hissar, Karnal, Ambala and Simla Districts of Ambala Divisions and Montgomery and Lyallpur districts. The main resolution condemning the British Cabinet Mission proposals was moved by Ujjal Singh and seconded by Giani Kartar Singh. Baldev Singh was nominated as the Sikh representative to the Interim Government which was sworn in on September 2, 1946. On January 17, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh explained to the pressmen that the right of "Veto" which they were seeking would mean that "Nothing affecting the Sikhs should be decided upon without the consent of the Sikhs themselves." Giani Kartar Singh blamed the British Government for its betrayal to the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh reminded the people that for more than seventy years the Kesri Flag of the Independent Sikh Raj had been hoisting in Lahore. Now we will

³⁵ Gopal Das Khosla, *Stern Reckoning*, Shri Bhagwandas Goenka, Book-Sellers, Connaught Place, New Delhi, 1949, p. 315, Muslim League attack on Sikhs and Hindus, p. 318.

again report our glorious history. For purpose of determining the boundaries, that Akali Dal suggested the appointment of a Boundary Commission. June 3, 1947 was a memorable day in the history of India. On that day Lord Mountbatten announced his plan of the partition of India into two independent states Indian Union and Pakistan. Even Lord Mountbatten was most distressed about the position of the Sikhs. On July 15, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh, the president of Shiromani Akali Dal issued a press statement in which he said, "The Sikhs will not rest content till the boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85% Sikhs in India. Giani Kartar Singh made his last desperate attempt to get a favorable award from the Redcliff Commission. Thus a crucial phase of history of freedom movement and specially the history of Punjab came to an end. The people of the Punjab had to make untold sacrifices. From among all the Sikh leaders, Giani Kartar Singh played the most decisive role. He came out of the ordeal with prestige and honor. His name came to be written in golden letters in the annuals of the history of Punjab of the partition days. Even afterwards, his role in the new Punjab was unique and fruitful.

**WITH SHRI N.C. CHATTERJI, M.P. & GIANI KARTAR SINGH,
M.L.C.**



(From left to right) Dewan Hukam Chand Sehgal; Giani Kartar Singh, Ex-Education Minister Punjab; Shri N.C. Chatterji, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha



(Giani Kartar Singh 1902-1974)

ਸਕਾਲੀ ਨੌਤੀ



ਖਬੇ ਪਾਸਿਓਂ ਬੈਠੇ ਹੋਏ—ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਚੰਨਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਰਾੜਾ, ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਐਮ. ਐਲ. ਏ., ਗਿਆਨੀ ਹਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੁਡਿਆਰਾ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਉਧਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਗੋਕੇ, ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ



Giani Kartar Singh took keen interest in the activities of the Federation, The photograph relates to 1946 when Giani Ji is seen being flanked by S. Amar Singh Dosanjh and S. Amar Singh Ambalvi.

CHAPTER 4

Role in Punjabi Suba Movement

One of the territorial demands which had been of major significance in Indian politics in the post-independence period was made by Shiromani Akali Dal on behalf of the Sikh community for the creation of Punjabi Suba by the exclusion of certain area from the then existing State of Punjab. After partition the first attempt of the Sikhs therefore was to have a separate electorate and reservation of seat for themselves. When the Constituent Assembly outrightly rejected the demand, especially the one for reservation of seats in the legislature as they conflicted with the basic values of the new regime, the Akali made a demand for the creation of Punjabi speaking State popularly known as the Punjabi Suba. Punjabi Suba has been defined differently by different political parties and leaders of the different political party.¹ Akali Dal contented "Punjabi Suba would be a state where spoken language would be Punjabi with Gurmukhi to be its sole script for the purpose of writing. This language would be used by the masses for their official educational, social, economic and cultural interaction. Punjabi Suba would have Sikh population in majority.

In 1948, the Sikh members of the East Punjab Legislative Assembly unitedly presented a charter of 13 demands for the consideration of the Constituent Assembly. They asked for certain constitutional provisions for the Sikhs. The significant point of their charter of demands was that the Sikhs should be allowed to form a new province of seven districts, i.e. Hoshiarpur, Ambala, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur², but this demand was not conceded. After the Minority sub-committee rejected the statutory safeguards, the Akali Dal Working Committee adopted a resolution on 28th May

¹ A.S. Narang, *Punjab Accord and Election Retrospect and Prospect: A Study in Development Democracy and Distortion*, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 27-28.

² Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, Macmillan Co., New Delhi, 1981, p. 24.

1950 for the creation of a fully autonomous Punjabi speaking state on the basis of language and culture.³

In an article discussing the objectives of the demand for Punjabi Suba, Master Tara Singh acknowledged that the Akali Dal had decided that such a state was the best method to maintain the independent existence of the Sikhs.⁴ What he wanted, to say, was that a state where the Sikhs would be in majority, so that they could escape from Hindu dominance in the legislature. He emphasized the desire for an area in India where on the birthdays of the Gurus, army would march in the streets, the Sikh flag would fly along with the National Flag on the government buildings and the Sikhs would have a free environment where they could decide their own fate according to their thinking and their traditions.⁵ In an interview Master Tara Singh elaborately mentioned that the demand for Punjabi Suba was a bid to protect the Khalsa Panth against the Hindu religious and intellectual inroads.⁶

Although the Akali argument before the state Reorganization Commission and on other occasions had been that language was the basis for their demand of Punjabi Suba, this was not a complete and true picture of the position of Akalis'. The Various statements made by certain Akali leaders had left no doubt as to their real motive in the demand for the Punjabi Suba. These objectives ranged from the attainment for the Sikh community the dominant position in the political affairs of the Punjab to the establishment of a Sovereign Sikh State.

During an interview Bhim Sain Sachar, (the Chief Minister of Punjab) on 21th January 1955 said, "Master Tara Singh stated that he did not believe in a linguistic Punjabi State, What he had in a mind was a Sikh state where the Sikhs

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Master Tara Singh, "*Punjabi Suba*" reprinted as chapter X in Gurcharan Singh, *Sikh Kya Chahtey Hain?* New India Publication, New Delhi, 1950, p. 122.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁶ Personal interview of Master Tara Singh, see Satya M. Rai, *Partition of Punjab*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p. 231.

would be in a numerical majority.”⁷ Another important Akali leader, Pritam Singh Gojran, went as far as to say that the Sikhs should not play around with a secular demand like that of Punjabi speaking state, but openly demand a Sikh State.⁸ Similarly, a senior Vice-President of the Akali Dal, Harcharan Singh Hudiara warned in 1961 that the government better concede Punjabi Suba now because later “the new leadership among the Sikhs might give a call for an independent Punjabi State instead of Punjabi Suba.”⁹ It may be stated here that majority of the Sikh leaders were against the demand of sovereign Sikh State. Even Giani Kartar Singh, the promoter of the Punjabi Suba plan, opposed the demand for a separate Sikh province and characterized it as “anti-national and harmful to the Sikhs, therefore, it cannot be accommodated in the secular set up of the Indian republic.” Moreover, it would “still further divide the Sikh population in a for worse manner than the partition of the country in 1947 did.”¹⁰

The Shiromani Akali Dal fought elections in alliance with the Congress Party and after the victory a Congress-Akali Government was formed headed by Gopi Chand Bhargava and Giani Kartar Singh was inducted in the Ministry as a ‘Minister of Education and Revenue’. During his tenure of office, he tried his level best to promote the cause of Punjabi language and literature. Giani Kartar Singh tried to solve the tricky and troublesome language problems and carved out a formula known as ‘Sachar Formula’. In the days of his career he was considered the brain of the Akali Party.¹¹

Giani Kartar Singh took a keen interest in the problems of the minorities in Punjab. It was during 1946, General elections that the Akali Dal had secured 23 seats in the Punjab Assembly and Swaran Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were its prominent leaders. In March 1948, they had merged

⁷ Virandra, ‘*Punjabi Suba or a Sikh State*’, *The Spokesman*, New Delhi, 17 July, 1961.

⁸ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in Punjab*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966, p. 38.

⁹ *The Spokesman*, 10 July, 1961.

¹⁰ *Akali Patrika*, 16 October, 1949.

¹¹ Fauja Singh, *Eminent Freedom Fighters of Punjab*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 149.

themselves in the Congress. At that time Giani Kartar Singh was the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and it was due to his initiative that on March 17, 1948, the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal advised all the members of the Panthak Assembly Party both at the Centre and in the East Punjab to join the Congress Assembly parties forthwith.¹²

Soon after this Giani Kartar Singh announced that the Sikhs would not demand any communal electorate. Even nationalist leaders of the Sikhs like Gurbachan Singh Bajwa had to declare:¹³ “The prevalence of communalism in services is having serious repercussions on the public life in the province... if we want to avoid a repetition of a past tragedy the confidence of the Minority Community will have to be won by the majority community.”¹⁴

In 1948 Chief Minister Gopi Chand Bhargava of Punjab issued the new education policy for the state. This declaration of the Government declaring both Hindi and Punjabi as the medium of instructions was not liked by the Sikh leaders. In October 1948, the Akali Dal passed a resolution demanding separate electorate for the Sikhs at least for the next ten years.¹⁵ Giani Kartar Singh opposed separate electorate proposal for the Sikhs. Actually, he was working for safeguarding the interests of the Sikh minority as a minister.¹⁶ In early November, 1948, Giani Kartar Singh persuaded all the Sikh members of the Assembly except Partap Singh Kairon to submit a charter of demands on November 15, 1948. The charter was drawn specially for the representation of the Sikhs. It was also realized that if the demands were rejected, the Sikhs would allowed to form a new Province of 7 districts i.e. Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar,

¹² Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, U.C. Kapoor & Sons, Delhi, 1974, p. 136.

¹³ Punjab Assembly Debates, 18 March, 1948.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 137.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ambala.¹⁷ The Minority Committee could not come to any decision and appointed a sub-committee of ten members, out of these 5 were Hindus and 5 were Sikhs.

The members in the Committee were Bhim Sen Sachar, Ch. Lehri Singh, B.L. Chaman, Suraj Mal and Smt. Shano Devi, all of whom were Hindus and Giani Kartar Singh, Swaran Singh, Ujjal Singh, Isher Singh Majhail and Bachan Singh who were all Sikhs. They could not arrive at any agreed decision. The Sikh demands were e.g. communal weightage and reservation were these interpreted as decisive steps to distort the growth of a healthy and natural political development.¹⁸

Giani Kartar Singh and Baldev Singh both were making efforts to avoid the clash between the Congress and Akali Dal. The arrest of Master Tara Singh on February 19, 1949 was an unfortunate event. The inauguration of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) in May 1948 was another important event in the constitutional development of the state of Punjab.¹⁹ Giani Kartar Singh who was a shrewd politician fully realized that the Sikhs can gain only by winning the goodwill of the national leaders and any confrontation with the Central Government could be extremely detrimental to the Sikh interests.²⁰

Baldev Raj Nayar in his study of the Punjabi Suba conclusively said, "The linguistic argument is considered to be merely a camouflage for the eventual creation of the Sikh theocratic State."²¹ Similarly Khushwant Singh stated:

I had many meetings with Master Tara Singh and he along-with some others including me, came to the conclusion that if we had a state in which we

¹⁷ Harjinder Singh Dilgir, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, 2nd Edition, Sikh University Centre, Belgium, 2000, p. 209.

¹⁸ *The Tribune*, Ambala, 26 November, 1948.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Dharam Singh Sahota, *Siyast Da Dhani: Giani Kartar Singh*, New Book Company, Jalandhar, 1982, pp. 78-92.

²¹ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in Punjab*, pp. 322-323.

were in the majority, we could perhaps evolve educational curriculum whereby the Sikh religion and the Khalsa tradition could be kept alive among the younger generation without violating the spirit of secularism to which the Sikhs along with all other Indians, had committed themselves. This was, in fact, the genesis of the movement for Punjabi Suba. The linguistic argument was only sugar-coating for what was essentially a demand for a Sikh majority state.”²²

But on the other side, Sant Fateh Singh’s views were different about the contents and nature of the Punjabi Suba. Sant Fateh Singh declared, “We do not seek a Sikh majority area, we are not concerned about percentages. We want the Punjabi Suba to comprise of an area where Punjabi language is spoken, regardless of the fact whether the Sikhs are in a majority or minority.”²³ Sant Fateh Singh explained that he had felt that Master Tara Singh at times is guided by the percentages and the effectiveness of the Sikhs in such an area. But he considered that the question was purely linguistic and must be treated as such. He added that he had all along expressed his conviction that there could be no Punjabi Suba at the cost of Hindu-Sikh unity and that such a Suba would not be of much benefit without the non-Sikhs.²⁴ Thereupon Master Tara Singh explained, “The Sant is a religious man... he is not a politician, and might have been misled.” According to the C.P.I. and Praja Socialist Party the contention of Punjabi Suba was to be a conglomeration of the Punjabi speaking area having unifying charter of common cultural heritage and common language Punjabi as the ingredient. Bharatiya Jana Sangh Party compared the Punjabi Suba demand with Muslim League’s demand of Pakistan. Congress leaders continued to dub this demand as communal and a subterfuge to create a Sikh State or a homeland for the Sikhs. The demand was simply for unilingual Punjabi State on the pattern of the other similar states demarcated in the country while the demand has been made in the name of Punjabi language, but the real purpose

²² Khushwant Singh, *My Bleeding Punjab*, UBS Publishers and Distributors Ltd., Delhi, 1992, p. 40.

²³ *The Tribune*, 30 October, 1960.

²⁴ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 386.

was believed to be the formation of a State which should be under the political control of the Sikhs.

Dynamics of Minority Politics and the Sikh Masses

After partition, there began a new era in the history of the Punjab. Rehabilitation and resettlement after partition resulted in a significant change in the demographic pattern in the State. In 1951 the Sikhs formed about 35 percent of the total population of the State, while the Hindus represented the majority with over 62.3 percent.²⁵ The majority status of the Hindu population as well as the increase in the percentage of the Sikhs was a new thing. Furthermore, since the Sikh landowners settled mostly in the districts from which they had gone to the canal colonies, and both Sikhs and Hindus replaced the erstwhile Muslim population of the cities and towns, the bulk of the Sikh population came to be concentrated in the area between the Ravi and the Ghaggar. In fact, in the Sikh princely states and the districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana and Ferozepur the Sikhs came to represent more than half of the total population. In any case the concentration of the Sikhs in these districts eliminated the major block to the earlier territorial demand of the Akali Dal especially that of sovereign Sikh State the absence of a geographically compact Sikh majority area. For the first time in their history they found themselves concentrated in a large contiguous territory.

The Akali leadership was acutely aware of the logic of the changed ratio. It felt that there would be no escape from the political domination of majority. It was under these circumstances that some Akali leaders rejected to accept the relegation of the Sikh community to the position of a permanent minority. Some of the leaders also realized in good time that it was going to be an uphill task to achieve a smaller province in which the Sikhs could hold their own.

²⁵ Government of India, *Census of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II-A, pp. 298-300 reported by Vashista Lakshmi Chandra, New Delhi, 1953, pp. 298-300.

Master Tara Singh saw in the development of the Sikhs constituting a majority in a strategic province, the possibility of the Akalis becoming the exclusive repository of power independently of the Congress. He, therefore, raised the demand of Punjabi Suba. On August 1948, Master Tara Singh addressed a Press Conference at Delhi and demanded the creation of Punjabi speaking State. He stated that he had written to Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the President of Constituent Assembly that the Punjabi Suba should be demarcated on the basis of the linguistic principle.²⁶

While the draft constitution was under consideration of the constituent Assembly the Akali Dal in a resolution on 29th October 1948 observed:

*It has become a fashion in the politics of the day to condemn the separate electorate system. But in the composite state that India undoubtedly is, the right to choose one's own representative is the most effective and prized safeguard for a minority. The separate electorates are only the age-old democratic maxim.... It would be open to the majority party and the other political parties to set up their own candidates to contest and secure the Sikh seats too by winning the confidence and support of the Sikhs. It will promote confidence and concord between the different communities by eliminating causes and chances of friction.*²⁷

The demand got impetus when minority rights were being discussed by the Constituent Assembly. The question was referred to a committee of the Constituent Assembly which included Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Bhim Rao Ambedkar.²⁸ This committee appointed a ten-man sub-committee to evolve an agreed formula in respect of all communal questions affecting the East Punjab. A memorandum was submitted by the Akali Dal to the Sub-committee on the minorities of the Constituent Assembly

²⁶ Gur Rattan Pal Singh, *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs 1947-78*, Akal Printmatics, Chandigarh, 1979, p. 145.

²⁷ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: A Story of Struggle*, p. 165.

²⁸ *The Hindustan Times*, 8 November, 1948.

demanding among other thing 50% seats for the Sikhs in Punjab Assembly and 5% in the Central Legislature and the communal representation for the Sikhs.²⁹ In November 1948, all the Sikh members of the East Punjab Assembly had drawn a list of 13 demands. The important among them were:

1. Representation is given to the Sikhs on the basis of 1941 Census without excluding Sikhs who had migrated to other provinces.
2. They should be given five percent representation in the Centre and reservations of seats in other provinces.
3. One Sikh Minister and one Deputy Minister be taken in the Central Cabinet.
4. Posts of the Governor and Premier of the East Punjab should go alternately to a Hindu or a Sikh.
5. Fifty percent representation in the provincial Cabinet and the Assembly be reserved for them.
6. Gurgaon district and Loharu State should be separated from the East Punjab.
7. Forty percent seats in services should be reserved for the Sikhs.
8. If the above demands were rejected, Sikhs should be allowed to form a new province of seven districts i.e. Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ambala.³⁰

When the Minorities Sub-committee rejected the demand of the Akalis for statutory safeguards they fell back on Punjabi as the sole means of attaining their objective of a dominant position for the Sikhs in the Punjabi speaking areas of the province. "The rejection of the demand for the retention of the existing safeguards had left them with no other weapon in their armory."³¹

²⁹ K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1974, p. 147.

³⁰ *The Hindustan Standard*, 15 November, 1948 and *The Statesman*, 8 November, 1948.

³¹ Manorma Kohil, "*Protest Movement in the Punjab: A Case Study of the Punjabi Suba Agitation*", *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVII-II, 1985, Punjabi University Patiala, p. 391.

The Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal announced holding of a conference at Delhi on the 20 February 1949, to voice the grievances such as the alleged discriminatory treatment of Sikhs in the services, denial of constitutional safeguards and denial to Punjabi of its rightful place in the education and administration of East Punjab.³² The central authorities tried to pursue Akali Dal not to hold this conference but to no avail. The Delhi administration clamped a ban on the meeting in the whole of Delhi. Master Tara Singh and other leaders were arrested.

Sardar Baldev Singh justified the arrest of Master Tara Singh in his statement to the press on February 23, 1949.³³ He however, was careful in admitting that “the minds of the Sikhs were exercised over some constitutional safeguards.”

The Shiromani Akali Dal held a protest day throughout the Punjab on 2 March 1949 and on 4 April 1949 a Conference of Sikh intellectuals was called in Amritsar where for the first time the resolution for Punjabi Suba was passed.³⁴

The Constituent Assembly had been eager to consider the issue of statutory reservations for religious minorities before August 1947, but after the creation of Pakistan it favored the abolition of all such reservations. In May 1949, the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly was clearly of the view that there was no room for weightage to the religious minorities in a federal republic with a Parliamentary democracy based on adult suffrage and with the fundamental rights of all its citizens enshrined in a written constitution. In any case, the Sikhs as ‘a highly educated and virile community needed no weightage’.³⁵

³² K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 152.

³³ *The Tribune*, 24 February, 1949.

³⁴ Dharam Singh Sahota and Sohan Singh Sahota, *Sikh Struggle for Autonomy 1940-92*, Guru Nanak Study Centre, Garhdiwala, 1993, p. 43.

³⁵ A.S. Narang, *Storm over the Sutlej: The Akali Politics*, Gitanjali Publication House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 91.

Some events at this time gave a handle to the Akalis to spread Punjabi Suba movement further. In February 1949 the Jalandhar Municipal Committee unanimously decided that it would have Hindi as medium of education in its schools instead of Punjabi. On 9 June 1949 Panjab University at Solan rejected the proposal for Punjabi as medium of education.³⁶ This was strongly resented by the Akali Dal. It appears that the seeds of Punjabi Suba were being simultaneously sown elsewhere with these decisions of the government. As a consequence of the independence, a new political state called PEPSU came into being in July 1948. It consisted of Patiala and other Princely States in the East Punjab.³⁷ All these states with the exception of Malerkotla had Sikh rulers. PEPSU had the Sikh Maharaja Yadvendra Singh as its Rajpirmukh, a Sikh aristocrat, Gian Singh Rarewala as Chief Minister and the majority of its population was Sikhs. The formation of PEPSU was therefore a step forward towards the formation of Punjabi Suba. Sardar Patel while performing its inaugural ceremony characterized it as “Homeland of the Sikhs” and it was utilized by the Akalis as an argument in favour of its merger into the Sikh majority areas of Punjab and formation of Punjabi speaking state.³⁸

On 15th March 1948 a well knit group of the Akali legislators joined the Congress.³⁹ Subsequently, President of the Akali Dal, Giani Kartar Singh had a resolution passed by the Executive Committee, stating that the Akali Dal would not engage in political activity, henceforth.⁴⁰ The Akali members inside the Congress party functioned as a separate group under the leadership of Giani Kartar Singh and Gopi Chand Bhargava, they became increasingly dependent on the support of this group to maintain his position as the Chief Minister.⁴¹

³⁶ K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 151.

³⁷ The eight Princely States of which PEPSU was formed were: Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Kalsia, Kapurthala and Nalagarh.

³⁸ *The Hindustan Times*, 2 June, 1948.

³⁹ The Akali Dal Group consisting of twenty-three members.

⁴⁰ Gur Rattan Pal Singh, *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs*, p. 142.

⁴¹ *The Tribune*, 10 April, 1949.

Bhargava's opponents led by Bhim Sen Sachar severely criticized him for a secret deal with the Akali Dal and for succumbing to Akali Dal's pressure. But Sachar himself carried on secret negotiations with the Akali party with a view to wrest political power.⁴² The Akali Dal extended its support to Sachar who became the Chief Minister on 6 April 1949.⁴³

Giani Kartar Singh followed the policy of getting concession step by step for the Sikhs in an atmosphere of goodwill. Giani was soon to initiate a move that was to lead to what is called 'Sachar-Giani Formula.' He was anxious to serve the cause of the Punjabi Language without any further division of the Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of this conflict and helped Bhim Sen Sachar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from the position of Chief Ministership of the Punjab. In the bargain, Bhim Sen Sachar agreed to implement a new language formula known as Sachar-Giani Language Formula.⁴⁴

It was indeed a great achievement on the part of Giani Kartar Singh. This formula became a basis for the achievement of the Punjabi speaking state of the later days. Under this formula, Punjab was demarcated into three areas, the Punjabi speaking, the Hindi and the bi-lingual.⁴⁵ A Provision was made for children where mother tongue was other than the regional language, provided there were 40 students in the school of ten in each class requiring instruction in the other language.⁴⁶ The Sachhar Formula had far reaching political effects and had given permanent position to Giani Kartar Singh in the history of the Punjabi Suba Movement.

⁴² Ajit Singh, *Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1992, pp. 207-08.

⁴³ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India, The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Orient Longman Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 193.

⁴⁴ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, pp. 152-57.

⁴⁵ Dharam Singh Sahota, *Siyast Da Dhani: Giani Kartar Singh*, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁶ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 2, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, pp. 295-96.

While commenting on the role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Congress, Baldev Raj Nayyar in his book *The Minority Problem in the Punjab* writes, "In the third category he puts the group's leaders who find membership of the Congress Party a suitable instrument for the pursuit of either personal or community goals but are ready to forsake that party the moment such goals are frustrated and return to the Akali Dal."⁴⁷ Thus, the Sachar Formula was the biggest achievement of Giani Kartar Singh. Master Tara Singh the most influential Sikh leader, he took the announcement as clear discrimination against the Sikhs and the Punjabi speaking population.⁴⁸

Bhim Sen Sachar's ministry lasted only for six months making way for Bhargava again. The Akali members in the Congress skillfully used their bargaining power to precipitate crisis between the rival Hindu leaders in the Congress party or to reap the maximum advantage out of the crisis whenever it occurred.⁴⁹ Giani Kartar Singh was included in Bhargava Ministry. In return for Akali support, Bhargava had to yield all along to the opportunist postures of the Akali group.⁵⁰ The leadership of the Congress organizational wing strongly criticized the Congress government, headed by Bhargava. The Central Parliamentary Board advised Gopi Chand Bhargava to resign.⁵¹ On 16th June 1951 Bhargava resigned and President's rule was clamped in Punjab, which was lifted on 4 April 1952. The Akali group was able to secure the Sachar Formula through its association with the Congress party. The Punjab was declared a bilingual state with both Punjabi and Hindi as its languages. It was on 2nd October 1949 that the Sachar Formula was announced which provided for a notional division of the province into two zones, a Punjabi Zone and Hindi Zone. The Punjabi Zone of the carving of Sachar Formula consisted of the districts of Amritsar, Jullandhur, Gurdaspur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur, all the

⁴⁷ Baldev Raj Nayyar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, p. 138.

⁴⁸ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 294-95.

⁴⁹ *National Herald*, 6 November, 1949.

⁵⁰ *The Tribune*, 3 November, 1950.

⁵¹ Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, p. 15.

portions of Hissar district, lying to the east of Ferozepur, Patiala side of the Ghaggar river and Ropar and Kharar tehsils of Ambala district; to the Hindi Zone were assigned the districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak, Karnal, all portions of Hissar district lying to the south of Ghaggar river and Jagadhri and Naraingarh tehsils of Ambala district and Kangra.⁵² The remaining areas Simla, Ambala, Chandigarh and Sirsa were declared as bilingual areas.

The importance of the Sachar Formula lay in the fact that the government had accepted the Akali claim that the Punjab could be demarcated into Hindi speaking and Punjabi speaking regions. In its origin, the Sachar Formula sought to settle the problem of the medium of instruction in the public schools. It provided that Punjabi in Gurmukhi script and Hindi in Devnagri script should be the regional language of Punjabi speaking and Hindi-speaking areas respectively, which areas were to be demarcated by the government. It also provided that Punjabi speaking areas up to the high school stage should have Hindi as compulsory subject from the fourth grade. The reverse arrangements were to apply to the Hindi-speaking areas.⁵³ 'Sachar Formula' later became the basis for Akali Dal's demands for the division for Punjab.⁵⁴ Some Sikh leaders considered it a first step in the direction of a Punjabi Suba. The Constituent Assembly did not agree to the reservation of seats for any community. But the Sikhs, unlike other communities, were not willing to agree to such a decision. They insisted that their case should not be linked with the other communities. It was Master Tara Singh's recurrent theme that the "English have gone, but our (Sikhs) liberty has not come. For us the so-called liberty is simply a change of masters, black for white. Under the grab of democracy and secularism our Panth, our liberty and our religion are being crushed."⁵⁵ Hukam Singh reminded the Congress leadership of the assurances and promises they, including

⁵² K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 134.

⁵³ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, p. 219.

⁵⁴ Ajit Singh, *Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, p. 209.

⁵⁵ Master Tara Singh's Presidential Address, All India Sikh Conference, 28 March, 1953 (Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, 1953), p. 2.

Gandhi, had given to the Sikhs and forcefully urged in the Constituent Assembly that those should now be redeemed. Sardar Patel retorted that the Sikh members of the Constituent Assembly had agreed that they would not ask for any other concessions for their community if the Sikh backward classes were given the rights identical to those given to the scheduled castes and that had been conceded.⁵⁶ But Hukam Singh could not be reconciled and together with Joginder Singh Mann did not append his signatures, in protest on the original Constitutional document. From then on Hukam Singh became bitterly critical. He said, "Pandit Nehru is, to say the least, the spearhead of militant Hindu chauvisim who glibly talks about nationalism, a tyrant who eulogies democracy and a global liar- in short a political cheat, deceiver and double dealer in the service of the Indian reaction."⁵⁷ The year 1950 was followed by the conventions, conferences, rallies and statements by different leaders relating to the issue of the Punjabi Suba. Master Tara Singh in an article *Daily Ajit* during this period concluded that "It should be obvious that a harmonious India would not be possible unless we have a contented and loyal Sikh community."⁵⁸ By this time, the Akalis had failed to get any constitutional safeguards. In a meeting of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal on 30th July 1950, the merger was revoked on the grounds that the hopes of constructive sympathy and support from the great leaders had been belied. However, only one Akali member Jaswant Singh Duggal resigned from the Congress Party.⁵⁹

The Akali members who continued to stay in the Congress Party justified their position by maintaining that it was more beneficial to the Panth if they stayed in the Congress Party. In a speech at Amritsar, Ishar Singh Majhail who was a Cabinet Minister in the Gopi Chand Bhargava ministry said that even if the situation was viewed from selfish angle, the Sikhs should continue in the

⁵⁶ A.C. Kapur, *The Panjab Crisis*, S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1985, p. 173.

⁵⁷ *The Spokesman*, Vol. 3, 16 January, 1952.

⁵⁸ Devinder Pal Sandhu, *Sikhs in Indian Politics*, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p. 90.

⁵⁹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Akali Dal Da Ek Itihas*, Punjab Book Company, Jalandhar, 1978, p. 243.

Congress party for they are now enjoying 50 percent representation in the Cabinet. Giani Kartar Singh (Revenue Minister Punjab) remarked that the Sachar formula and the rights given to Sikh Harijans were the achievements for which they could justly feel proud.⁶⁰ Now the Punjab Congress decided to oppose the Akali demand of an autonomous status for Punjabi speaking State. On 15th December 1950, Partap Singh Kairon called an "All India Congress Sikhs Convention in which all the leading Congress Sikhs⁶¹ made attack on the Akali Dal and the Punjabi Suba demand. This convention was of the opinion that "The formation of new states on communal basis is bound to lead to fissiparous tendencies in the body-politic and it must be opposed by all those who desire to work for the unity and strength of the country...."⁶²

Giani Kartar Singh was pained when in 1951 Census majority of the Hindus in the Punjab disowned their mother tongue Punjabi and Hindu organization successfully persuaded Punjabi speaking Hindus to declare that their mother tongue was Hindi.⁶³ Now Giani Kartar Singh started drifting away from the congress. He decided to quit the party in 1952 when he was defeated by a small margin in Kartarpur Assembly Elections. He went back to Akali Dal and soon was appointed as the General Secretary of Akali Dal. He came back to Punjab Legislature once again as an Akali MLA. He was elected member of the Punjab Legislative Council in 1952.

After 1952 Giani seriously worked to control the Sikh masses and to prepare them for the struggle of getting Punjabi speaking state. The elections of

⁶⁰ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, p. 220.

⁶¹ Among those who attended the Congress convention were Giani Zail Singh, Surjit Singh Majithia, Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Jathedar Udharn Singh Nagoke, Sarmukh Singh Chamak and Jathedar Sohan Singh Jallalulman, K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 156.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Census of India 1951, Vol. 3, p. 293.

the S.G.P.C. came to be the pillar of strength and support of the Sikhs in the cause of Punjabi Suba.⁶⁴

The creation of Andhra Pradesh encouraged Sikh agitation for the Punjabi Suba. The Shiromani Akali Dal issued manifesto emphasizing that an autonomous Punjabi speaking province alone would give the Sikhs the needed security.⁶⁵

Giani Kartar Singh did a lot for the development of PEPSU. On September 30, 1953 an Akali Conference was held at Anandpur Sahib. The demand for an early formation of Punjabi Suba was reiterated.⁶⁶ On May 16, 1955, Giani Kartar Singh, Kabal Singh and some other prominent leaders were arrested for the demand of Punjabi Suba. A Convention of all party was organized in Amritsar on October 16, 1955. It fully supported the demand for creation of a Punjabi speaking state.⁶⁷

The demand for Punjabi-speaking province and the appointment of the State Reorganization Commission gave an impetus to the movement for a separate Haryana on Hindi-speaking state.⁶⁸ The States Reorganization Commission was confronted with a large number of memorandum given by the people of Haryana region for the formation of Haryana as a separate State.⁶⁹ The people of Haryana alleged that they had been discriminated against by the

⁶⁴ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 225.

⁶⁵ *The Spokesman*, 29 August, 1961.

⁶⁶ V.D. Mahajan, *Fifty Five Years of Modern India*, S. Chand Publisher, New Delhi, 1970, p. 483.

⁶⁷ Interview with Giani Lal Singh, Associate of Giani Kartar Singh. Department of History and Punjab Historical Studies, Oral History Cell, Punjabi University, Patiala, File No. OHC-110

⁶⁸ The demand for a separate Jatt State including the whole part of the Meerut Division of the U.P. and large part of the Ambala Division was mooted even in April 1947 when Akalis were pressing their case for a Sikh State and partition of Punjab; vide *Manserh*, Vol. X, Doc. 115, p. 183. Note by Sir E. Jenkins Giani Kartar Singh told Jenkins that the Sikhs would let the Hindu Jats have Rohtak, Gurgaon about half the Karnal district and about of Hissar district. But the Jat demand was not vigourously voiced.

⁶⁹ Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987, p. 69.

more advanced Punjabi in all the fields of education, administration, politics, trade and commerce. Speaking in Lok Sabha on 23 December 1955, Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava⁷⁰ gave figures from various departments, ministries, Parliament and State Legislative to prove that Haryana region had only 5.5 percent representation.⁷¹

19 member of the Punjab Legislature and two members of the Parliament representing the Ambala Division, in a memorandum submitted to the States Reorganization Commission, urged the formation of new State, comprising of the Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Meerut and Agra Division of U.P.⁷² Prof. Sher Singh asserted that nearly 90 percent of people of Haryana state were of the opinion that they should have no connection whatsoever with the Punjab and wanted that they should be “linked with the area, with the people of which they have everything in common, language, dress, habits and customs (and) with whom they were united before the great revolt of 1857 to form a separate State.”⁷³ Sri Chand, Sri Ram Sharma and Diwan Alakh Dhari also supported the demand for Haryana *Prant*.⁷⁴ The people of Haryana gave support to the demand of Punjabi Suba and criticized the Maha Punjab slogan for the hope of a Haryana *Prant* that lay only in the achievement of Punjabi Suba.

The States Reorganization Commission’s Report was published in October 1955. Despite the show of widespread Sikh support by Akalis which came in the midst of the deliberations of the State’s Reorganization

⁷⁰ Thakur Das Bhargava, an Advocate at Hissar, M.L.A. (Central) 1926-30 and 1945-47-50: Member Provisional Parliament 1950-52 and first and second Lok Sabha, Secretary Congress Party in Parliament and a member of the Panel of Chairman in the first and second Lok Sabha.

⁷¹ *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. I, 1955- Report on the State Reorganisation (New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1955), pp. 120-21.

⁷² *Hindu*, 29 April, 1954.

⁷³ *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Debates*, Vol. II: 6, Chandigarh, 2 November, 1955.

⁷⁴ Gulsan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, p. 78.

Commission, the recommendations of the Commission rejected the Punjabi Suba demand observing:

*The case for a Punjabi-speaking State falls firstly because it lacks the general support of the people inhabiting the area and secondly, because it would not eliminate any of the causes of friction from which the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State emanates. The proposed State would solve neither the language problem nor the communal problem, and far from relieving internal tension which exists between the communal and not linguistic groups, it might further exacerbate the existing feelings.*⁷⁵

On the other hand States Reorganization Commission recommended the integration of Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh into the administrative unit. The Akali Dal opposed the recommendations of the States Reorganization Commission and they alleged that it was a conspiracy to destroy the Sikh Nation and that the commission had led the Sikhs to a state with bound hand and foot to the slavery of an aggressively communal group.⁷⁶ On 11th October 1955, Master Tara Singh declared at Gurdwara Manji Sahib that they had already announced their non-confidence in the commission and therefore, they were not bound by its recommendations.⁷⁷

Following this Master Tara Singh gave a 'Do or Die' call to the Sikhs, in an appeal he said:

*Dear Sikh brothers, today we are faced with a calamity that is bound to finish us. The present stage is of do or dies. Set aside all ponderings, and let there be no wavering of indecision. It is the time for immolation to death, the symbol of sacrifice that has been picked. This is the time when all resources shall have to be exhausted, all efforts made and all sacrifices undergone.*⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, Government of India, Delhi, 1955, p. 146.

⁷⁶ The Tribune, 7 October, 1955.

⁷⁷ Akali, 13 October, 1955.

⁷⁸ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle, p. 255.

Giani Kartar Singh started that out of 14 recognized languages in the Indian Constitution, 13 States had been formed on the linguistic basis. Only Punjabi Suba had not been formed because Sikh loyalty was suspected.⁷⁹ Hukam Singh, another senior leader of the Akali Dal referred to it “as another deadly blow to the Sikhs and threatened that the Akalis would launch an agitation if peaceful negotiation failed.”⁸⁰

Akalis called a convention of all the parties and reorganization of the Sikhs on 16 October, and underlined the secular and democratic character of the demand. They were of the opinion that the recommendations of the Commission appeared to be as partisan as the most rabid partisan could wish. Even the Sachar Formula, which the Commission recognized was not implemented, was whittled down. The convention authorized Master Tara Singh to approach the government of India on behalf of the Sikh community.⁸¹

Master Tara Singh met Jawaharlal Nehru on 24th October in the presence of Abul Kalam Azad and G.B. Pant. He was accompanied by Giani Kartar Singh, Hukam Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Bhai Jodh Singh. Their talks were inconclusive. Another deputation met the Prime Minister to suggest that the PEPSU formula could be extended to the Punjab for solving the language problem and Punjabi language could be promoted in the whole state.⁸²

The annual session of All India Congress was held at Amritsar on 7th February 1956. The Akali Dal also held its tenth All India Akali Conference at Amritsar at the same time. The occasion was also seized by the Maha Punjab Samiti to put up its show on the same day. The procession that preceded the holding of the Akali Conference was historic. Principal Teja Singh described the Akali procession with these words:

⁷⁹ *Akali*, 13 October, 1955.

⁸⁰ *The Spokesman*, 12 October, 1955.

⁸¹ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India, The Sikhs of Punjab*, pp. 190-91.

⁸² *Ibid.*

*While standing by the road-side near the Shaheed Nagar, I saw a sight which had thrilled me to the core. It seemed as if the whole Sikh nation had turned out. All those who were able-bodied men and women had come from all quarters of Punjab and even beyond, were on the roads.*⁸³

Brecher, the author of *Nehru: A Political Biography*, wrote that this procession had impressed Prime Minister Nehru: "Nehru was sympathetic to the Sikh fears, but was reported by friends to be under strong pressure from the communal minded Hindu Congressmen who were not prepared to place the Punjabi-Hindus in an inferior political position."⁸⁴ In his speech on the occasion of the Conference, Master Tara Singh said:

*I must say that we cannot be satisfied unless we get rid of the communal domination of Punjabi Hindus, led by the Arya Samajists, who in their effort to destroy our religion went so far as not to even accept their mother tongue. We have demanded a Punjabi speaking state as the only permanent solution of the Punjab problem. It solves both the questions of communal domination and of language. Some modified form of our proposals are suggested by some well wishing gentlemen, but to me, all these solutions appear to be temporary and not conducive to permanent peace and settlement.*⁸⁵

This popular demonstration appealed to the democratic instincts of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was now prepared to accommodate the Akalis as much as he could in the face of the contending pressures.

On July 20, 1950 the Executive Committee of Akali Dal adopted a resolution directing "all MLAs who got elected on the Panthic ticket to resign forthwith from the Congress and create a separate Panthic Block in the Assembly Party."⁸⁶ The directive was conveyed to Baldev Singh, Defence

⁸³ *The Spokesman*, 11 February, 1955.

⁸⁴ Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. 386.

⁸⁵ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 261.

⁸⁶ *The Tribune and Akali Patrika*, 21 July, 1950.

Minister, Government of India, Giani Kartar Singh and Ishar Singh Majhail, two Akali Ministers in the Punjab Cabinet.⁸⁷

A deputation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and some other leaders met Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 24th October, 1955. Maulana Azad and Padit Pant were also present in the premier's house this meeting but the meeting failed at last. After some time these leaders again met Prime Minister and produced fruitful results.⁸⁸

On November 10, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Amritsar and went to Darbar Sahib to pay homage. Akali leaders including Giani Kartar Singh presented him Siropa on behalf of S.G.P.C. This was a point which created a goodwill feeling among the two sides. On February 11, 1956, the city witnessed a historic procession of Sikhs. Jawaharlal Nehru was stunned by the hold of Akalis on the Sikh masses.⁸⁹ On March 11, 1956, a general meeting of Shiromani Akali Dal was called at Amritsar. Giani Kartar Singh succeeded in over powering the opposition and getting Dal's acceptance of the Regional Formula. At last the Departments of Punjabi and Hindi were to be set up and provision was made for the establishment of Punjabi University.⁹⁰

It was March 11, 1956 when Giani Kartar Singh and Hukam Singh were elected as Deputy Speakers of Lok Sabha after the Akalis' acceptance of the Regional Formula. In the meeting of Working Committee Giani Kartar Singh stated that it would be essential to join the Congress for the ultimate good of the Akali Dal, because of the regional base of the Congress, to maintain Akali Dal's position on a certain political status and for the proper adjustment of the seats.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 209.

⁸⁸ Interview with Giani Lal Singh, Associate of Giani Kartar Singh. Department of History and Punjab Historical Studies, Oral History Cell, Punjabi University, Patiala, File No. OHC-110

⁸⁹ Harcharan Singh Bajwa, *Fifty Years of Punjab Politics 1920-70*, Modern Publishers, Chandigarh, 1979, p. 94.

⁹⁰ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 297-98.

⁹¹ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 277.

Giani Kartar Singh talked to Maulana Azad in 1956 before realizing that the Congress was ready to allow the Akali Dal to continue with its social cultural and religious activities but would not allow it to participate in the political affairs. On the contrary in a Press Conference Master Tara Singh declared on February 14, 1957, "Now I am not bound by the Akali Congress compromise because the Congress has dishonored us."⁹² Master Tara Singh made his position clear through the short speech that he made at the meeting. He went on to clarify, "Our object is not to create trouble. The proposal offered by the Government does not constitute the Punjabi Suba, but under the present circumstances, I do not want to fight."⁹³

In this meeting, majority of the leaders were in favour of accepting the scheme finalized afterwards, the scheme came to be known as the Regional Formula. The main provisions of the agreement which represented a compromise between the Hindu demand for the Union of all three states in greater Punjab and the Akali Sikhs' demand for a separate Punjabi-speaking state were as follows:

1. Punjab and PEPSU should be merged in a single bilingual state with a common Governor, Ministry, Legislature, Public Service Commission and High Court. The predominantly Hindu state of Himachal Pradesh would provisionally become a Union Territory.
2. For the transaction of the government business with regard to certain specified matters the State would be divided into two regions- one Hindi speaking and the other Punjabi-speaking.
3. For each region there would be a regional committee of the Punjab State Assembly consisting of the members of the Assembly, including the ministers belonging to the region but excluding the Chief Minister.
4. Legislation regarding the specified matters would be referred to the regional committees, which could also make legislative proposals to the

⁹² *The Tribune*, 15 February, 1957.

⁹³ *The Tribune*, 11 March, 1956.

State Government. The advice tendered by the regional committees would normally be accepted by the government and the State Legislature, but in the event of the difference of opinion the matter would be referred to the Government, whose decision would be final and binding.

5. The regional committee would deal inter alia with development and economic planning (with framework) of General development, Public Health, Primary and Secondary Education, Agriculture, Cottage and Small Scale Industries, Livestock, Fisheries, Cooperative Societies and Charitable and Religious Institutions.
6. The demarcation of the Hindi and Punjabi regions would be carried out in consultation with the State Government and the other interests concerned.
7. Both Punjabi and Hindi would be recognized as official language of the State. At district level and below the official language of each region would be the regional language. The State Government would set up two separate departments for promoting the Punjabi and Hindi languages. The proposals contained in the State Reorganization Bill were unanimously approved by the Pepsu Legislative Assembly on 22 March.⁹⁴

In a press statement on 15th March 1956 explaining the reasons for the acceptance of the Plan, Master Tara Singh said that the Formula fulfilled the aspirations of the Sikhs to an extent and at the same time did not give them any opportunity to dominate others- a power if given might make them "undemocratic and narrow minded."⁹⁵

After the agreement on the regional formula and the political compromise between the government and the Akali Dal the Sikh grievances as the Akali leaders themselves admitted, were redressed. But the compromise left the Akali

⁹⁴ *Papers Relating to Hindi Agitation in Punjab*, Public Relations Department, Punjab, Chandigarh, 1957, pp. 9-10.

⁹⁵ *The Tribune*, 16 March, 1956.

Dal in a political wilderness and it had to decide upon the course to be adopted in future. The party was in a situation of political drift and Gian Singh Rarewala, even said in a statement that under the changed circumstances, the Akali Dal should leave the political field, confine itself only to the social, cultural, religious and educational activities of the Sikhs and allow its members and supporters to join the national and progressive forces.⁹⁶

In fact, he even started discussion with the Congress leaders in order to facilitate the entry of his group into the Congress. An acrimonious debate followed among the Akali leaders, Master Tara Singh immediately branded Rarewala's move as a "treachery" and made it clear that the Akali Dal would maintain its independent existence because of his belief in the independent political entity of the Sikhs.⁹⁷ Hukam Singh characterized Rarewala's advice to join the Congress Party as "virtually an act of sabotage" and a 'betrayal of trust'.⁹⁸ The Working Committee even expelled Rarewala and his five colleagues for their advocacy.⁹⁹ However, the Akali Dal in view of increasing pressure to tilt towards Congress among the rural Sikhs, started negotiating with Congress leaders about political cooperation.¹⁰⁰ Eventually the convention of Akali Dal held at Amritsar on 2 October 1956 under the chairmanship of Master Tara Singh unanimously decided that it was "desirable that the Dal should again repose confidence in the Congress and its leaders so far as its political programme was concerned." It further resolved that the Dal would concentrate on and confine itself to the religious, educational, cultural, social and economic fields for the betterment of the Sikhs."

Thus on 24th November 1956 the General body meeting of the Akali Dal decided to delete from the Akali Dal's constitution those clauses which related to

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *The Tribune*, 12 June, 1956.

⁹⁸ *The Spokesman*, 18 June, 1956.

⁹⁹ *The Tribune*, 16 July, 1956.

¹⁰⁰ *The Tribune*, 3 October, 1956.

the national aspiration of Sikhs as a separate political entity.¹⁰¹ It was further resolved that in regard to the political activities the members of Akali Dal should join the Congress.

An era of close and cordial relations began between the Congress and the Akali Dal. Master Tara Singh declared that he would never forsake Jawaharlal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru praised Master Tara Singh for his courage and honesty of purpose.¹⁰²

Government's Attitude towards the Demand

All the political parties stepped up their efforts to propagate their respective points of view and demonstrate the solidarity of their followers and to establish before the State Reorganization Commission the validity of their claims. The Akali Dal and Maha Punjab Samiti exceeded certain limits, adopted more aggressive postures. Both shouted provocative slogans. The Hindu agitators shouted the slogan: 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan' and the Sikh shouted the counter slogan: 'Dhoti, topi, Jamuna Par' (those who were dhoti and cap i.e. Hindus would be sent across the Jammu). The situation became explosive and the Punjab Government banned the shouting of slogans of any type. The Akalis resented the ban and threatened to start a Morcha to defy the prohibitory orders. Both the Prime Minister and then Home Minister, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant expressed themselves against the threat of Akali agitation¹⁰³ and warned that the government would meet the challenge sternly. The Akalis did not relent and the Morcha was started with full vigour and attracted popular support both from the rural and urban Sikh population.¹⁰⁴ It was reported that the agitation received both implicit and explicit support of the various political parties.¹⁰⁵ The clash

¹⁰¹ A.S. Narang, *Storm Over Satluj- The Akali Politics*, p. 130.

¹⁰² J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India, The Sikhs of Punjab*, p. 193.

¹⁰³ *The Times of India*, 10 May, 1956.

¹⁰⁴ More than 12,000 Akalis were arrested. Among the leaders arrested were Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Hukam Singh.

¹⁰⁵ *The Tribune*, 16 June, 1955.

between the agitating procession is to and the police within the precincts of the Golden Temple on July 1955, led to widespread resentment all over the Punjab and the agitation assumed alarming proportions. Realizing the gravity of the situation the government withdrew the prohibitory order on 12 July 1955. The Akalis suspended their sixty-four days old Morcha, but that was not the end. With the publication of the Report of the States Reorganization Commission the Akali agitation entered a new phase.

The official language of each region at the district level and below was to be the regional language. The States were to be bilingual recognizing both Punjabi (Gurmukhi script) and Hindi (Devnagri script) as the official language of the State. The Punjab Government was to establish two separate departments for developing Punjabi and Hindi language. The general safeguards proposed for linguistic minorities were to be applicable to the Punjab like the other States of the Union of India. In accordance with and in furtherance of its policy to promote the growth of all Regional languages the Central Government encouraged the development of the Punjabi language.

The Regional Formula was accepted by the Akalis. Giani Kartar Singh conceded that what had been offered by the government was not the Punjabi Suba, yet he commended its acceptance as a Shagan or a promise of the Punjabi Suba. Master Tara Singh and leaders of the Akalis said, “no more Punjabi Suba” we are satisfied.”¹⁰⁶

Partap Singh Kairon (the then President Punjab State Congress) was opposed to the division of the State on linguistic basis. Nehru felt that Kairon was indispensable for Punjab and got him (Kairon) elected in place of Sachar. Kairon became the Chief Minister of Punjab on 23rd January 1956.

Nehru believed in the saying that ‘iron cuts iron’. So, in practical politics, Nehru brought Kairon to crush the extremist Sikh forces operating in the form of

¹⁰⁶ Attar Chand, *Jawaharlal Nehru and Politics in Punjab*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. 114.

'Punjabi Suba' agitation in the region. Kairon was a successful leader, because being a Sikh himself, he suffered from none of the hesitations that beset his predecessors. Kairon also had the full support of the Centre, particularly Nehru's unstinted support.¹⁰⁷ Kairon handled the Punjabi Suba agitation led by Akalis successfully. Because of his being a former Akali leader himself, he knew Master Tara Singh and Akali tactics. He manipulated his own intelligence sources, who provided Kairon with advance information regarding the Akalis move. Kairon used strong arm methods to crush the movement.

Government leadership believed that the Akali Dal was the main political party of the Sikhs and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee was their mini parliament and representative body of the Sikhs. S.G.P.C. also was main source of power of the Dal. In spite of having resources at its command the Akali Dal always wanted to establish its full control over the S.G.P.C. Government tried to cut these sources in order to establish its own control over it.

To achieve the control over S.G.P.C. the Congress Government directly contested two elections in 1954 and 1960 under the banner of its newly formed organization Khalsa Dal and Sadh Sangat Board respectively but could not be successful.¹⁰⁸

Master Tara Singh raised the demand of Punjabi Suba from time to time. As reaction to this there was a radical change in the attitude of the leadership of the Congress Government. It appeared that government wanted to oust Master Tara Singh from the arena of Sikh politics and conspired to remove him from the Presidentship of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Master Tara Singh was ousted from Presidentship of the S.G.P.C. in October 1958, by a neo-converted Akali Prem Singh Lallpura with the connivance of Congress and help of Giani Kartar Singh, the then Minister in the Punjab Government and the 22 members nominated from Pepsu, as a result of its merger in the Punjab. Tara

¹⁰⁷ S.C. Arora, *Turmail in Punjab Politics*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ Fateh Singh, *Facts about Punjabi Suba Agitation*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, 1960, p. 2.

Singh decided to resort to fast unto death at Delhi charging the Government with “gross interference in the Sikh religious affairs”. However, the calamity was averted through a letter that Gopal Singh brought from Jawaharlal Nehru to soothe the injured feelings of the venerable old Sikh Chief. Nehru after stating that he had no interest in the Gurdwara affairs and could discuss with him how best every semblance of government’s connection with them could be abolished (including elections conducted under government auspices etc.) expressed his “sincere apologies” if he had by any chance hurt the Akali Chief’s feelings. Thereupon Master Tara Singh abandoned his resolve to fast.¹⁰⁹ A year later he won a resounding victory at the elections to the S.G.P.C. and was re-installed its President in March 1960.

Formation of Punjabi Suba

In accordance with the Congress-Akali Agreement, the Akali candidates fought the 1957 General Election on Congress tickets. But prior to this dissention surfaced on the issue of the allotment of party’s tickets.¹¹⁰ The Akalis were given 26 seats only. The announcement of the final list of nominees provoked a revolt.¹¹¹ Master Tara Singh was the first to rebel against his own pact with Nehru. In a Press Conference Master Tara Singh stated:

¹⁰⁹ Master Tara Singh was so moved by this letter that he refused to divulge to the press (inspite of their insistent protests) the first paragraph of the letter in which the Prime Minister of India had expressed his “sincere apologies”. Later he told the present writer: “Jawaharlal has shown his greatness by saying that he apologises to me, should I be so mean as to publicise this to the press?” Master Tara Singh had a streak of high idealism in him and he was essentially a man of compromise, if his people’s self respect were not hurt.

Quoted in Gopal Singh, *History of the Sikh People 1469-1978*, World Sikh University Press, New Delhi, 1979, p. 726.

¹¹⁰ Kailash Chander Gulati, *The Akali: Past and Present*, p. 166.

¹¹¹ Amongst the Akalis, however, there arose an internal tussle for political supermacy between Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. Both of them made separate efforts to procure as many Congress tickets for their camp followers as they could. Master Tara Singh demanded about fifty tickets for his people. But Giani Kartar Singh outmanoeuvred him and secured 25

*Now I am not bound by the Akali-Congress compromise because the Congress had dishonoured us. The members of the Congress High Command had assured us of giving representation to the Akalis in accordance with their position amongst the Sikhs, and had promised that the list of Congress nominees for the General Election would be finalized in consultation with me, but these assurances were not respected. How ridiculous to consider our position amongst the Sikhs to be such as to entitle us to not more than 1/3rd seats in the Vidhan Sabha which the Congress has allowed us.*¹¹²

Master Tara Singh put more than 15 candidates against the Congress nominees. He called these contestants as Panthic candidates. During this election Master Tara Singh made strong speeches against the Congress party declaring that it was futile to repose confidence any more in the Congress party as “the Congress party has deceived us”.¹¹³

The Congress Party contested this election on the plank of reconstruction and building of Indian society, but the Akali Dal’s main focus was on the demand for a Punjabi speaking State.

None of the Panthic nominees of Tara Singh succeeded, however, whereas the Congress Party had 120 seats in house of 154. Among the newly elected Congress legislators 22 were elected on the Akali quota and about 6 belonged to the Rarewala group.

In the 1957 General Election the Congress polled more votes in the Assembly elections than it had done in 1952. During the 1952 general elections the Congress Party had firmly opposed the demand for Punjabi Suba and had been able to win considerable Hindu and Harijan support. Prior to the 1957

tickets mostly for people of his choice. Master Tara Singh opposed Congress tickets being given to Partap Singh Kairon, Darbar Singh and other some Akalis. Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, Sameer Prakashan, Chandigarh, 1984, p. 88.

¹¹² Ajit Singh, Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, pp. 214-15.

¹¹³ *The Times of India*, 16 February, 1957.

General Elections the Congress Party conceded the Regional Formula to the Akali Dal and had witnessed the Dal to merge politically into the Congress Party.

TABLE 7 (i)

Party wise Position in the Punjab Assembly Election, 1957¹¹⁴

Total Votes Polled	73,51,164
Invalid Votes	1,67,334
Valid Votes	71,83,830

Percentage of Votes polled 53,76%

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of votes polled
Congress	154	120	47.51
Communist	69	6	13.56
Praja Socialist	15	1	1.25
Jana Sangh	64	9	8.60
Scheduled Castes	24	5	5.39
Federation			
Socialist (Lohia)	8	0	0.49
Independents	115	13	23.20
Total	449	154	100.00

¹¹⁴ Compiled from Election Commission, *Report on the Second General Elections in India, 1957*, Vol. II, Manager Publications, Delhi, 1958.

In this manner it was able to secure larger support from the part of the Sikh community which was under the influence of the Akali Dal, but in the process it also lost a larger part of the Hindu vote.¹¹⁵

The analysis of the election results have revealed that there were significant shifts in the support-base of different the political parties. There was a unique shift in the urban Hindu support from the Congress in 1952 to the Jana Sangh in 1957. A section of Hindus both rural and urban supported the Jana Sangh. Since the Akalis did not participate in the elections the rural Sikhs supported the Congress, whereas the urban Sikhs opted for the independents and Jana Sangh. The Communist Party of India got a good number of votes from the rural areas.¹¹⁶

After the Assembly election, Partap Singh Kairon was elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly party on 3 April 1957. He formed the Congress Ministry and inducted two erstwhile Akalis- Gian Singh Rarewala and Giani Kartar Singh in his Cabinet. Moreover Kairon took control of both the Congress Party organization and the government transforming bi-factional cleavage into single group dominance.¹¹⁷

One of the provisions of the Regional Formula was to give no option to the students for Hindi in the Punjabi Region. The Arya Samajist who had earlier refused to implement the Sachar Formula in their schools, now opposed the Regional Formula as something than the earlier one worse. Under the Hindi Raksha Samiti they started a 'Save Hindi' movement in their opposition to

¹¹⁵ Myren Weiner and John Osgood Field, *Electoral Politics in the Indian States: Party Systems and Cleavages*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1975, p. 39.

¹¹⁶ A.S. Narang, *Punjab Politics in National Perspective*, Gitanjali Publication, New Delhi, 1986, p. 37.

¹¹⁷ Baldev Raj Nayar, 'Punjab' in Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968, pp. 458-480.

Punjabi. This movement was supported by men like Suraj Bhan¹¹⁸ and the Arya Samajist politicians such as Virendra, Editor of the *Partap*. The language aspect of the Regional Formula was compromised by making concession to Hindi. Soon after the agitation started in, lasted for seven months. However, the Chief Minister Partap Singh Kairon, under the pressure from the Arya Samajists, adopted delaying tactics in the implementation of the Regional Formula.

The Akali Dal's daily 'Jathedar' observed in October 1961 that if the Regional Formula had been implemented in the spirit in which it had been conceived by the Central leadership under the guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru, then no further trouble would have arisen in the state of Punjab.¹¹⁹

The dissatisfaction with the working of the Regional Formula and the indifferent attitude of Kairon towards the Akali legislators brought the Akali Dal out of the Congress fold.¹²⁰ On 14th June, 1958 Master Tara Singh while addressing a gathering at Amritsar, stated that compelled by circumstances, he had given up the demand for Punjabi Suba and agreed to the Regional Formula, but he had found that the attitude of the Government was forcing him again to give preference to the Punjabi Suba over the Regional Formula. He, however, condemned the idea of Sikh State saying:

*I have never wanted a Sikh State, nor I am in favour of it, and added, "I do not want to usurp the rights of another community. I want the freedom of Sikhs."*¹²¹

However, on September 16, 1958 at a reception given to Rachhpal Singh on his election as the President of Local Akali Dal at Delhi, he announced that the Regional Formula in the Punjab had not been satisfactorily implemented and

¹¹⁸ Suraj Bhan, Principal of D.A.V. College Jalandhar, who later become Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University.

¹¹⁹ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India, The Sikhs of the Punjab*, p. 196.

¹²⁰ Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, p. 27.

¹²¹ *The Tribune*, 15 June, 1958.

that 'I will be compelled to reopen the demand for Punjabi Suba.'¹²² Thereafter the first Punjabi Suba Conference was held on 12 October 1958 at Amritsar where the plan for its attainment was announced by Sant Fateh Singh who had, by then, come to prominence as the Senior Vice-President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and trusted lieutenant of Master Tara Singh. Addressing the conference, he stated that their demand was only for a Punjabi Suba wherein they should be able to develop the Punjabi language and culture and protect their religion. He complained that the Government had taken life among from the Regional Formula and handed over the corpse to them. He deplored the inordinate delay in the implementation of the formula whereby the Sikhs had been completely disillusioned.¹²³

On the other hand, the Federation of Sikh Students urged partition of Punjab. In a statement to the press, it announced that the Regional Formula was the 'root cause of all the discontent and strained relations in the State'. After a careful study and analysis of the nature of the 'Save Hindi' movement, one is led to an inevitable conclusion that ultimately the partition of Punjab on linguistic basis alone would create a peaceful atmosphere in the State, it added.¹²⁴

Hukam Singh in one of his recorded interviews had stated that the first blow had been given to the Regional Formula by Master Tara Singh himself when he sponsored his own candidates to fight against the Congress in 1957 elections. And this he did in defiance of the decision of the general body of the Akali Dal taken almost unanimously in a meeting presided over by him.¹²⁵

The second blow was dealt on Regional Formula by the Hindi agitation under whose pressure the government, both Central and State yielded to whittle

¹²² Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba: The Story of Struggle*, p. 309.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Stated by Hukam Singh in an interview with Dr. Kirpal Singh, Department of History and Punjab Historical Studies, Oral History Cell, Punjabi University, Patiala, File No. OHC-109, p. 111.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

it down. Partap Singh Kairon was never enthusiastic about its implementation. Pandit Pant was deliberately tardy in framing the rules and demarcating the zones.¹²⁶

After Master Tara Singh's declaration to attain Punjabi Suba, the entire Punjab Government machinery was moved to oust him from the Presidentship of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Giani Kartar Singh vehemently supported Prem Singh Lallpura against Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh was defeated by three votes because of Giani Kartar Singh got the support of all the 24 Communist members and 3 Congress members.¹²⁷

The second Punjabi Suba Conference was held at Chandigarh. Master Tara Singh addressed the mammoth gathering of more than 25,000 persons. The cumulative dissatisfaction among the Sikhs with the non-implementation of the Regional Formula, the impact of Hindi Raksha movement on them and the interference of the government in the Gurdwara administration were the factors that created an atmosphere favourable for agitation, and Master Tara Singh did not lose the opportunity and announced that he would take out a silent procession of the Sikhs at Delhi to demonstrate against the interference of the government in the Gurdwara administration on 15th March 1959.

Master Tara Singh was arrested on 13th March at midnight. After his arrest a procession was taken out from the Parade Ground of Delhi on 15 March 1959. According to the newspaper reports, there were about three lakhs of people in the procession. The portrait of Master Tara Singh was taken in a truck at the head of the procession. A huge All India Dharmic Conference was held at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj grounds, where a resolution expressing great resentment at the arrest of Master Tara Singh, was passed.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹²⁷ Jaswant Singh (ed.), *Master Tara Singh: Jivan Sangarsh Te Udesh*, Hades Printing Press, Amritsar, 1972, pp. 287-88.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.

In his communication from Dharamsala Jail, Master Tara Singh wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting arbitration on the issue of government's interference in the Sikhs religious affairs. Master Tara Singh got the reply on 21 March 1959 through which Pandit Nehru rejected the arbitration proposal: *The Statesman* reported:

“Nehru is reported to have disagreed with Master Tara Singh's proposal that the latter's grievances be referred to arbitration. In his recent correspondence with Nehru, Master Tara Singh had suggested that an impartial person should arbitrate on the question whether the Punjab Government had interfered in the religious affairs of the Sikhs by passing the Sikh Gurdwara Amendment Act. He had particularly questioned the motives of Giani Kartar Singh, Punjab's Minister for Agriculture. He had proposed that his complaints be referred to Acharaya Vinobha Bhave, C. Rajagopalchari and Jai Prakash Narayan or all of them. Nehru's reply was delivered to Master Tara Singh at Yol Camp in Dharamsala just before his release. Nehru is understood to have explained in the letter that it would be unprecedented to refer an Act passed by a legislature to arbitration. Further it was not clear what exactly was to be referred to for arbitration. Clear and precise issue had not been raised and the alleged motives of a particular individual were too vague a matter for inquiry...”¹²⁹

On the intervention of the Central Government, Master Tara Singh was released on 21 March 1959. The proposal for arbitration was rejected by the Prime Minister again on 5 April 1959 on the ground that there was nothing to be referred to arbitration. Master Tara Singh announced that he would go on fast unto death from 16 April 1959. A few well-meaning friends interceded and Nehru invited Master Tara Singh on 11 April 1959 for talks.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ *The Statesman*, 23 March, 1959.

¹³⁰ *The Tribune*, 12 April, 1959.

In the meantime, the election to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee became due and was held in January 1960. Partap Singh Kairon, Gian Singh Rarewala and Kartar Singh jointly sponsored 'Sadh Sangat Board' to fight the election against the Akali Dal. On May 1959 Master Tara Singh announced at Ludhiana that he would fight S.G.P.C.'s election on the Punjabi Suba issue only. The decision of the Congress High Command on 23 December 1959 to bifurcate the State of Bombay into two States, Maharashtra and Gujrat had an impact on the Sikh masses on the eve of the elections of S.G.P.C. This gave teeth to the demand by Sikhs for their own Punjabi-speaking people.

The Parliamentary Committee had 22 members (14 members from Lok Sabha and 7 members from Rajya Sabha) with Hukam Singh, the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha as its Chairman.¹³¹ Simultaneously a Press communique was issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat inviting public bodies, associations or individuals desirous of submitting memoranda for the consideration of the Committee.¹³²

On 10th January 1966 Lachhman Singh Gill, General Secretary of the S.G.P.C. and Rawel Singh, a member of its Executive met the Committee and presented the case of Punjabi-speaking State.¹³³

On 29 January Giani Kartar Singh and Harcharan Singh Brar appeared before the Committee on behalf of the Congress group in the Punjab

¹³¹ Members of the Parliamentary Committee were:

Chairman- Hukam Singh (Speaker).

From Lok Sabha: M.S. Aney, Mani Ram Bagri, Brahm Prakash, S.N. Dwivedy, Dhanna Singh Gulshan, Hem Raj, Maharaja Karni Singh of Bikaner, Lehri Singh, Surjit Singh Majithia, K.D. Malviya and H.N. Vidyalankar.

From Rajya Sabha: Bansi Lal, Uttam Singh Duggal, Joginder Singh, Dayabhai V. Patel, Sadiq Ali, Miss Shanta Vashist, A.B. Vajpayee.

¹³² Pt. Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, p. 294.

¹³³ *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on the demand for Punjabi Suba*, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, 1966, Appendix II, p. 56.

Legislature.¹³⁴ Both argued in favour of Punjabi Suba. The Committee received 7184 written memorandums.¹³⁵ Members of Shiromani Akali Dal and Master Tara Singh personally met the Committee at Amritsar and revived their demand for Punjab Suba.¹³⁶

It would be pertinent to observe that Hukam Singh secured a unanimous vote in favour of the creation of Punjab Suba. But circumstances changed soon because Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri died at Tashkent on 11 January 1966 and Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister on 20 January 1966. In the arising circumstances Mahavir Tyagi an important member in the Committee resigned from the Cabinet. Gulzari Lal Nanda and Jagjivan Ram were put on the Committee in their place. Gulzari Lal Nanda, Union Home Minister, who as Minister-in-charge handled this issue, cut a sorry figure. It was greatly felt that he never wanted Punjab to be divided and was therefore, very sympathetic and cooperative with those who opposed the demand for Punjabi Suba.¹³⁷

Giani Kartar Singh, the promoter of the Punjabi Suba plan, opposed the demand for a separate Sikh province and characterized it as “anti-national and harmful to the Sikhs, therefore, it cannot be accommodated in the secular set up of the Indian republic.” The Shiromani Akali Dal fought elections along with Congress Party’s alliance and after the victory a Congress-Akali Government was formed headed by Gopi Chand Bhargava and Giani Kartar Singh was inducted in the Ministry as a ‘Minister of Education and Revenue’. During his tenure of office, he tried his level best to promote the cause of Punjabi language and literature. Giani Kartar Singh tried to solve the thorny language problems and carved out a formula known as ‘Sachar Formula’. Giani was soon to initiate a move that was to lead to what is called ‘Sachar-Giani

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Pt. Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, p. 294.

¹³⁶ *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on the demand for Punjabi Suba*, Appendix III, p. 62.

¹³⁷ Attar Singh, ‘What went wrong’ in Abida Sammiuddin (ed.), *The Punjab Crisis: Challenge and Response*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, p. 19.

Formula.' Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of this conflict and helped Bhim Sen Sachar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from the position of Chief Ministership of the Punjab. As a bargain Bhim Sen Sachar agreed to implement a new language formula known as Sachar-Giani Language Formula. Under this formula, Punjab was demarcated into three areas, the Punjabi speaking, the Hindi and the bi-lingual. The Sachhar Formula had far reaching political effects and had given permanent position to Giani Kartar Singh in the history of the Punjabi Suba Movement. Giani Kartar Singh (Revenue Minister Punjab) remarked that the Sachar formula and the rights given to Sikh Harijans were the achievements for which they could justly feel proud. On May 16, 1955, Giani Kartar Singh, Kabal Singh and some other prominent leaders were arrested for the demand of Punjabi Suba. Giani Kartar Singh said that out of 14 recognized languages in the Indian Constitution, 13 States had been formed on linguistic basis. This was a point which creates a goodwill feeling among the two sides. The Regional Formula was accepted by the Akalis. After the Assembly elections, Partap Singh Kairon was elected as the leader of the Congress Assembly party on 3 April 1957. He formed the Congress Ministry and inducted two erstwhile Akalis- Gian Singh Rarewala and Giani Kartar Singh in his Cabinet. On 29 January Giani Kartar Singh and Harcharan Singh Brar appeared before the Committee both argued in favour of Punjabi Suba.



On the issue of keeping Akali Dal's separate entity, Giani Kartar Singh resigned from the Dal's presidentship on 7-4-48. Master Tara Singh was elected in his place on 30-5-48. The picture shows Master along with Hukam Singh addressing the Press Conference at Delhi on 2-8-48, in which Punjabi Suba Demand was raised. Ajaib Singh Machakki, Rachhpal Singh, Kehar Singh Vairagi are also seen.

CHAPTER 5

As Revenue, Rehabilitation and Agriculture Minister (1949 to 1952 and 1957 to 1967)

Giani Kartar Singh also played a unique and constructive role in the development of the Punjab after independence. He now primarily aimed at adjusting Sikh politics to the main stream of national politics and to convert Punjab into an ideal, modern and secular state. That he did in all sincerity. In spite of the fact that he had been a controversial figure in politics, no one has ever doubted his sincerity of purpose and the willingness to make sacrifices. He was a constructive worker. His practical approach to knotty problems was par excellence. Little wonder, he became a legendary figure in his very life time. There is not the least doubt that his name would ever shine like a pole-star in the history of the modern Punjab.

Giani Kartar Singh recovered from the shock of partition sooner than most other Sikh politicians and worked day and night for the proper rehabilitation of refugees from West Pakistan. He stayed in the Western Punjab till the last possible moment. And when he moved out of the area, he led the biggest refugee's caravan of history. It consisted of three lakhs of people who trod their way into India from the districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery. In all nearly four million displaced persons from West Pakistan crossed the border. Within days of their arrival, they started itching for resettlement. Giani impressed upon the refugees to lodge themselves in East Punjab and the Sikh States. He impressed upon the refugee land-holders the desirability of not going beyond Ambala district in any case. "I insisted upon S. Joginder Singh Mann, the then Rehabilitation Minister and R.N. Thapar, the then Financial Commissioner to send the land-holders to the specific districts under a clearly thought out scheme. The scheme lay in settling the refugees from the same area into a compact territory of this side of the border. For example, the refugee land-

holders from Lahore and non-colonists from Montgomery district were planned to be settled in Ferozepur district and those from Sialkot district in Hoshiarpur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. Those families which had gone to West Punjab as colonists were advised to return to their ancestral villages.”¹ In this way, about 3,50,000 peasants and cultivators families from the West-Punjab Government crossed over.² Each family was temporarily allotted a ‘Plough Unit’ of 10 acres of land and given loan to buy seeds and agricultural equipment. Giani Kartar Singh used his full energy for total transfer of Hindu-Sikh population from the West Punjab to the East Punjab and the Muslims to the West Punjab from the East Punjab. In the earlier stages Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru opposed this scheme and Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the people to stay on at their original places. It was not realized that without transfer of total population there was no way out for the permanent settlement of refugees but later on Pandit Nehru reconciled himself to the total transfer of Hindus and Sikhs of Western Punjab.

Giani did not allow all his attention taken up by 16 April, 1947 Rehabilitation of refugees. Up to April 1948, he was the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal. He got very anxious to connect his party with the Indian National Congress and thus suitably make the Sikh politics run in the main stream of National life of independent India. Due to his personal efforts, the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution on March 17, 1948 advising all the members of the Panthic Assembly party both in the Central and the East Punjab Assemblies to forthwith join the Congress Assembly parties.

After this compromise, Giani Kartar Singh became a Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation in the Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. That began a new

¹ Rural Rehabilitation in the Punjab (Punjab Government Public Relations Department, Simla’s Publication), p. 1.

² Quasi Permanent Allotment of Land in Punjab (Punjab Government Public Relations Department, Simla’s Publication)

phase in his political career. Now he could get things of rehabilitation more effectively. As Rehabilitation Minister, his main aim was to permanently settle the refugee land-holders and to initiate other welfare schemes for the benefit of the down-trodden. He was fortunate in having two brilliant I.C.S. officers, Tarlok Singh and Dr. M.S. Randhawa, to assist him in the Rehabilitation Department. Rehabilitation Advisory Boards were set-up in all the districts. S. Tarlok Singh drew upon a land-settlement manual which out-lived the policy to be followed. "He converted all the evacuee land into standard acres i.e. an acre which could yield between 10 to 11 mounds of wheat and a standard acre was equated with one rupee and land was addressed in terms of annas fraction of the standard acre."³ As against 4,000,000 standard units left in Pakistan the available land in the East Punjab was only 2,500,00 units. A scheme of graded cuts was introduced by which the small land holders did not suffer as much as the rich Zamindar. It was the latter who as a class was made to lose the major portion of their lands. This graded-cut affected the economic, social and political structure of the Punjab later on. Under this, scheme a peasant who abandoned 30 acres of land in Pakistan got 21 acres in the East Punjab but a land-lord who left 4000 acres got only 326 acres here.

As Rehabilitation minister, Giani Kartar Singh aimed at benefitting the peasant proprietors from the West Punjab as much as possible. At that time, there was a suggestion from some ministers with urban back-ground and some prominent Sikh leaders like S. Swaran Singh, then Home-Minister and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke that there should be option to land-holders to get compensation in terms of money. Possibly S. Swaran Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke had taken that stand because they were not refugees and had no stakes in the issue. Giani Kartar Singh stoutly opposed this suggestion and emphasized that the refugee land holders should get land for land even if they had to suffer a graded-cut. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava agreed with Giani's

³ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p. 284.

suggestion and this had a far-reaching effects. His suggestion for evaluating first graded Lyallpur district acre at 18 annas, Montgomery acre at 16 annas and Sind acre at 14 annas was also accepted by S. Tarlok Singh, the Director General of the Rehabilitation Department. The Hindu Landlords of Jhang, Multan and Shahpur districts had left 16 lakh acres of totally barren-*Banjar Kadim*-land in Pakistan. In their case, Giani Kartar Singh made them to agree to get nominal compensation in terms of money emphasizing that this land had no value. This decision enabled him to allot more land to the peasants of the lower category.⁴

Some utopian socialist leaders suggested that “Start every refugee with five acres of land and distribute the rest among the land-less.” But Giani Kartar Singh under the advice of P.N. Thapar, Financial Commissioner, vehemently opposed this suggestion and said ‘Do so’ if you are dealing with the whole country, refugees or non-refugees. Do not pick up the unfortunates who have lost all.⁵ But later on, when Giani Kartar Singh strongly proposed in the cabinet that all the *nambardars* should be allotted one square land each out of the evacuee pool, he was persuaded by S. Tarlok Singh and S. M.S. Randhawa not to press this proposal.⁶

After permanent settlement of land-holders from the West Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh gave more attention to the land reforms and the allied problems as the revision of land revenue rates. In 1949, he issued orders for compulsory consolidation of land. This work received top priority. The *Killa-bandi* or actual demarcation of rectangles of land measuring approximately 73 by 66 yards gave the streamlined agricultural land a shape pleasing to the eyes. *Katcha* roads leading from one village to another were demarcated in accordance with a survey plan for the whole state. This helped a lot in brightening the life of the

⁴ Interview with S. Kabal Singh. Giani's Personal Assistant from 1957 to 1961 on 2.10.78, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁵ A.N. Bali, *Now It can be told*, Akashvani Prakashan, Jullunder, 1949, p. 118.

⁶ A.N. Bali, *Glimpses of Punjab's History*, The Auther, New Delhi, 1969, p. 125.

villagers. It was a prelude to or beginning of the green revolution and link-roads of the later years. A new era of rural development and agricultural development, under community development scheme began. The credit of all these welcome changes must be given to Giani Kartar Singh, the initiator of compulsory consolidation.

According to land Alienation Act, 1900, the Khattris, Aroras, Baniyas and Harijans were declared non-agriculturists. This has always been a source of heart burning and division among the different categories of the Punjabis. Though cultivators, this Act stipulated the Harijans in villages were not to be the owners of the land on which they had built their houses. Giani Kartar Singh as Revenue Minister piloted a bill giving full right to the so-called non-agriculturists to buy land and thus got the controversial land Alienation Act of 1900 repealed. He also gave ownership rights to the thousands of Harijan householders living in villages and thus won the sympathy and gratitude of the down-trodden and the oppressed.

In 1948, when Giani Kartar Singh was again the Revenue Minister, he did a great service to the Punjab Peasants by piloting the Punjab Land Mortgage Bank Act. The bill was prepared by Sh. S.S. Puri, who was Registrar Cooperative Societies, at that time. The land holders were entitled to get loans from the bank on the security of their land. This was a very helpful scheme for the rapid development of agriculture in the Punjab. In 1951, When Lala Jagat Narain was the Transport Minister; he proposed complete nationalization of Passenger Transport in the Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh instantly opposed the proposal and it was at his suggestion that some particular routs like Jalandhar-Amritsar routes were provincialised (nationalized) on experimental basis and a ratio of 50% for Government and 50% for non-Government routes fixed to be maintained as a policy. It is also worth-mentioning that when site for Chandigarh was selected for the capital of Punjab in 1950, Giani Kartar Singh was the Revenue and Rehabilitation Minister. The land-owners sought to be displaced for the construction of the city demanded which land. On the advice of Sh. P.N.

Thapar, which was strongly supported by Giani Kartar Singh, later on the proposal was accepted by the Cabinet. The land-lords in three Tehsils of Ambalas, Ropar and Kharar were persuaded to place their surplus land at the disposal of the Government by Giani Kartar Singh.⁷

Giani Kartar Singh was not confining himself only to the problem posed by the Department. He took a keen interest in the Minority problem of Punjab. One must go back a little to see how he did that. During 1946, General Elections, the Akali Dal had secured 23 seats in the Punjab Assembly and S. Swaran Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were its prominent leaders. In March, 1948, they had merged themselves in the Congress. At that time Giani Kartar Singh was the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and it was due to his initiative that 'on March 17, 1948, the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal advised all the members of the Panthak Assembly party both at the centre and in the East Punjab to join the Congress Assembly Parties forthwith.'⁸

Soon after Giani Kartar Singh announced that the Sikhs would not demand any communal electorate. Instead, they would throw their weight with the Congress and give it complete support if they were offered safeguards. In spite of such a unique gesture of goodwill on his part, as the President of The Shiromani Akali Dal, the communal Hindu Press continued to dub him and the Sikhs as stark communalists. Little wonder that this hurt the feelings of many a Sikhs. Even nationalist leader of the Sikhs like Gurbachan Singh Bajwa had to declare "the prevalence of communalism in services is having serious repercussions on the public life in the province..... if we want to avoid a repetition of the past tragedy the confidence of the minority community will have to be won by the majority community."⁹ The Hindi Punjabi controversy further added to the Hindu-Sikh differences.

⁷ *The Tribune*, 7 July, 1950.

⁸ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, U.C. Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1970, p. 136.

⁹ Punjab Assembly Debates, 18 March, 1948.

At the centre, the Constituent Assembly appointed an Advisory Committee on the minority and fundamental rights in February, 1948. One of its sub-committees consisting of Sardar Patel as Chairman and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajinder Prasad, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. K.M. Munshi as members was directed to report on the minority problems which affected the East Punjab and Bengal.

In the meantime, Dr. Gopi chand Bhargava, the then Chief Minister of Punjab issued a circular in June, 1948 laying down the Education Policy of the State Government, "The Government of the East Punjab had decided" Gopi Chand Bhargava's circular stated, "that the medium of instruction in Schools in the East Punjab will be mother-tongue of the pupil. The script to be used will either be the Devanagari or Gurmukhi in the last two classes. The school which adopts the Devanagari script in the first two classes will have to use the teaching of Gurmukhi script as additional script from third class onward and vice-versa." This declaration of the Government declaring both Hindi and Punjabi as medium of instruction was not liked by the Sikh leaders. In October, 1948 the Akali Dal passed a resolution demanding separate electorate for the Sikhs at least for the next ten years. Of course, it was not to the liking of Giani Kartar Singh, who had opposed separate electorate for the Sikhs as far back as in October, 1947. In his own way, he was working for safeguard of the interest of the Sikhs minority as a minister in the Congress in the Punjab. He persuaded the East Punjab ministry to appoint a minority committee which was done by a unanimous decision of the House. In early November, 1948. Giani Kartar Singh persuaded all the Sikh members of the Assembly except Partap Singh Kairon to submit a charter of demands on November, 15, 1948. The main demands in the charter were as under:-

- (1) Representation to the Sikhs on the basis of 1941 census without excluding the Sikhs who had migrated to the other provinces.
- (2) The Sikhs be given 5 percent representation in the central cabinet.

- (3) The Sikhs to have minimum one minister and one Deputy Minister in the Central Cabinet.
- (4) The post of the Governor and the premier of the province to be given to the Sikhs.
- (5) 50 percent representation in the Provincial Cabinet to go to the Sikhs.
- (6) The Gurgaon district and the Lehari State to be excluded from the East Punjab.
- (7) 40 percent of the services are reserved for the Sikhs.
- (8) If the above-demands were rejected, the Sikhs to be allowed to form a new province of 7 districts i.e. Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ambala.¹⁰

The minority committee could not come to any decision and appointed a Suba committee of ten members of which 5 were Hindus and 5 were Sikhs. The members were, Bhim Sen Sachar, Ch. Lehri Singh, B. L. Chaman, Suraj Mal and Smt. Bhano Devi all of whom were Hindus and Giani Kartar Singh, Swaran Singh, Ujjal Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail and Bachan Singh who were all Sikhs. In spite of their best efforts, they could not arrive at any agreed decision. 'The Sikh-demands like communal weightage and reservation were taken as devices to distort the growth of a healthy and natural political development.'¹¹ Both Giani Kartar Singh and Baldev Singh were making efforts to avoid the clash between the Congress and the Akali Dal which was fast approaching. Congress leaders at the Centre were also trying their level best to prevent the Hindu-Sikh confrontation in the Punjab. The arrest of Master Tara Singh on February 19, 1949 was an unfortunate event. In this context, the inauguration of the Patiala & East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) in May, 1948 which was another important event in the Constitution development in the Punjab. It further aggravated the tension between two sister communities.

¹⁰ Harjinder Singh Dilgir, *Shiromini Akali Dal*, Sikh University Centre, Belgium, 2000, p. 209.

¹¹ *The Tribune*, Ambala, 26 November, 1948.

Giani Kartar Singh who was a shrewd political fully realized that the Sikh can gain only by winning the goodwill of the national leaders and any confrontation with the Central Government could be extremely detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs. On May 27, 1949 when proposal for elimination of reservation for minorities was being discussed, he persuaded S. Hukam Singh to speak against the reservation and support the stand of Sardar Patel. He also assured Dr. Rajindra Prasad of S. Hukam Singh's support. Ultimately, the advisory committee on minorities rejected the plea for reservation. But in Advisory Committee's report, Para 6, acceptance was given to the 'unanimous' proposal made by the Sikh representatives that some classes in Eastern Punjab namely *Mazhbis*, *Ramdasiyas*, *Kabirpanthis* and *Sikligars* who suffer from the same disability as other members of the scheduled castes, should be included in the scheduled castes so that they get the benefit of representation enjoyed by the scheduled castes. Subject to this change to the above mentioned resolution, the report of the special sub-committee was approved. In all this Giani Kartar Singh was following the policy of getting concession step by step for the Sikhs in an atmosphere of good will. Giani was soon to initiate a move that was to lead to what is called 'Sachar-Giani formula'. He was anxious to serve the cause of the Punjabi language without any further division of the Punjab. He took advantage of the rift in the Congress ranks. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Bhim Sen Sachar were leaders of the opposing groups. Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of this conflict and helped Sh. Bhim Sen Sachar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from the position of the Chief-ministership of the Punjab. In the bargain, Bhim Sen Sachar agreed to implement a new language formula to know as 'Sachar-Giani Language Formula'. The Punjab Government announced this new language plan for the educational institutions in October, 1949. It was indeed a great achievement on the part of Giani Kartar Singh. This formula became a basis for the achievement of the Punjabi-speaking State in the later days. Under this Formula the Punjab was demarcated into three areas:-

The Punjabi speaking, the Hindi speaking and the Bilingual. The first was comprised of the district Amritsar, Jalandhar, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur

& Hoshiarpur and the two Tehsils of Ambala (Ropar & Kharar excluding Chandigarh). The Hindi speaking area comprised of five district of Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Kangra & Hissar (with the exclusion of Sirsa Tehsil) and two tehsils of Ambala. (Jagadhri & Naraingarh) The remaining area of Simla, Chandigarh & Sirsa was declared as bilingual.

It was provided that in each of these areas the language of these areas would be the medium of instruction in all the schools up to the matriculation standard while the other languages would be taught as a compulsory language from the last class of the Primary Stage up to the matriculation standard and in the case of girls in the middle classes only. Provision was made for children whose mother tongue was other than regional language, provided there were 40 students in the school or ten in each class requiring instruction in the other language.¹²

Though the Sachar formula had far-reaching political effects and had given permanent position to Giani Kartar Singh in the history of the Punjabi-Suba movement it was not a satisfactory solution of the language problem. By giving option to the parents to select the medium of education for their children it created further communal differences in the Punjab. while commenting on the role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Congress, Shri Baldev Raj Nayar in his book "The Minority Problem in the Punjab" writes "In the third category he puts the group leaders who find membership of the congress party a suitable instrument for the pursuit of either personal or community goals but are ready to forsake that party the moment such goals are frustrated and return to the Akali Dal."¹³

There is no doubt that Sachhar formula was one of the top achievements of Giani Kartar Singh. It made the way easier for the future Punjabi-speaking state.

¹² Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 295-96.

¹³ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Problem in the Punjab*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1966, p. 138.

From the Sachhar-Giani formula to the Regional formula was only a step. The Draft committee of the constituent Assembly had recommended in December, 1947 the appointment of a linguistic commission to look into and report on the desirability or otherwise of creation of any other than proposed the provinces of Andhra, Karnatka, Kerala and Maharashtra. Unfortunately the proposal for creation of a Punjabi-Speaking state was excluded from the terms of reference of the linguistic commission. This commission under justice Dar pronounced against any change in the boundaries of the Punjab. In fact it killed any hope for it when it observed that the formation of linguistic provinces was sure to give rise to a demand for the separation of linguistic groups. Elsewhere claims have already been made by the Sikhs, Jats and others and these demands in course of time would be intensified and become live issues if once the formation of linguistic provinces is decided upon.¹⁴

Another committee called J.V.P. committee, appointed by the Constituent Assembly and consisting of Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pathabhai Sitaramayya, also endorsed the view of Dar Commission when it reported: "We are clearly of the opinion that no kind of rectification of boundaries in the provinces of Northern India should be raised at the present moment, whatever the merits of such a proposal might be."¹⁵

Master Tara Singh, the most influential of the Sikh leader took the announcement as a clear indicator of discrimination against the Sikhs and the Punjabi-speaking population. He had his reason for feeling that way. It was against the earlier policy of the Indian National Congress which had favored the creation of linguistic states. It had adopted this policy as far back as 1920 when it had passed a resolution to that effect. Moti Lal's report of 1928 had also endorsed this policy.

¹⁴ Dar Commission Report, Paira 120, Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, Government of India Press, Delhi, 1948.

¹⁵ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 294-295.

It was under such atmosphere that a representative convention of the Sikhs in April, 1949 adopted a resolution making Punjabi-Suba as the objective of the people of the Punjab. Hukam Singh also sought the demarcation of the linguistic state on the basis of Punjabi. The Akali leaders emphasized that their stand was purely national; and democratic. The Akali leadership could not convince the national leaders about the immediate need of such a small state. That was because of the general feeling even among the Sikhs that Jawahar Lal Nehru could never think of discriminating against a brave community like the Sikhs.

Giani Kartar Singh, who was the Revenue Minister of the Punjab Government in 1960, was convinced that it was not an appropriate time to start an agitation for a Punjabi-Speaking state. While addressing a conference of the Harijan's at Jalandhar on July 18, 1950, he opposed the demand by saying "the Sikhs were in majority only in two Tehsils TarnTaran (Amritsar) and Moga (Ferozepur) hence the demand was unjustified."¹⁶

One of these days the Shiromini Akali Dal issued a show-cause notice to the Panthik M.L.A.'s why they should not leave the Congress party and have a block of their own. On July 20, 1950 the executive committee of Akali Dal adopted a resolution directing all M.L.A.'s who got elected on the Panthik ticket to resign forthwith from the Congress and create a separate Panthik Block in the Assembly Party,¹⁷ the directive was conveyed to Baldev Singh, the Defense Minister, Government of India and Giani Kartar Singh and Isher Singh Majhail, two Akali Ministers in the Punjab Cabinet.¹⁸

The Sikh legislators held a meeting at Ambala on July 23, 1950 to consider the situation and set up a five-man sub-committee including Giani Kartar Singh to decide about the issue after meeting the Akali Dal High Command. Among those who attended the meeting were Baldev Singh, Giani

¹⁶ *The Tribune*, 19 July, 1950.

¹⁷ *The Tribune* and *Akali Patrika*, 21 July, 1950.

¹⁸ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, p. 209.

Kartar Singh, Isher Singh Majhail, Gurbachan Singh Bajwa, Swaran Singh, Dalip Singh Kang and Narinder Singh. They decided against leaving the Congress Party. The only members who abided by the directive of the Shiromani Akali Dal was Jaswant Singh Duggal.

Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters in the Congress Assembly Party were then convinced that the question of Punjabi language and script had almost been settled by the Sachhar Formula and the question of a Punjabi-speaking state could be settled by mutual good-will and not by adopting an aggressive and agitational approach. The displaced persons were still to be properly settled. There was no harm if the Punjabis waited for some time more. But it did not take Kartar Singh and his supporters long to realize that the communalists among the Hindus were out to harm the interests of the Sikh. Giani Ji was especially pained when in the 1951 census the majority of the Hindus in the Punjab disowned their own mother tongue Punjabi and the Hindu organizations successfully persuaded Punjabi-speaking Hindus to declare that their mother tongue was Hindi.¹⁹ The political atmosphere in the state of Punjab was being polluted by the stark communalists and Giani Kartar Singh was feeling frustrated, that was natural. Even important members of the Congress Party were showing hostile attitude towards the Sikhs and their democratic demand of a Punjabi speaking State which was including PEPSU.

From now onwards Giani Kartar Singh started drifting away from the Congress. He decided to quit the party in 1952 when he was defeated by a small margin by a somewhat unknown person Gurdial Singh in the Kartarpur Assembly election. He was piqued that even the Congressmen had tried their level best to oust him from the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He went back to the Akali Dal and soon after was appointed General Secretary of the Akali Dal. He was soon back in the Punjab Legislature once again as an Akali. He was elected member of the Punjab Legislative council in 1952. He fell seriously ill for sometime but he regional his health by the beginning of the year 1953.

¹⁹ Census of India 1951, Vol. III, p. 293.

As a practical politician Giani Kartar Singh fully realized that to control the Sikh masses and to prepare them for a struggle for the attainment of a Punjabi speaking state, it was essential for Shiromani Akali Dal to have full control over S.G.P.C. After partition, the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee was in the hands of the nationalist Sikhs headed by Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. The ruling Congress party had given them all possible support. He worked day and night to oust this group from the S.G.P.C. and ultimately succeeded in doing so. In the annual election in October 1952, he got the Akali Dal's nominee Pritam Singh's Khuranj elected as President of the S.G.P.C. It gave the control of S.G.P.C. the major statutory body to the Akalis which thereafter played a major role in the politics of the Punjab. The election of the S.G.P.C. came to be the barometer of the strength and support of the Sikhs for the cause of the Punjabi Suba.²⁰

In the beginning of 1953, Romulu, a prominent Andhara leader sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra Pradesh. The Central Government appointed a one-man commission consisting of Justice Wanchoo to demarcate Andhra province. The creation of Andhra Pradesh encouraged Sikh agitation for the Punjabi Suba. The Shiromani Akali Dal issued a manifesto emphasizing that an autonomous Punjabi speaking Province alone would give the Sikhs the much needed security.²¹

Giani Kartar Singh as General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal also contributed in a big way to the proper development of the PEPSU. That was the time when the Central Government was trying to oust the Pro-Akali Premier, S. Gian Singh Rarewala from the United Front Ministry. In March 1953, the centre suspended constitution in PEPSU even when the united front ministry had a majority and could run the administration. This greatly disappointed Giani Kartar Singh and the other leader of the Akali Dal who took it as a clear proof of the hollowness of slogans of democracy and secularism proclaimed so land by the

²⁰ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, p. 225.

²¹ *The Spokesman*, 29 August, 1961.

Congress leaders. This further convinced the Sikh leaders that the only remedy for all these ills and discriminations was the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state including PEPSU. On September 30, 1953 an Akali Conference was held at Anandpur Sahib and the demand for the early formation of Punjabi Suba was reiterated.

It appeared that now the demand for Punjabi Suba could not be resisted and stalled for long. After the creation of Andhra Pradesh the demand for linguistic States was being voiced in many parts of the country. As a consequence, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru made a statement in Parliament on December 22, 1953 to the effect that a commission would be appointed to examine “objectively and dispassionately” the question of the re-organization of the states of the Indian Union, “so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as the nation as a whole is promoted.” Mr. Fazal Ali was appointed the chairman of the commission with Pandit H. Zuzru and Sardar K.M. Panikar as its members. The appointment of the Commission was welcomed by the Sikh leaders as it gave them an opportunity to place their case for the Punjabi Suba. The working committee of the Shiromini Akali Dal submitted its memorandum giving convincing facts and figures.

Punjabi Suba enthusiasts were disappointed. The Commission submitted its report to the Government of India on September 30, 1955 and it was released to the Public on October 10, 1955. The Commission recommended that PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh should form part of the Punjab.²² According to the commission the linguistic complexion and the communication needs of the Punjab did not justify the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. The creation of such a state was likely to disrupt the economic life of the area. There was no case for a Punjabi Speaking State because it lacked the general support of the people inhabiting that area and because it was not to eliminate any of the causes of friction from which the demand for a Punjabi Speaking State had

²² V.D. Mahajan, *Fifty Five Years of Modern India 1919-1974*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1975, p. 483.

arisen. The Punjabi Suba was to solve neither the language nor the communal problem. On the other hand it might further antagonize and frustrate the feelings already being nursed. Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh were too small to continue by themselves. As far as the economic and administrative links between PEPSU and the Himachal Pradesh concerned in the one hand and the present Punjabi State on the other hand, the merger of these two States in the Punjab was justified.²³

The Akali leaders denounced the report as “decree of Sikh annihilation” and threatened to start a passive Resistance movement.²⁴ In the meantime the election to the S.G.P.C. was held in early 1955 and the Shiromani Akali Dal entered the contest on the basis of the Punjabi Suba demand. The Congress Party organized a Khalsa Dal to fight these elections. That move was resented by the Sikh masses a good deal. Giani Kartar Singh made it as a question of prestige and collected a big amount of money from the landlords of Ferozepur district including S. Parkash Singh Badal and S. Narinder Singh to fight Congress Khalsa Dal.²⁵

The congress failed in its move to weaker S.G.P.C. in 1955 S.G.P.C. Elections. The Khalsa Dal contested 132 seats and won only three. Akali Dal contested 112 seats and won all of them. 23 seats were won by the Desbhatat Board consisting of communists and other progressive parties opposed to the Congress. This greatly raised the morale of the Sikh leaders who had been fighting for the attainment of Punjabi Suba. A counter agitation by the Arya-Samaj-Jan Sangh groups was launched to save Hindi and in support of Maha-Punjabi Suba that caused a lot of tension among the different communities in the Punjab.

²³ States Reorganisation Commission Report.

²⁴ *The Spokesman*, 19 October, 1955.

²⁵ Interview with Kartar Singh of Tanda, Giani's associate on 12 September, 1978, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Under the instructions of Bhim Sen Sachhar, the Chief Minister of Punjab, the district Magistrate Amritsar promulgated an order on April 6, 1955, banning the raising of the slogans in support of Punjabi Suba or Maha Punjab. The Akali Dal decided to start a morcha against the order on May 10, 1955 and Master Tara Singh along with ten others courted arrest on May 10, 1955 by raising the slogans and thus defying the ban.

Giani Kartar Singh, Kabal Singh, Bhai Permanand Jhansi and some other prominent leaders were arrested on May 16, 1955. Some of the old Congress leaders like Abdul Ghani Dhar, Prof. Mota Singh, Sri Ram Sharma and Ch. Sri Chand of Haryana supported the Akali agitation. By the first week of July, 1955 nearly 8000 volunteers courted arrest. The agitation was a success. The ban on shouting slogans was lifted by the Punjab Government on July 12, 1955, as it was announced 'to mark the great occasion of Mr. Nehru's triumphant return from peace Mission abroad.' But Master Tara Singh and the other prominent leaders were not released till September 8, 1955. A convention of all parties and organization of the Sikhs was called at Amritsar on October 16, 1955. It fully supported the demand for the creation of a Punjabi Speaking State.

On October 24, 1955 a deputation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala, Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Hukam Singh met the Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru, for nearly two hours in the presence of Pandit Pant and Maulana Azad but the meeting failed to end the crisis. On 14th of January, Bhim Sen Sachhar resigned and S. Partap Singh Kairon, the strongman of Punjab, became the Chief Minister on January 21, 1956.

Giani Kartar Singh along with Master Tara Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Hukam Singh met the Prime Minister on October 24, 1955. The talks could not produce any fruitful results. On November 10, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Amritsar and went to Darbar Sahib to pay homage, as much to the great Sikh temple as the Sikh community. He was received by a big crowd and the Akali leaders including Giani Kartar Singh, he presented to him a

Saropa on behalf of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.). This created tremendous goodwill on both the sides. The Sikh leaders mentioned above met the Prime Minister again on November 22, December 23, 1955 and on January 22, 1956 and presented their case for the creation of the Punjabi speaking state with great in emphasis than ever before.

In February, 1956 All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.) decided to hold its annual session at Amritsar. Akali Dal also decided to conduct its tenth annual conference at the same time and in the same city. On February 11, 1956 the city witnessed a historic procession of the Sikhs. It was a sea of humanity. One million Sikhs moved in this vast sea of humanity. Jawahar Lal Nehru was stunned by the hold of Akalis on the Sikh masses.²⁶ Giani Kartar Singh who was General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal at that time was the force behind the Akali Conference.

Obviously influenced by this historic conference the Cabinet Sub Committee of the Central Government resumed talks with the Sikh leaders and a delegation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh and the other prominent leaders met the committee. On February 11, 1956, Giani Kartar Singh unfolded the plan given by the Sub-Committee about the proposed Reorganization of the Punjab State at a meeting of the prominent leaders at Delhi and vehemently pleaded the case for a Punjabi Suba. In the beginning of the month of March, the final plan of the Government, commonly known as Regional Formula was accepted by the members of the Sikh delegation consisting of Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Bawa Harkishan Singh. A general meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal was called at Amritsar on March 11, 1956. Gian Singh Rarewala sought approval of the General Council and Giani Kartar Singh succeeded in over-powering the opposition and got Dal's acceptance for the Regional Formula. In the final voting only S. Amar Singh Ambalvi recorded his dissent, over the proposal to accept the Regional Formula.

²⁶ Harcharan Singh Bajwa, *Fifty Years of Punjab Politics 1920-1970*, Modern Publishers, Chandigarh, 1979, p. 94.

According to the Regional Formula, the members of the Punjab Legislature were divided into two groups, one comprising of the elected members of the Punjab Assembly from the Punjabi speaking region and the other from the Hindi speaking region. Any measure affecting a particular region was first to be considered by the members of the region before coming up for plenary (full) consideration. The Sachhar Language Formula was to continue and in addition, it was agreed that the official language of each at the district level and below would be the language of the region. The Punjab was declared a bilingual state which recognized both Punjabi in Gurmukhi and Hindi in Devnagri script as the official languages of the State. The advice tendered by the Regional Committees was normally to be accepted by the Government and the State Legislature. In case of a difference of opinion reference was to be made to the Governor whose decision was to be final and binding. The Department of Punjabi and Hindi were to be set up and provision made for the establishment of Punjabi University.²⁷

After the acceptance of Regional Formula by the general body of the Akali Dal on March 11, 1956, Giani Kartar Singh and Hukam Singh, who was elected Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha after the Akalis acceptance of the regional formula and Gian Singh Rarewala started talks with Maulana Azad and U.N. Dhebar, President of the Congress, for the merger of Akali Dal members in the Congress. Giani Kartar Singh stated in the meeting of the working committee of the Aali Dal that for the ultimate good of the Akali Dal, it was essential to join Congress. He considered that three conditions were necessary before such a move could mature. These three were (1) that there should be congress committees on regional basis; (2) that the Akali Dal should be allowed to maintain its position by having a certain political status; and (3) that there should be proper adjustment of seats.²⁸

Giani Kartar Singh continued his talks with Maulana Azad up to September, 1956 before realizing that the Congress was ready to allow the Akali

²⁷ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 297-98.

²⁸ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punajbi Suba*, p. 277.

Dal to continue itself to social, cultural and religious activities, but would not allow it to participate in the political affairs.

On September 30, 1956 the Working Committee of the Akali Dal and about two hundred Jathedars, General Secretaries and other leaders assembled at Amritsar at the instance of Giani Kartar Singh. A resolution proposing merger of the Akali Dal in the Congress was moved by Ajit Singh Sarhadi and seconded by Harcharan Singh Hidiara. Finally, it was decided to have another meeting of the general body of the Akali Dal on November 20, 1956. This meeting was attended by 322 delegates from the Punjab and other States. The merger resolution passed earlier was endorsed with only five dissidents. Master Tara Singh supported the resolution.

After the merger of Shiromani Akali Dal in the Congress, the Congress High Command nominated three Akali leaders on the state election board. They were, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Hukam Singh and S. Ajit Singh Sarhaddi. But they soon found that they were being given shabby treatment by the Punjab Congress leaders. The erstwhile Akalis were given 23 Assembly seats and three Parliament seats. Master Tara Singh strongly protested, but it was too late. All the same in the press-conference on February 14, 1957 he said, "Now I am not bound by the Akali-Congress compromise, because the Congress has dishonored us."²⁹ The pro-congress Akalis including Giani Kartar Singh looked upon Master Tara Singh as getting impolite. Giani Kartar Singh was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly from the Dasuya-Tanda constituency of Hoshiarpur district defeating Dr. Jagjit Singh by a margin of more than 10,000 votes. S. Partap Singh Kairon was elected Chief-Minister of Punjab on April 3, 1957 and he included two erstwhile Akalis, Giani Kartar Singh and Gian Singh Rarewala, in his cabinet. Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Revenue and Agricultural Minister and this once again gave Giani an opportunity to play constructive role in the development of Punjab. The first and foremost aim of Giani Kartar Singh after talking oath as a minister was to normalize relations

²⁹ *The Tribune*, 15 February, 1957.

between Akalis and the Congress Party and besides getting the regional formula properly implemented. The Arya Samaj started an agitation on the basis of the language clause of the Regional Formula. Its Hindi-Rakhsha samiti wanted Punjab to be made a bilingual State. The Government took hold and practical stand. It assured that Hindi as a national language will be given proper place in Punjab and Giani Kartar Singh while addressing a big conference said, 'that no regional language can challenge the status of the national language.'³⁰

Giani did a number of other things as a minister. He got Punjabi University established at Patiala. He took advantage of clause No. 14 of the Regional Formula which stated that the departments of Punjabi and Hindi would be set up and efforts be made for the establishment of Punjabi-University.³¹ In a meeting of the Punjab-Zone Regional Committee, Giani made Sh. Ram Dayal Singh M.L.A. a close associate of his, move a resolution 'demanding that in the Punjabi Zone medium of instruction in all the schools should be Punjabi.'³² The resolution was passed by a majority vote but its implementation threatened to create political complications. As a compromise, Partap Singh Kairon accepted the proposal for establishing the Punjabi University at Patiala. On August 5, 1960, Giani Kartar Singh through the Punjab Government got issued a notification for appointing a commission consisting of the Maharaja of Patiala as its Chairman and 12 renowned educationists to give shape to this decision.³³ By the ordinance of the Government of Punjab dated April 30, 1962 the Punjabi University was established and colleges within ten miles of Patiala city were put under its jurisdiction. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the President of India, inaugurated the University and Bhai Jodh Singh appointed its first Vice-Chancellor. Credit must be given to Giani Kartar Singh for getting another University established in the Punjab. It was Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana. He was directly responsible for its establishment. He was then in charge of the Agricultural

³⁰ *Akali Patrika*, 20 May, 1957.

³¹ *Quami-Ekta*, February 1979, p. 22.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Department besides a few others. Giani Kartar Singh got interested in cleanliness in public life. He supported the dissidents in the Congress Party who were collecting material on the Corruption charges against the Chief Minister, Partap Singh Kairon. They put 25 charges against the Chief Minister. They divided these charges into three categories viz. charges of corruption, charges about mis-use of power in the interest of his family and friends and lastly charges regarding irregularities in the administration. The Chief Minister was supported by the Congress High Command and later on, he tried to get rid of Giani Kartar Singh but the High Command did not allow him to do so. Giani Kartar Singh also now took interest capturing strategic positions for his own men. For the Chairman of the Punjabi Regional Committee, he and his associates supported Seth Ram Nath against S. Darbara Singh who enjoyed the support of the Chief Minister. By his clever moves, he got the former elected. This was another feather in the cap of Giani Kartar Singh. It made the Chief Minister angry. 'Kairon deprived Giani Kartar Singh of the important portfolio of Revenue and Local Bodies and made him a minister of only Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and games on August 19, 1958.³⁴

Giani Kartar Singh found himself in a delicate position. The Chief Minister was hostile to him. On the other hand, Akali leaders like Master Tara Singh did not like his attitude towards the Congress party. He strongly believed that the Regional Formula should be given a proper trial and was convinced that his approach to the problems of the Sikhs and Punjabis as a whole was more practical and enduring. The Sachhar Formula had later on resulted in the Regional Formula and his view, the Regional Formula was a major step towards the attainment of Punjabi Suba. He did not like the frequent outbursts of Master Tara Singh who was reiterating, 'I will be compelled to-re-open the demand for Punjabi Suba.' Giani thought of cutting Master Tara Singh to size. As a shrewd Politician Giani Kartar Singh knew fully well that so long as Master Tara Singh

³⁴ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, p. 307.

was the President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee, he was a force to reckon with. He decided to deprive the Master of this office.

The annual elections of the office bearers of S.G.P.C. were to be held on November 16, 1958. Giani Kartar Singh who had only recently resigned from the Akali Dal joined hands with the Communist Group in the S.G.P.C. and sponsored Prem Singh Lalpuri for the President ship against Master Tara Singh. There was hectic activity and Giani Kartar Singh's candidate was able to defeat Master Tara Singh by 77 votes to 74. It was a great bomb-shell in the Akali circles and in a way it was the beginning of the renewed confrontation between the Akalis and the Government of the Congress Party. Though his critics doubted the bonafide of Giani Kartar Singh, but he wanted to strengthen the position of the S.G.P.C. and in all sincerity suggested the amendment of the Gurdwara Act, 1925.³⁵ His main aim was to give representation to the old PEPSU area, on the S.G.P.C. The management of historic Gurdwara in PEPSU was under the PEPSU interim Gurdwara Board and all the members of the Board had been nominated by the Government to S.G.P.C. According to the proposed amendment, the PEPSU interim Gurdwara Board was to be abolished and its members made members of the Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. An electoral College of 3000 Sikh voters including Sikh Legislators of Parliament and both the Houses of the State from the PEPSU area, heads of the registered Sikh Institutes, Sikh members of the municipal committees in PEPSU and the then 12 members of the Interim Gurudwara Board of the PEPSU area were to co-opt 35 additional members of the S.G.P.C. General body. The Sikh Gurudwara Amendment Bill attaching all the PEPSU Gurudwaras in the S.G.P.C. was piloted by Giani Kartar Singh and was passed into an Act on December 31, 1958. It was a spectacular achievement and had a permanent effect on the Sikh politics and religion. The vast resources of these Gurudwaras enhanced the prestige and power of the S.G.P.C. and in 1960 when the Shiromani Akali Dal captured power in the S.G.P.C. they realized that their

³⁵ *Akali Patrika*, 3 December, 1958.

earlier fears were unfounded. But for the personal efforts of Giani Kartar Singh, the Gurudwaras in the PEPSU would not have come under the control of the S.G.P.C. Even the congress leaders, including Partap Singh Kairon, the Chief Minister of Punjab, could not visualise that Giani Kartar Singh was indirectly serving his community and that this amendment was against the future interests of the Congress Party.

Master Tara Singh took this decision about PEPSU Gurudwaras as a direct interference in the administration of the Gurudwaras by the Government and at the second Punjabi Suba Conference at Chandigarh threatened to start a mass movement on this issue. He announced that he would soon organize a silent procession at Delhi. He said, he would do that on March 15, 1959 but was arrested on March 12 along with S. Atma Singh, S. Hargurnad Singh and S. Sarup Singh M.L.A. The procession was taken out on the fixed date. Master Tara Singh was released on March 21 and he met the Prime Minister on April 11, 1959. When Master Tara Singh announced that the Akali Dal would fight the next S.G.P.C. elections on the Punjabi-Suba issue as its basis, it was taken as a challenge by the Congress Sikh and Giani Kartar Singh organized a 'SADH SANGAT' Board. On October 24, 1959, Giani Kartar Singh resigned his minister ship to devote his entire time and energy to defeating Master Tara Singh. The elections were held on January 17, 1960. The Shiromini Akali Dal secured 132 seats out of 139. This was a signal for a big agitation for Punjabi Suba. On March 15, 1960, the Akali Dal Working Committee directed the Akali Legislators to leave the Congress but only five of them abided by this directive.³⁶

After the formation of Punjabi Suba, Giani Kartar Singh failed to get elected in 1967 from the Dasuya constituency of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1967. Afterwards, he also fell seriously ill and in disgust resigned from the Congress party. He carefully watched the agitation for inclusion of Chandigarh and Punjabi speaking areas of Haryana in Punjab, but was not able

³⁶ Interview with Kabal Singh, Political Secretary to Giani Kartar Singh, 1957-61, Oral History Cell, History and Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala.

to play an active role. Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Chanan Singh did not want to bring him into lime light again. So much so that in 1969 when S. Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister Punjab wanted to appoint him Chairman of the Punjab Subordinate Services Selection Board in appreciation of his services to the Akali Party, they directly pressed the Chief Minister not to give him such a recognition.³⁷

But this hardly counted with this selfless worker. In March, 1970 when S. Parkash Singh Badal, his old devotee and admirer became Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Chairman of the Committee for taking back Punjabi Speaking areas from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. He toured different areas of the Punjab and gave useful information and guidance to the Chief Minister. In 1971, he fought for membership of Lok Sabha from the Hoshiarpur constituency on Akali ticket against Darbara Singh, a prominent congress leader, but was defeated. That was his last political endeavour.

Giani Kartar Singh used his full energy for total transfer of Hindu-Sikh population from the West Punjab to the East Punjab and the Muslims to the West Punjab from the East Punjab. Due to his personal efforts, the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution on March 17, 1948 advising all the members of the Panthic Assembly party both in the Central and the East Punjab Assemblies to henceforth join the Congress Assembly parties. After this compromise, Giani Kartar Singh became a Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation in the Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. He also gave ownership rights to thousands of Harijan householders living in villages and thus won the sympathy and gratitude of the down-trodden and the oppressed. When Giani Kartar Singh was again the Revenue Minister, he did a great service to the Punjab Peasants by piloting the Punjab Land Mortgage Bank Act. Giani Kartar Singh as General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal also contributed in a big way to proper development in the PEPSU. S. Partap Singh Kairon was elected Chief-Minister of Punjab on April 3, 1957 and he included two erstwhile Akalis,

³⁷ Dhanna Singh Gulshan, *Aaj da Punjab te Sikh Rajniti*, p. 199.

Giani Kartar Singh as Revenue and Agricultural Minister. It was Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana. He was directly responsible for its establishment. He was then in charge of the Agricultural Department besides a few others. After the formation of Punjabi Suba, Giani Kartar Singh failed to get elected in 1967 from the Dasuya constituency of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1967. Afterwards, he also fell seriously ill and in disgust resigned from the Congress party. In March, 1970 when S. Parkash Singh Badal, his old devotee and admirer became Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Chairman of the Committee for taking back Punjabi Speaking areas from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. He toured different areas of the Punjab and gave useful information and guidance to the Chief Minister.



ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ। ਸ੍ਰ. ਜਸਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ
ਸੰਧੂ ਮੰਚ ਤੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਹੋਏ।



ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਦਲ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਜਸਦੇਵ
ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਧੂ ਗੱਲ ਬਾਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ।



ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਦਲ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਰੇ
ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਜਾਰੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ।

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Giani Kartar Singh a well-known figure of 20th century particularly amongst the Sikhs played a great role for the independence of India and particularly for the formation of Punjab, that we find in the present form. Though Giani Kartar Singh was not a well educated person yet he was very intelligent and a farsighted individual. He jumped into political life in his adolescent age and became a renowned personality. He had a great belief in Shri Guru Granth Sahib and took pledge for the independence of India. This helped Giani Kartar Singh to reaffirm his resolve to dedicate himself to the service of the people. He was an associate of great personalities like Ganga Singh and Bhagat Singh.

In his early life he was active in student politics and actively participated in the students Conference held at Gujranwala in 1920. He was greatly influenced by the political writings of Bhai Parmanand and Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri and thus he became an able vanguard of the Akali politics. In those days a member of the Akali Party could also be a member of the Indian National Congress. He also participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. He continued his membership of the Congress even after Chauri- Chaura incident. He contributed a lot towards the Akali agitation which was started in 1921 and in the Jaito Morcha he headed a Jatha of 41 Satyagrahis. He also contributed in the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. He was a prominent member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and as a great freedom fighter and he took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1933) and hence he was sentenced to one-year imprisonment. He was also influenced by Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, Raizad Hans Raj, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Ansari. In 1927 Giani Kartar Singh took an important part in protest against the Simon Commission at Lahore. Giani Kartar Singh also participated in the historic procession at Lahore in which Lala Lajpat Rai was wounded by the blows of lathis in 1928.

In the Provincial Elections of 1937, he became the member of the Legislative Assembly. He toiled hard for organizing the Sikh masses under the leadership of Master Tara Singh. He tried to make the Akali Dal Movement a part and parcel of all India freedom struggle. Giani Kartar Singh, along with Master Tara Singh played a substantial role in shaping the destiny of the Sikhs as India vis-à-vis Punjab were heading towards partition. Giani Kartar Singh was deadly against the demand of Muslim League for the division of the country and stood for the freedom of undivided India. To make the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan more difficult, he posed the Sikh demand for Khalistan as the Government appeared to have soft corner for the Muslim League. Giani Kartar Singh with the other Sikh leaders opposed the Cripps Plan and the Cabinet Mission Plan as they were hostile to the interest of the Sikh community. But India had to be divided despite all his efforts to the contrary.

As the Mountbatten Plan divided the country into two parts, Giani Kartar Singh as the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, called a joint meeting of the Akali Dal Working Committee and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board on June 14, 1947. This meeting passed a resolution emphasizing the absence of the provision of transfer of population and property, the very purpose of the partition would be defeated.

The rioting and the civil war started in the month of August. People packed up their belongings and awaited directions from their leader like Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh who were authors of the Partition Plan. They exhorted the Sikhs in the Western Punjab to stay where they were and make their terms with Pakistan. But the wave of hatred that swept the province compelled the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan to leave for India and the Muslims in the Eastern Punjab were to seek asylum in Pakistan, the two-way traffic assumed mammoth proportions. In this tragic period of turmoil and disturbances, Giani Kartar Singh came to the rescue of the distressed people. He made great efforts to arrange safe and quick evacuation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from

the West Punjab and had to face many problems and difficulties in that undertaking.

After the partition of India, Giani Kartar Singh dreamt of ideal, modern and secular Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh was a shrewd politician who fully realized that the Sikhs can gain only by winning the goodwill of the national leaders and any confrontation with the central government could be extremely detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs. Thus, he was anxious to connect his party with the Indian National Congress. Due to his personal efforts the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution in March 1948, advising all the members of the Panthic Assembly to join hands with the Congress. As a result of which Giani Kartar Singh became the Revenue and Rehabilitation Minister in the Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. This began a new phase in the political career of Giani Kartar Singh. He did a lot for the rehabilitation and the resettlement of the refugees and initiated other welfare schemes for the benefit of the down-trodden.

Giani Kartar Singh soon initiated a move that led to the Sachar-Giani Formula. He was anxious to serve the cause of the Punjabi language without any further division of the Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of the rift in the Congress and that led Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from Chief Ministership. Bhim Sen Sachar agreed to implement a new language formula known as 'Sachar-Giani Formula'. The Punjab Government announced this new language plan for the educational institutions in October 1949. It was a great achievement of Giani and this formula became a basis for the achievement of the Punjabi speaking state of the later days.

Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters were aware that the question of the Punjabi speaking state in the long run could be settled by mutual goodwill and not by adopting the agitational means. But it did not take too much time for Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters to understand that the communalists among the Hindus were against the interests of the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh took it very

seriously, and was rather pained when in the 1951 census majority of the Hindus living in Punjab disowned their mother tongue- Punjabi, as Hindu organizations had successfully persuaded Punjabi speaking Hindus to declare their mother tongue as Hindi and not Punjabi.

In order to attain the aim, Giani Kartar Singh realized that S.G.P.C. must be in the hands of the Shiromani Akali Dal and only then they would be able to succeed. After partition the control of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee went in the hands of nationalist Sikhs, headed by Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and they had the full support of the ruling party. He worked hard for ousting them and ultimately the control of SGPC came into the hands of Akalis who there- after played a great role in the politics of Punjab.

Giani Kartar Singh projected three demands for the Sikhs and the most important among them was that a Punjabi speaking area be demarcated on a purely cultural and linguistic basis, so as to preserve the Punjabi language and culture. The creation of Andhra Pradesh led to the demand for linguistic states being propogated in many parts of the country and a commission was also appointed by the then Prime Minister and Akali Dal had also submitted its memorandum. The report so submitted was a bolt from the blue for the Punjabi Suba enthusiasts like Giani Kartar Singh. The Commission recommended that PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh should form part of Punjab, but this did not justify the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. It neither solved the language problem nor the communal problem. The Akali leaders denounced the report.

In April 1955, the slogans in favour of Punjabi Suba were banned in Amritsar when Bhim Sen Sachar was the Chief Minister. The Akali Dal headed for a *Morcha* and thousands of volunteers including Giani Kartar Singh were arrested. The agitation was a success. In 1956 Shiromani Akali Dal merged into Congress and the Congress High command nominated three Akali leaders to the State Election Board and Giani Kartar Singh was one of them. Next year, he was included in the Cabinet of Partap Singh Kairon. He became directly

responsible for the establishment of Punjabi University, Patiala and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

Giani Kartar Singh carefully watched the long Punjabi Suba movement particularly from 1960-66. In April 1966, Shah Commission was appointed in order to demarcate the boundaries of Hindi and Punjabi regions. Giani Kartar Singh did a lot for getting maximum area for the Punjabi speaking state. He emphasized with his resources to enlarge the boundary of Punjab. He personally pleaded merger of major part of Kangra district in Punjabi speaking state emphasizing that Kangri is a dialect of Punjabi and the areas having less than three thousand feet height from sea level have been always termed as plains. He tried his best for the inclusion of Una tehsil in Punjab. He stressed on the inclusion of Anandpur Sahib areas in the Punjabi speaking area, as Sikhs had already lost Nankana Sahib. To conclude, the credit for including Anandpur Sahib, Nangal and Nurpur Bedi into Punjabi speaking areas goes to Giani Kartar Singh, Punjabi Suba came into existence on November 1, 1966.

Giani Kartar Singh was admitted to the Rajindra Hospital, Patiala, sometimes in 1971. After a prolonged illness of almost three years, he passed away on the morning of 10th June, 1974. That was to the deep grief of hundreds of thousands of admirers all over the Punjab. It was decided that Giani be cremated at Tanda, the headquarters of the constituency he had represented in the Punjab Legislative Assembly on more than one occasion after independence.

Giani last journey began on the morning of 11 June. His dead body covered with floral tributes laid at Patiala reached the Sabzi Mandi crossing Ludhiana when the scorching heat of a June day had still to have its full effect. Hundreds of Akalis and non-Akalis paid their homage to his departed soul. They included Jathedar Surjan Singh, Dial Singh and Giani Harjit Singh. Giani Kartar Singh's services to the nation and the *panth* were eulogized. The body bereft of breath was at Jalandhar two hours later. Those keen on paying their last homage to the Giani had gathered in large numbers on the outskirts of the city.

They included both Congress and Akali workers in large numbers. They also had among them dignitaries of the official world of the District. In affectionate remembrance the large gathering shouted: "Giani Kartar Singh Zindabad". On behalf of the District Administration of Jalandhar, Shri Ram Gopal, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, garlanded the dead body of the Giani in the proximity of P.A.P. crossing. Sardar Sukhjinder Singh and Kuldip Singh Bhatina did that on behalf of the Akalis.

On the evening of 11 June, Giani's mortal frame was to be no more. He was given a state funeral at Tanda. The Punjab police came and saluted him with arms down. Shri Gupta, the Deputy Commissioner of Hoshiarpur placed wreathes on the body on behalf of the District administration. Akali leaders, Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur and S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra and the Jan Sangh leader Baldev Parkash placed wreath on behalf of the Akali and Janta party respectively. Parkash Singh Badal, then only a political worker albeit of standing arrived somewhat late but soon enough to pay his floral tribute before the funeral pyre was lit. Shri Gurmel Singh, the Education Minister, did that on behalf of the Punjab Government. Shri Suba Singh, the then Press Secretary of the Chief Minister followed to pay the personal tribute of Giani Zail Singh. Homage was also paid to the departed soul by the Development Minister, S. Umrao Singh, Dr. Amir Singh, the then M.L.A. from the Tanda Constituency, sprinkled flowers on the dead, on behalf of the people whom Giani Kartar Singh loved so much and whom he had represented in the Punjab Assembly on two occasions. The Jathedar of the *Takht Sahib*, Sri Anandpur Sahib did the final *ardas* and Bhagwan Singh Danewalia, lit the funeral pyre.

Thousands of men and women had seen the last ceremony with tears in their eyes. That symbolized people recognizing the great services that Giani had rendered to the Punjabis, if not the entire country. Their feelings were voiced in the tributes paid to him by leaders of all shades of political opinions.

Giani Zail Singh described Giani Kartar Singh as a "great son of the Punjab who was actively associated with politics and history of the Punjab for

over 50 years.” He went on to say that “The uplifting of the downtrodden was his (Giani’s) first love. He was a great parliamentarian and an effective organizer.” The President of the Punjab Provincial Congress, Niranjana Singh Talab underlined another facet of the departed soul when he observed: “the Giani (Kartar Singh) played a very significant role in Akali politics and had been called the brain of the Akalis.” Gian Singh Rarewala, by no means an admirer of Giani Kartar Singh politics went emotional. He observed that “he heard the sad news of the passing away of Giani Kartar Singh with great sorrow; the poignancy of it was that the man who once dominated Punjab’s politics had died in a hospital as a destitute.” Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, then the General Secretary of the Akali Dal said, “Giani Kartar Singh was a rare figure.”

Giani Kartar Singh had inspired scores of politicians and social workers of Punjab to take to public life. He had earned the praise and respect of the people of not only his state but those of the whole of India for being completely above corruption. He loved his country. He was indeed a patriot of the highest caliber. To him the people of the Punjab had the first claim on his affections and mixed among them the way ordinary human beings do only among their near ones. A farmer himself, he loved the farmers and very naturally “farmer was the first citizen for him.” Giani Kartar Singh was indeed a man committed to undiluted honesty.

Giani Kartar Singh was given to simple living. Many anecdotes tell of this trait in him. One such concerns his visit to Gurdwara Guptsar. Giani was habituated to take milk with his meals but when he went to the Gurdwara there was no milk in the Gurdwara Kitchen. The cooks insisted that Giani have his meals after they had managed to procure the milk from outside the Gurdwara. But the great Giani committed to simple living “insisted on having for his meal the stale *chapattis* of the previous night with half boiled *dal* which was still being cooked.” Giani thoroughly enjoyed this meal. In the conference on the next day, when he made a spirited oration his colleagues humorously observed ‘that this was the effect of the stale *chapattis*.

Though characterised as a Sikh politician above anything else, Giani Kartar Singh's love encompassed all communities. He was particularly fond of the 'Harjans'. Like Gandhi Ji, Giani Kartar Singh regarded 'untouchability' as a great sin. Both his love for the Harijan and strong hatred for untouchability was reflected when he visited social functions organized by the Harijans. He would embrace them, sit with them and take meals with them a naturalness that have sprung only from a genuine love of the so-called untouchables. It was to the Harijans that he was making a reference when he once observed, "Economic prosperity and social solidarity cannot be achieved if we do not purge ourselves of the idea of class-differences."

Giani's love of the Harijans was almost complimentary to his simple living. His simple living was proverbial. In June, 1978, while speaking on the fourth death anniversary, Sardar Parkash Singh Badal told a very interesting anecdote. He related that once Giani's Chief Minister, Partap Singh Kairon, came to Giani Kartar Singh's official residence and asked him to vacate the house. Giani's response reflected his simple living. He immediately told his secretary in the presence of Partap Singh Kairon "Go and bring my other *Katcha* (small trousers) from the bathroom and let us go." E.N. Mangat Rai, a sophisticated official unwittingly paid a compliment to this lovable trait in Giani Kartar Singh in his book *Commitment My Style*. He did that when he wrote in his book: ".....Giani Kartar Singh first Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation occupied one of the houses. Within a few days, the tubs in the bathroom of the house were pulled out and one of them used for containing the fodder given to the family cows."

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Giani Kartar Singh was a politician par excellence. He had political wisdom of a very high order and cared for small things that imperceptibly affect politics. "He sought to seek goodness in evil. He possessed the ability to strength statement with his deeds." He had likewise compassion for the poor and did not turn a deaf ear towards their pleadings. Giani possessed a mind that was quick in its reactions and could react on occasions with biting sarcasm.

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ROLE OF GIANI KARTAR SINGH IN PUNJAB POLITICS

A

THESIS

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BALJEET SINGH



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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Giani Kartar Singh a well-known figure of 20th century particularly amongst the Sikhs played a great role for the independence of India and particularly for the formation of Punjab, that we find in the present form. Though Giani Kartar Singh was not a well educated person yet he was very intelligent and a farsighted individual. He jumped into political life in his adolescent age and became a renowned personality. He had a great belief in Shri Guru Granth Sahib and took pledge for the independence of India. This helped Giani Kartar Singh to reaffirm his resolve to dedicate himself to the service of the people. He was an associate of great personalities like Ganga Singh and Bhagat Singh.

In his early life he was active in student politics and actively participated in the students Conference held at Gujranwala in 1920. He was greatly influenced by the political writings of Bhai Parmanand and Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri and thus he became an able vanguard of the Akali politics. In those days a member of the Akali Party could also be a member of the Indian National Congress. He also participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. He continued his membership of the Congress even after Chauri- Chaura incident. He contributed a lot towards the Akali agitation which was started in 1921 and in the Jaito Morcha he headed a Jatha of 41 Satyagrahis. He also contributed in the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. He was a prominent member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and as a great freedom fighter and he took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1933) and hence he was sentenced to one-year imprisonment. He was also influenced by Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, Raizad Hans Raj, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Ansari. In 1927 Giani Kartar Singh took an important part in protest against the Simon Commission at Lahore. Giani Kartar Singh also participated in the historic procession at Lahore in which Lala Lajpat Rai was wounded by the blows of lathis in 1928.

In the Provincial Elections of 1937, he became the member of the Legislative Assembly. He toiled hard for organizing the Sikh masses under the leadership of Master Tara Singh. He tried to make the Akali Dal Movement a part and parcel of all India freedom struggle. Giani Kartar Singh, along with Master Tara Singh played a substantial role in shaping the destiny of the Sikhs as India vis-à-vis Punjab were heading towards partition. Giani Kartar Singh was deadly against the demand of Muslim League for the division of the country and stood for the freedom of undivided India. To make the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan more difficult, he posed the Sikh demand for Khalistan as the Government appeared to have soft corner for the Muslim League. Giani Kartar Singh with the other Sikh leaders opposed the Cripps Plan and the Cabinet Mission Plan as they were hostile to the interest of the Sikh community. But India had to be divided despite all his efforts to the contrary.

As the Mountbatten Plan divided the country into two parts, Giani Kartar Singh as the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, called a joint meeting of the Akali Dal Working Committee and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board on June 14, 1947. This meeting passed a resolution emphasizing the absence of the provision of transfer of population and property, the very purpose of the partition would be defeated.

The rioting and the civil war started in the month of August. People packed up their belongings and awaited directions from their leader like Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh who were authors of the Partition Plan. They exhorted the Sikhs in the Western Punjab to stay where they were and make their terms with Pakistan. But the wave of hatred that swept the province compelled the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan to leave for India and the Muslims in the Eastern Punjab were to seek asylum in Pakistan, the two-way traffic assumed mammoth proportions. In this tragic period of turmoil and disturbances, Giani Kartar Singh came to the rescue of the distressed people. He made great efforts to arrange safe and quick evacuation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from

the West Punjab and had to face many problems and difficulties in that undertaking.

After the partition of India, Giani Kartar Singh dreamt of ideal, modern and secular Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh was a shrewd politician who fully realized that the Sikhs can gain only by winning the goodwill of the national leaders and any confrontation with the central government could be extremely detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs. Thus, he was anxious to connect his party with the Indian National Congress. Due to his personal efforts the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution in March 1948, advising all the members of the Panthic Assembly to join hands with the Congress. As a result of which Giani Kartar Singh became the Revenue and Rehabilitation Minister in the Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. This began a new phase in the political career of Giani Kartar Singh. He did a lot for the rehabilitation and the resettlement of the refugees and initiated other welfare schemes for the benefit of the down-trodden.

Giani Kartar Singh soon initiated a move that led to the Sachar-Giani Formula. He was anxious to serve the cause of the Punjabi language without any further division of the Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of the rift in the Congress and that led Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from Chief Ministership. Bhim Sen Sachar agreed to implement a new language formula known as 'Sachar-Giani Formula'. The Punjab Government announced this new language plan for the educational institutions in October 1949. It was a great achievement of Giani and this formula became a basis for the achievement of the Punjabi speaking state of the later days.

Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters were aware that the question of the Punjabi speaking state in the long run could be settled by mutual goodwill and not by adopting the agitational means. But it did not take too much time for Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters to understand that the communalists among the Hindus were against the interests of the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh took it very

seriously, and was rather pained when in the 1951 census majority of the Hindus living in Punjab disowned their mother tongue- Punjabi, as Hindu organizations had successfully persuaded Punjabi speaking Hindus to declare their mother tongue as Hindi and not Punjabi.

In order to attain the aim, Giani Kartar Singh realized that S.G.P.C. must be in the hands of the Shiromani Akali Dal and only then they would be able to succeed. After partition the control of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee went in the hands of nationalist Sikhs, headed by Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and they had the full support of the ruling party. He worked hard for ousting them and ultimately the control of SGPC came into the hands of Akalis who there- after played a great role in the politics of Punjab.

Giani Kartar Singh projected three demands for the Sikhs and the most important among them was that a Punjabi speaking area be demarcated on a purely cultural and linguistic basis, so as to preserve the Punjabi language and culture. The creation of Andhra Pradesh led to the demand for linguistic states being propagated in many parts of the country and a commission was also appointed by the then Prime Minister and Akali Dal had also submitted its memorandum. The report so submitted was a bolt from the blue for the Punjabi Suba enthusiasts like Giani Kartar Singh. The Commission recommended that PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh should form part of Punjab, but this did not justify the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. It neither solved the language problem nor the communal problem. The Akali leaders denounced the report.

In April 1955, the slogans in favour of Punjabi Suba were banned in Amritsar when Bhim Sen Sachar was the Chief Minister. The Akali Dal headed for a *Morcha* and thousands of volunteers including Giani Kartar Singh were arrested. The agitation was a success. In 1956 Shiromani Akali Dal merged into Congress and the Congress High command nominated three Akali leaders to the State Election Board and Giani Kartar Singh was one of them. Next year, he was included in the Cabinet of Partap Singh Kairon. He became directly

responsible for the establishment of Punjabi University, Patiala and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

Giani Kartar Singh carefully watched the long Punjabi Suba movement particularly from 1960-66. In April 1966, Shah Commission was appointed in order to demarcate the boundaries of Hindi and Punjabi regions. Giani Kartar Singh did a lot for getting maximum area for the Punjabi speaking state. He emphasized with his resources to enlarge the boundary of Punjab. He personally pleaded merger of major part of Kangra district in Punjabi speaking state emphasizing that Kangri is a dialect of Punjabi and the areas having less than three thousand feet height from sea level have been always termed as plains. He tried his best for the inclusion of Una tehsil in Punjab. He stressed on the inclusion of Anandpur Sahib areas in the Punjabi speaking area, as Sikhs had already lost Nankana Sahib. To conclude, the credit for including Anandpur Sahib, Nangal and Nurpur Bedi into Punjabi speaking areas goes to Giani Kartar Singh, Punjabi Suba came into existence on November 1, 1966.

Giani Kartar Singh was admitted to the Rajindra Hospital, Patiala, sometimes in 1971. After a prolonged illness of almost three years, he passed away on the morning of 10th June, 1974. That was to the deep grief of hundreds of thousands of admirers all over the Punjab. It was decided that Giani be cremated at Tanda, the headquarters of the constituency he had represented in the Punjab Legislative Assembly on more than one occasion after independence.

Giani last journey began on the morning of 11 June. His dead body covered with floral tributes laid at Patiala reached the Sabzi Mandi crossing Ludhiana when the scorching heat of a June day had still to have its full effect. Hundreds of Akalis and non-Akalis paid their homage to his departed soul. They included Jathedar Surjan Singh, Dial Singh and Giani Harjit Singh. Giani Kartar Singh's services to the nation and the *panth* were eulogized. The body bereft of breath was at Jalandhar two hours later. Those keen on paying their last homage to the Giani had gathered in large numbers on the outskirts of the city.

They included both Congress and Akali workers in large numbers. They also had among them dignitaries of the official world of the District. In affectionate remembrance the large gathering shouted: "Giani Kartar Singh Zindabad". On behalf of the District Administration of Jalandhar, Shri Ram Gopal, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, garlanded the dead body of the Giani in the proximity of P.A.P. crossing. Sardar Sukhjinder Singh and Kuldip Singh Bhatina did that on behalf of the Akalis.

On the evening of 11 June, Giani's mortal frame was to be no more. He was given a state funeral at Tanda. The Punjab police came and saluted him with arms down. Shri Gupta, the Deputy Commissioner of Hoshiarpur placed wreathes on the body on behalf of the District administration. Akali leaders, Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur and S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra and the Jan Sangh leader Baldev Parkash placed wreath on behalf of the Akali and Janta party respectively. Parkash Singh Badal, then only a political worker albeit of standing arrived somewhat late but soon enough to pay his floral tribute before the funeral pyre was lit. Shri Gurmel Singh, the Education Minister, did that on behalf of the Punjab Government. Shri Suba Singh, the then Press Secretary of the Chief Minister followed to pay the personal tribute of Giani Zail Singh. Homage was also paid to the departed soul by the Development Minister, S. Umrao Singh, Dr. Amir Singh, the then M.L.A. from the Tanda Constituency, sprinkled flowers on the dead, on behalf of the people whom Giani Kartar Singh loved so much and whom he had represented in the Punjab Assembly on two occasions. The Jathedar of the *Takht Sahib*, Sri Anandpur Sahib did the final *ardas* and Bhagwan Singh Danewalia, lit the funeral pyre.

Thousands of men and women had seen the last ceremony with tears in their eyes. That symbolized people recognizing the great services that Giani had rendered to the Punjabis, if not the entire country. Their feelings were voiced in the tributes paid to him by leaders of all shades of political opinions.

Giani Zail Singh described Giani Kartar Singh as a "great son of the Punjab who was actively associated with politics and history of the Punjab for

over 50 years.” He went on to say that “The uplifting of the downtrodden was his (Giani’s) first love. He was a great parliamentarian and an effective organizer.” The President of the Punjab Provincial Congress, Niranjan Singh Talab underlined another facet of the departed soul when he observed: “the Giani (Kartar Singh) played a very significant role in Akali politics and had been called the brain of the Akalis.” Gian Singh Rarewala, by no means an admirer of Giani Kartar Singh politics went emotional. He observed that “he heard the sad news of the passing away of Giani Kartar Singh with great sorrow; the poignancy of it was that the man who once dominated Punjab’s politics had died in a hospital as a destitute.” Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, then the General Secretary of the Akali Dal said, “Giani Kartar Singh was a rare figure.”

Giani Kartar Singh had inspired scores of politicians and social workers of Punjab to take to public life. He had earned the praise and respect of the people of not only his state but those of the whole of India for being completely above corruption. He loved his country. He was indeed a patriot of the highest caliber. To him the people of the Punjab had the first claim on his affections and mixed among them the way ordinary human being do only among their near ones. A farmer himself, he loved the farmers and very naturally “farmer was the first citizen for him.” Giani Kartar Singh was indeed a man committed to undiluted honesty.

Giani Kartar Singh was given to simple living. Many anecdotes tell of this trait in him. One such concerns his visit to Gurdwara Guptsar. Giani was habituated to take milk with his meals but when he went to the Gurdwara there was no milk in the Gurdwara Kitchen. The cooks insisted that Giani have his meals after they had managed to procure the milk from outside the Gurdwara. But the great Giani committed to simple living “insisted on having for his meal the stale *chapattis* of the previous night with half boiled *dal* which was still being cooked.” Giani thoroughly enjoyed this meal. In the conference on the next day, when he made a spirited oration his colleagues humorously observed ‘that this was the effect of the stale *chapattis*.

Though characterised as a Sikh politician above anything else, Giani Kartar Singh's love encompassed all communities. He was particularly fond of the 'Harjans'. Like Gandhi Ji, Giani Kartar Singh regarded 'untouchability' as a great sin. Both his love for the Harijan and strong hatred for untouchability was reflected when he visited social functions organized by the Harijans. He would embrace them, sit with them and take meals with them a naturalness that have sprung only from a genuine love of the so-called untouchables. It was to the Harijans that he was making a reference when he once observed, "Economic prosperity and social solidarity cannot be achieved if we do not purge ourselves of the idea of class-differences."

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ABSTRACT

Giani Kartar Singh was born on 22 January, 1902 in Chak no. 40 Jhang Branch in the Lyallpur District. Giani Kartar Singh had shown his flair for politics even as a child. He read newspapers and was especially impressed by the writings of Bhai Parmanand, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri and Lala Lajpat Rai. All this evoked political, social and religious consciousness in his tender heart. He had participated in Gurdwara Reforms Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and more important movements of Punjab politics. Due to this reason he was called 'Brain of the Sikhs'. After partition he performed as the Rehabilitation minister and settled all the problems with heavy hand. He fought the battle for Punjabi Speaking Suba which Punjabis got in a 1966. He passed away on the morning of the 10th of June, 1974.

In the present research work an attempt has been made to know what circumstances had motivated Giani Kartar Singh to join Akali Movement. The leading role of Giani Kartar Singh in Gurdwara reform Movement 1920-1925, along with have also been discussed in detail its effects and the achievement of Gurdwara bill in 1925. The role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Civil Disobedience movement has also been discussed. His role in the elections of 1937 to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and the reason why and that elections should be fought in collaboration with the Indian National Congress has also been taken up. After the elections, the compact group of the Akalis under the joint leadership of Giani Kartar Singh and Sampuran Singh merged itself in the Congress Legislative party to form a strong opposition to the Unionist party.

He managed to get the benefits for the Sikh community through the cooperation of the Congress Party, This aspect also needed to be explored. The Muslim League had passed what is called the Pakistan Resolution in March 1940 and that put the Sikhs in a very critical position. The Congress and the Muslim League had realized about the weak position of the Sikhs and had seriously started thinking about their new line of action. It was a point to ponder over how did Giani Kartar Singh exhorted the Sikhs to act independently of both the Congress and the Muslim League. Counter attacking to the Pakistan demand, Giani Kartar Singh appealed to the Akali party to take up the

issue of the Sikh State. He had organized a special Akali Conference at Amritsar on May 13, 1944 to support the demand for Azad Punjab.

The study has also defined the real nature of the Akali politics before and after partition and what role was played by Giani Kartar Singh in the politics and for the Punjabi Suba movement. The Study has analyzed how Giani Kartar Singh had played a vital role in the transfer of population from the east Punjab to the west Punjab and vice versa and his achievements were to get the new laws for the welfare of Refugees. Serious efforts have been made to examine the role of Giani Kartar Singh after partition as implemented a Revenue, Rehabilitation and Agriculture Minister from 1949 to 1952 and 1957 to 1967 for the settlement of the refugees and his policy and programme for the economic upliftment of the State of Punjab. A need was felt to highlight the meaningful role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Sachar-Giani Formula and Punjabi Suba Movement. The study has sought to explore what efforts were made by Giani Kartar Singh for the establishment of the Punjabi University at Patiala and Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana in 1962.

ਸਾਰ

ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ 22 ਜਨਵਰੀ 1902 ਨੂੰ ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਚੱਕ ਨੰਬਰ 40 ਝੰਗ ਬ੍ਰਾਂਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਬਚਪਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੋਸ਼ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਲਾਲਾ ਲਾਜਪਤ ਰਾਏ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਸ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਭ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕੋਮਲ ਦਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਸਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ, ਸਿਵਲ ਨਾਫਰਮਾਨੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ 'ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਿਮਾਗ' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਸਨੇ ਮੁੜ ਵਸੋਬਾ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰੀ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਪਟਾਇਆ। ਉਸਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸੂਬੇ ਲਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਲੜੀ ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ 1966 ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ। 10 ਜੂਨ, 1974 ਦੀ ਸਵੇਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣਾ ਕਰ ਗਏ।

ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਖੋਜ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਹਾਲਾਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ 1920-1925 ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ-ਅਤੇ 1925 ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਿੱਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸਿਵਲ ਨਾਫਰਮਾਨੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। 1937 ਦੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਡੀਅਨ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਲੜਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਵੀ ਉਠਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਚੋਣਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਯੂਨੀਅਨਿਸਟ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਵਿਧਾਇਕ ਦਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।

ਉਹ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਲਾਭ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਰਹੇ। ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਘੋਖਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਲੀਗ ਨੇ ਮਾਰਚ 1940 ਵਿਚ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਾਜ਼ੁਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਲੀਗ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ

ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸੋਚਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਲੀਗ ਦੇਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਉਠਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅਪੀਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਦੀ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਲਈ 13 ਮਈ 1944 ਨੂੰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਅਸਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਸੀ। ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪੂਰਬੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਤਬਾਦਲੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਸ਼ਰਨਾਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਲਈ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਸ਼ਰਨਾਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਸੇਬੇ ਲਈ 1949 ਤੋਂ 1952 ਅਤੇ 1957 ਤੋਂ 1967 ਤੱਕ ਮਾਲ, ਮੁੜ ਵਸੇਬਾ ਅਤੇ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਘੋਖਣ ਲਈ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸੱਚਰ-ਗਿਆਨੀ ਫਾਰਮੂਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਚ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਚ 1962 ਵਿਚ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ।

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Appendix- I

COPY OF LETTER, DATED 12 DECEMBER 1939, FROM PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, TO MASTER TARA SINGH:

“Shri Rajendra Prasad has forwarded to me a letter dated December 7th sent to him by Sardar Kartar Singh. Babu Rajendra Prasad has unfortunately been ill for a long time and is at present bed-ridden. He has asked me to reply to this letter on his behalf. I am sending this reply to you with a copy to the secretary, Shiromani Akali Dal, as suggested by Sardar Kartar Singh.

About three weeks ago we received a long representation from Sardar Kartar Singh for the consideration of the Working Committee. Soon after, Sardar Kartar Singh and other Sikh leaders met many of us separately as well as jointly and we had the advantage of discussing the situation with them fully. In the course of over three hours talk which I had with them, I explained to them fully the Congress position and dealt with various matters referred to in their memorandum. Later they met Shri Rajendra Prasad as well as other members of the Working Committee. The memorandum itself was considered by the Working Committee.

I shall not repeat all that I said to Sardar Kartar Singh and others as that would lengthen this letter too much. But I shall briefly deal with the principal points which arose in the course of our discussion.

Complaint was made in the memorandum that the Congress had ignored the claims of the Sikhs in regard to communal settlements, in spite of the sacrifices made by the Sikhs in the national struggle. I venture to say that these complaints are not justified and the Congress has always paid special attention to the very special position of the Sikhs. It is true that in the Congress-League Pact of 1916, so far as I remember, prominent Sikhs were not consulted. It would have been better if they had been consulted and their views considered. But it is difficult for me to say much about this old episode as I was not intimately connected with it. In those days the Sikhs, as far as I remember, had not put forward any

special claims which were before the Congress and the League. The League had approached the Congress and come very near to it, politically and otherwise, and had joined in the Congress demand for reforms. Only a minor matter of representation in the legislature remained. Only this was settled by the Lucknow Pact. You will remember that this was the old Congress which underwent a great change three years later when the Congress became a mass organization under Gandhiji's leadership.

For some years the Congress was not concerned at all with communal pacts and the like and was busy with the struggle against British imperialism. Later various all-parties and unity conferences were held and always the Sikhs were represented in them and every attempt was made to meet their wishes. For various reasons these conferences did not yield substantial results. For a number of years the Working Committee had a Sikh member also.

Then came the All-Parties Committee which produced what is known as the Nehru Report. In this report every attempt was made to discuss the Sikh position and to meet it. The report however was not acceptable to the Sikhs as a whole and it was largely because of their insistence that it was given up at the Lahore Congress.

At the Lahore Congress also, entirely because of the Sikh demand, steps were taken to change the national flag. The present national flag is due to those steps. You will realize what a vital matter this was for the Congress and yet we did not hesitate to change a well-established flag to meet the wishes of the Sikh leaders.

I do not wish to enter into past history too much because we have to deal with the present now. I should like however to warn you and other friends against accepting as a fact all that appears in the daily papers. It has been the Congress policy to be ready to meet anybody and everybody to discuss our problems. We have often expressed our willingness to meet Mr. Jinnah for instance and some of us met him in

Delhi a few weeks back. This has nothing to do with prejudicing the interests of the Sikhs or any other group. It is inevitable that where Sikh interests are concerned they must be consulted. You can rest assured that the Working Committee will gladly welcome every cooperation from the Sikhs in this matter.

About the constituent assembly that has been proposed there has been some elucidation in the last Working Committee resolution.¹ I do not remember the reference made to Mahatamaji's article in this respect. But the Working Committee resolution is quite clear, it says:

This assembly can frame a constitution in which the rights of the accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. But the constituent assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of these members in the assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

It is true that we would very much like the basis of separate electorates to be done away with altogether, as this has been the root cause of communal trouble. But we want to leave this matter in the hands of the accepted minorities and the Sikhs are obviously one of the accepted minorities. If therefore the Sikhs desire such separate representation they can have it. In regard to weightage to a minority, the question does not ordinarily arise when the basis is adult suffrage. If weightage is given to one minority, there is no reason why it should not be given to others. This, as you will realize, produces difficulties and complications. The Working Committee thought that the fairest way out of it was to have no weightage but to adhere to adult suffrage on a

¹ At its meeting between 19-23 November, 1939, the Working Committee reiterated its demand for a constituent assembly, as the only adequate instrument for solving the communal and other problems.

population basis. This is a matter which can be discussed in detail when the constituent assembly is agreed to and is being formed. Ordinarily it does not make much difference to a small minority if weightage is given. Suppose 50% weightage is given, and that is a great deal, it will mean a slight addition to the numbers. It will also mean a certain ill-will on the part of those groups who have suffered from giving this weightage. This weightage does not confer any additional political influence but it vitiates the atmosphere and in this sense weakens the minority.

The question of the proportion of the Sikhs in the Indian army is one of undoubted importance to the Sikhs, but it is entirely out of the control of the Congress at present. What the future policy is likely to be depends upon many importance factors. No one can say what the future of any army is likely to be after this war is over. The results of the war may conceivably abolish large armies and have large-scale disarmament. On the other hand it is also conceivable that our general policy in India might not be one of keeping large armed forces. It is also possible that the world situation may compel a free India to develop her defence forces.

Then again the whole nature of the defence forces has changed rapidly. More and more importance is attached to the air arm and to mechanized units like tanks, etc. It is thus impossible to say what the future of the army as such will be in India. Possibly our regular first-line defence forces will be limited in numbers, while a large militia will form the second line.

It seems to us therefore that it is impossible for anyone to guarantee what the army of the future will be. If, however, a free India has to develop its armed forces, it will naturally do so on a national basis and not on the present more or less mercenary basis. A national army cannot and should not be confined to particular groups and it should be open to a member of every class or groups to join it. It must be remembered that whatever the future may be, the army in India cannot play that dominant

role, politically and economically, which it plays under British imperialism. It will be a subordinate instrument of the national will. No community or group can flourish to any large extent merely by dependence upon the army. The industrial, commercial, cultural and economic development of the country will absorb the energies of the vast majority of the population.

As you know, Sir Sikandar Hayat has proposed that the Muslim proportion in the army should be guaranteed. I do not think this or any such guarantee is at all desirable and it will be highly injurious to the development of a national defence force, when this is considered necessary. If any guarantee is given to one group, there is no reason why it should not be given to another group. A multiplicity of guarantees of this kind will reduce the whole thing to a farce and produce all manner of dangerous conflicts which disrupt the country.

It is clear that any individual or group that takes part in the national movement against British imperialism and for the freedom of India, offends that imperialism. The British Government, so long as it is dominant in India, will try to injure the interest of that group. It is also clear that the British Government is not going to be dominant in India for long. Obviously there can be no bargaining on such issues and each individual and group must decide for itself and take the risks and consequences of that decision. I do not think that the British domination of India can survive this war. Those who oppose that domination will suffer in such conflicts as may come, but will also ensure their own honoured position in a free India. No guarantee can equal this security which is obtained by one's own self-reliance and self-sacrifice in a great cause. It seems to me wrong to think in terms of religious groups having power as such in a free India. Those who will stand for that freedom, whoever they might be, will have have power.

In regard to enlistment in the army, the Congress policy at present is this: for the moment we have withdrawn from the provincial governments. We have declared that we cannot support the war. We are

to that extent non cooperating with the British Government and we cannot encourage any help being given to a war, either in men or money, when this war has been imposed upon us against our will and our questions put to the British Government have not been satisfactorily answered. Therefore we are not supporting the war. But we have refrained from taking any aggressive steps so far as we do not wish to close all avenues of settlement till this position is forced upon us. We have, therefore, explained the Congress position to the masses but have not carried on any intensive movement against enlistment. Our general appeal to the people stands-not to help in the war. We have left it at that during this temporary phase which cannot last very long. Time may come, however, when we may have to issue definite and specific instructions in regard to the enlistment in the army. Even so, we would not interfere with any individual who chooses to do so in spite of our advice. That general advice would, however, hold.

It has always been our desire that the Sikhs should have an important and an honoured place in the Congress organization, because they have been and are our comrades in the national struggle. But it is not an easy or a desirable method for any group as such to be given a place in a democratic organization. The members of our committees are chosen by elections from primary members or delegates. We have sought to advise the electorates to give special preference to minority interests and our advice has had some influence. But beyond the advice it is not possible to go either constitutionally or otherwise. We have as a matter of fact many Sikhs functioning in our organization.

So far as the Working Committee is concerned we would welcome a Sikh member but it would be a dangerous precedent for any person to be appointed, because he is a Hindu or Sikh or Muslim. The Committee is a small one for a large country and the ultimate choice must be made from prominent Congressmen who represent the Congress policy. It would cease to be an effective body if it was otherwise constituted.

Subject to this, I agree with you that it would be desirable for the Committee to have prominent Sikh Congressmen on it whenever this is possible. I agree with you also that in selecting Sikh candidates on behalf of the Congress for Legislatures, etc., regard should be paid to their influence among Sikh Congressmen.

Apart from this constitutional question of elections, I think it is very necessary that there should be close cooperation between the Sikh leaders who are Congressmen and the Congress organization as a whole. The Working Committee would very gladly keep in the closest touch with such Sikh Congress leaders and consult them in regard to the views of the Sikhs in matters of national policy.

I think I have dealt with the principal matters touched upon in Sardar Kartar Singh's letter and memorandum.

I was sorry that you could not come to Allahabad last month as we would have been glad to meet you and discuss all these matters with you. In particular I should have liked to meet you. There is just a chance of my going to Amritsar for a day on December 30th. If so, I hope that we shall meet there.

Appendix- II

SOME RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE SHIROMANI AKALI DAL, UNDER THE PRESIDENSHIP OF GIANI KARTAR SINGH, EXPRESSING THE DAL'S CONCERN AT THE VIOLENCE THAT ERUPTED MUCH BEFORE THE ACTUAL TRANSFER OF POPULATION, DEPRECATING THE DIVISION OF PUNJAB AND LAMENTING THE HUGE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

1. The Shiromani Akali Dal strongly condemns the barbarous acts of loot, arson, rape, ravish, larceny, abduction, forcible conversion and marriages and desecration of the Holy Guru Granth Sahib by the Musalmans throughout the Punjab, especially in the Rawalpindi Division, the Multan district and N.W.F.P.
2. The Dal is strongly of the opinion that all this lawlessness on the part of the Musslmans was pre-mediated, pre-planned and pre-arranged in order to coerce the Sikhs to give up opposition to the demand of Muslim Leaguers for an independent Pakistan and to accept the Muslim domination. The Dal feels confident that the Panth will, under no circumstances, be intimidated by such acts of barbarity, but instead will not hesitate from making any sacrifice, howsoever great, in order to defend its freedom, faith, honour and integrity.
3. (i) The Akali Dal Working Committee urges upon the Punjab Government that punitive police posts be stationed in the villages, the Musalmans whereof committed inhuman crimes of arson, general massacre of Sikhs and Hindus and looted and destroyed their property.
(ii) That the culprits and the ring leaders be immediately arrested and be awarded sufficiently deterrent punishment.
(iii) that punitive fines be imposed upon the Musalmans of such areas which fines should be adequate to recover the loss of property of 'the minorities and the cost of punitive police.

(iv) that the Musalmans of these areas, especially the ex-servicemen, be disarmed; searches be made to recover smuggled and stolen arms and ammunition.

(v) that the licences to carry arms be issued liberally to Hindus and Sikhs of these areas.

4. The Akali Dal Working Committee urges upon the Punjab Government to take immediate steps for the early rehabilitation of the refugees from the areas of Muslim tyranny.
5. The Shiromani Akali Dal notes with great concern that the Punjab Police and many other civil officials not only failed to effectively check the occurrences of pre-planned hooliganism on the part of the Pakistani Muslims but in many cases actively sided with the aggressors and abetted commission of various acts of lawlessness, resulting in the wholesale destruction and ruin of the minorities in large areas and calls upon the Government and the Governor to take stern action against such persons immediately.
6. The Shiromani Akali Dal is of the view that the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in the Punjab police is dangerous for the peace of the Province and therefore demands of His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab to adopt such measures immediately as to increase the number of non-Muslims in the police to at least 50% in the near future.

-The Liberator, 13 April 1947

Shiromani Akali Dal notes with satisfaction that the nationalist Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have fully agreed to the partition of the Punjab. Recent barbarities of the Pakistani Muslims on the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have left no other solution of the communal tangle except the partition of the Punjab.

Shiromani Akali Dal demands that before the transfer of power to Indian hands in June, 1948 the Punjab should be divided into two provinces and for the redistribution of the provincial boundaries a boundary commission should be set up, the terms of references whereof should be to demarcate the Provincial

boundaries keeping in view the (a) Population, (b) Landed property (c) Land Revenue and (d) Historical places and traditions of the various communities.

The Shiromani Akali Dal further demands that facilities be provided for exchange of population and property and that special arrangements be made for the protection, honour, integrity and sanctity of the historically religious places.

The Shiromani Akali Dal also appeals to all the Panthic organizations and workers to unite and solidly stand behind this demand.

The Shiromani Akali Dal requests the I.G. Police, Punjab, to take immediate and definite steps to make the share of the Muslims and non-Muslims in the police fifty-fifty and expects the Sikh youth to make up this deficiency by readily joining the police force in overwhelming numbers.

The Shiromani Akali Dal further demands the immediate removal of Mr. Khan, D.S.P., Amritsar, who in Shiromani Akali Dal's opinion is a regular menace to the peace of the town and whose conduct especially on the 11th April proved him neither efficient nor impartial and thus responsible for the destruction caused by acts of arson, of loot and murder, when a large body of Muslims was allowed to offer their Friday prayers in the mosque near Chaunk Pragdas.

-The Liberator, 11 May 1947

Appendix- III

COPY OF LETTER, DATED 11 APRIL 1949, FROM SARDAR VALLABH BHAI PATEL, UNION HOME MINISTER, TO BHIM SEN SACHAR, CHIEF MINISTER OF PUNJAB:

1. I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I wrote to Dr. Gopi Chand regarding the speeches delivered by Giani Kartar Singh in December, January and February. Dr. Gopi Chand, in reply, has sent me an explanation of Giani Kartar Singh which I regret I am unable to accept. He has denied having said anything of the kind that is alleged against him and has insinuated that the whole thing has been manufactured. It is impossible to agree that this can be so.
2. Earlier, when I went to Ambala, Giani Kartar Singh came there, but did not call on me, nor did he come to any function connected with my visit. The Governor noticed this and wrote to Giani Kartar Singh. To that also he sent a reply saying that he was unwell and, therefore, could not come to Ambala. But at the pressing call from Sardar Baldev Singh, he did come and on being told that Dr. Gopi Chand wanted him to call on me, he went to the Circuit House, but was told by Sardar Baldev Singh that I had already left for the railway station. In regard to this matter also, I am afraid I am unable to accept his explanation. Giani Kartar Singh says that at about 4 p.m. his host, Sardar Dalip Singh, after attending the University convocation, returned to his house with message referred to above from Dr. Gopi Chand. The convocation finished before 1 p.m. There was plenty of time between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. in which the omission could have been rectified. Apart from this, my programme should have been known to Giani Kartar Singh. He could have known what time I was due to leave Ambala. Lastly, the whole of the Ministry was in Ambala except Giani Kartar Singh. He felt himself compelled to come to Ambala at Sardar Baldev Singh's call, but he could not obey the dictates of official etiquette and ministerial duty.

3. I am afraid, apart from any other considerations, these lapses of Giani Kartar Singh make him entirely unsuitable for inclusion in the Ministry, and as I told you yesterday, I am strongly of opinion that he should be excluded.

Appendix- IV

COPY OF LETTER, DATED 13 OCTOBER 1951, FROM GIANI KARTAR SINGH TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU:

I regret having had to encroach upon your precious time with this letter and if did not feel that it was absolutely necessary in the interests of the nation I would certainly have dissuaded myself from writing it. For the past two and a half months I have devoted my full attention to the points raised in this letter; first time on the 5th of August last I addressed to you a letter in this regard, then I had interviews with you in the last week of September and on the 6th of October, and lastly I met Sh. Gulzari Lal Nanda on the 7th of October at Delhi. During the past week, on my return to the Punjab, I have had talks with the President and General Secretary of the Punjab Congress on the same matters. Perhaps this is the last time I am going to worry you with this importunate letter.

On all occasions mentioned above, if you remember, I have pressed the following points for your close attention. First, I have submitted points for your close attention. First, have submitted that the Sikhs are very sore over the matter of the enumeration of the Scheduled Castes under Section- 341 of the constitution. In this they see downright discrimination against the Sikh faith and a kind of inducement to Sikhs from amongst the Scheduled Castes to revert to the Hindu Faith. Master Tara Singh even alleges that some three lakhs of Sikhs of the Scheduled Castes in the U.P. alone have been converted to Hinduism. I do not take this allegation at its face value, but even when the necessary discount is made for exaggeration usual in such matters it is something which must disturb the peace of mind of those who swear by secularism. I feel, however, that it is possible for you to do the right by the Sikhs in this matter. It is absolutely necessary that all those castes that have been enumerated as scheduled if they profess the Hindu religion, should be likewise enumerated as scheduled if they profess the Sikh faith and that should be valid throughout India. I may mention it here that the Punjab

and Pepsu Governments when consulted in the matter at the time tendered the same advice. Action in this matter is needed immediately.

Secondly, as I had occasion before to bring to your notice, the agriculturist sections of the Punjab were before 1947 accorded protection against encroachment on their interests in various ways; for instance, the Land Alienation Act saved their lands from falling into the hands of the money-lending castes; a sixty percent share in recruitment to the services and in admission to technical and professional institutions was reserved for them; considerable sums were spent on the education of their children and the betterment of the villages out of the Peasant Welfare Fund, Rural Development Fund and the like. As all these concessions and reservation were given to statutory agriculturists declared so on the basis of caste, they have been cancelled during the past three or four years under provisions of the constitution prohibiting discrimination between castes. I have no doubt that protection to the cultivating and backward classes on the old basis was not just in all cases and was against the canons of democratic government, but the protection of the interests of the backward classes, i.e. agricultural classes irrespective of caste and other classes carrying on professions allied and auxiliary to agriculture, is imperatively needed all the same. Accordingly I requested you to grant reservation of a fair share for them in the services and in admission to technical and professional institution, and in other ways show special consideration towards their welfare and uplift.

The third point I urged before you related to the grant of proprietary rights in the land allotted to refugee landowners. In the Punjab, as you may be aware, majority of the agriculturalists being peasant proprietors the tenant's status is regarded as something humble and low. As the refugee landowners were in almost all cases full proprietors in West Punjab, they feel quite humiliated at the proprietary right being withheld from them. It is absolutely essential for their mental rehabilitation to make them proprietors of their allotments. This will also help large numbers in

making necessary adjustments in their circumstances of life and work by selling part or whole of the land allotted to them. Also those landowners whose claims have been verified but to whom, owing to shortage of land in the Punjab and PEPSU, no land has so far been allotted should be granted the U.P., Rajasthan or other states. Their number does not exceed ten thousand and only about 2,00,000 standard acre are needed to rehabilitate them. If owing to certain international complications, it is not possible immediately to give them full proprietary rights, a time limit say of one year or so must be declared.

Fourth is the question of Gurdwaras left in Pakistan. It is a sad commentary on the civilization and culture professed by our people in India and Pakistan that the Sikhs should not only have been driven out of their ancestral homes and lands, but that they should continue to be treated as outlaws by a neighbouring state with whom their own states has all peaceful intercourse, and they should not be permitted to manage their holy shrines situated in that neighbouring state, and go on pilgrimage to them freely as people do in all other parts of the world. Apart from the spiritual agony that all this causes to the Sikhs, the cessation of income from those Gurdwaras has dealt a serious blow to their educational, cultural and religious activity which was, in a large degree, supported by that income. It is essential that the Sikhs be assured safe and free access to those Gurdwaras for the purpose of both management and pilgrimage. As for the properties vested in those Gurdwaras, some compensatory arrangements, pending a permanent settlement must be made in India under which the S.G.P.C. and other relevant bodies may be able to prosecute their educational, cultural and religious missions.

Lastly, I urged on you to combat the misguided propaganda carried on by rabid communalist elements among the Hindus in the Punjab against the Punjabi language and particularly against its script;

and to give all encouragement to this language spoken by not less than two crores of people, so as to raise their educational and cultural level.

As far as this last point of language is concerned, I have no hesitation in admitting that your speech to a workers' meeting at Ludhiana on the 20th September last, was very encouraging and it has given wide satisfaction. But, as you have seen, the communalist press suppressed important parts of it. I hope during your next tour, you will put the necessary emphasis on this point in your public speeches.

I cannot say the same of your reference to the problem of Gurdwaras left in Pakistan. On every score those references fell short of expectations. I must beg of you to bring greater determination to bear on this problem and exert greater pressure on the Pakistan Government for its settlement.

The first three points urged by me in this letter, you will see, affect large masses of the people. Accordingly, they deserve your immediate notice and I urge you to take them up in your presidential address to the forthcoming Congress Session. Those demands of the people must be met and a clear assurance on that score held out in your address. Failure to do so will certainly cause wide-spread disappointment and make it exceedingly difficult to wage a successful election campaign among the cultivators and other backward classes, the refugees and the Sikhs.

Meeting the demands enumerated above will have considerable effect, no doubt, but still it would be idle to pretend that it will really solve what may be called the Sikh problem. Dissatisfaction among the Sikhs has gone very deep. The whole question is of sharing power. The Sikhs feel that they are not equal sharers in power in the Punjab but are being dominated by the other community. New arrangements consistent with democracy and secularism will have to be found to remove this feeling from the Sikhs' minds. It would be splendid, indeed, if you could give some hints on this problem in your presidential address.

In the coming elections I want to fight on the side of the Congress. If the demands of the people as listed above are acceded to, it will make the task of Congress workers, including me, in fighting relations easier. Without this I doubt if we can at all be effective and in the case I will have to consider whether I should enter the lists or not on the side of the Congress.

Appendix- V

COPY OF LETTER, DATED 14 OCTOBER 1951, FROM PRIME MINISTER JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TO GIANI KARTAR SINGH:

1. I have received today your letter to the 13th October.
2. You mention various points in it which are of interest to Sikhs. Most of these relate to State Governments and I cannot give a precise answer without going into the question much more deeply and consulting the State Governments concerned. I propose to do so.
3. The question of the Scheduled Castes was considered at some length at the time of the drawing up of the Constitution and subsequently. I was not then intimately connected with those discussions. It would be improper for me, therefore to express any firm opinion without proper enquiry and consultation.
4. The Scheduled Castes have certain privileges given to them. One of these relates to reservation for the elections. The other is assistance in education and like matters. So far as elections are concerned, the question does not arise now, as we cannot make any changes before election time. This question can only have any relevance at a subsequent election. So far as educational and other facilities are concerned, it is our general policy to extend them to all backward castes, whether they are Hindus, Sikhs or Christians. If there is any discrimination in this matter, it should certainly be looked into.
5. Your second point relates to the reservation of a share in the services and in technical and professional institutions for the agricultural classes of the Punjab. You point out yourself that the previous reservation was not just at all and was against the canons of democratic government. It is not quite clear to me what can be done in this matter now, except of course that it is our duty to protect and advance the backward classes, wherever they might be. As a matter of fact, the backward classes in India, from an economic point of view, probably include eighty percent of India's population. The question

thus is not of showing favour to a small backward group but of trying to raise the level of the masses of our people. They should be given opportunities of training and of entering the services. But I am quite clear that we should not allow the standards of the services to be lowered. Unfortunately they have gone down somewhat and if we do not take care they will go down further. The idea of the services being meant to provide people with a living seems to me to be completely wrong. That may be an incidental result, but the services are supposed to be manned for a particular purpose, that is to get certain work done in as efficient a manner as possible. We must maintain standards at all costs. In doing so, however, we must give every encouragement to the vast numbers of our agriculturists.

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Role of Giani Kartar Singh in Resettlement of Refugees and Punjabi Suba Struggle (1947-1966)

Baljeet Singh*

India got independence 1947. It had to face multiple problems Social, Economic, Political and Cultural. But the biggest serious problem was the resettlement of the refugees who migrated from Western Punjab to Eastern Punjab in search of shelter. This paper attempts to highlights this issue. An effort has been made to analyze the role of Giani Kartar Singh in this context. Apart from their his contribution in Punjabi Suba Struggle has also been discussed along with establishment of Universities/Educational Institutions as result of his hard work and dedication.

Giani Kartar Singh played unique and constructive role in the development of the Punjab after independence. He now primarily aimed at adjusting Sikh politics to the main stream of national politics and to convert Punjab into an ideal, modern and secular state. That he did in all sincerity. In spite of the fact that he had been a controversial figure in politics, no one has ever doubted his sincerity of purpose and the willingness to make sacrifices. He was a constructive worker. His practical approach to knotty problems was par excellence. Little wonder, he became a legendary figure in his very life time. There is not even a single doubt that his name will ever shine like a pole star in the history of the modern Punjab.

Giani Kartar Singh recovered from the shock of partition sooner than most other Sikh politicians and worked day and night for the proper rehabilitation of refugees from West Pakistan. He stayed in the Western Punjab till the last possible moment. And when he moved out of the area, he led the biggest refugee's caravan of history. It consisted of three lakh of people who trod their way into India from the districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery. In all nearly four million displaced persons from West Pakistan crossed the border. Within days of their arrival, they started itching for resettlement. Giani impressed upon the refugees to lodge themselves in East Punjab and the Sikh States. He impressed upon the refugee land-holders the desirability of not going beyond Ambala district in any case. "I insisted upon S. Joginder Singh Mann, the then Rehabilitation Minister and R.N. Thapar, the then Financial Commissioner to send the land-holders to specific districts under a clearly thought out scheme. The scheme lay in settling the refugees from the same area into a compact territory of this side of the border. For example, the refugee land-holders from Lahore and non-colonists from Montgomery district were planned to be settled in Ferozepur district and those from Sialkot district in Hoshiarpur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts. Those families which had gone to West Punjab as colonists were advised to return to their ancestral villages."¹ In this way, about 3,50,000 peasants and cultivators families from the West-Punjab Government.² Each family was temporarily allotted a '*Plough Unit*' of ten acres of land and given loan to buy seeds and agricultural equipments. Giani Kartar Singh used his full energy for total transfer of Hindu-Sikh population from the West Punjab to the East Punjab and the Muslims to the West Punjab from the East Punjab. During the earlier stages Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru opposed this scheme and Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the people to stay on at their original places. It was not realized that without transfer of total population there was no way out for the permanent settlement of refugees but later on Pandit Nehru reconciled himself to the total transfer of Hindus and Sikhs of Western Punjab.

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Giani did not allow his attentions taken up by 16 April, 1947 Rehabilitation of refugees. Upto April 1948, he was the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal. He got very anxious to connect his party with the Indian National Congress and thus suitably make the Sikh politics run in the main stream of National life of independent India. Due to his personal efforts, the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution on March 17, 1948 advising all the members of the Panthic Assembly party both in the Central and the East Punjab Assemblies to forthwith join the Congress Assembly parties.

After this compromise, Giani Kartar Singh became a Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation in the Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. That began a new phase in his political career. Now he could get things of rehabilitation more effectively. As Rehabilitation Minister, his main aim was to permanently settle the refugee land-holders and to initiate other welfare schemes for the benefits of the down-trodden. He was fortunate in having two brilliant I.C.S. officers, Tarlok Singh and Dr. M.S. Randhawa, to assist him in the Rehabilitation Department. Rehabilitation Advisory Boards were set-up in all the districts. S. Tarlok Singh drew upon a land-settlement manual which out-lived the policy to be followed. "He converted all the evacuee land into standard acres i.e. an acre which could yield between 10 to 11 maunds of wheat and a standard acre was equated with one rupee and land was addressed in terms of annas fraction of the standard acre.³ As against 4,000,000 standard units left in Pakistan the available land in the East Punjab was only 2,500,00 units. A scheme of graded cuts was introduced by which the small land holders did not suffer as much as the rich Zamindar. It was the latter who as a class was made to lose the major portion of his lands. This graded-cut affected the economic, social and political structure of the Punjab later on. Under this, scheme a peasant who abandoned 30 acres of land in Pakistan got 21 acres in the East Punjab but a land-lord who left 4000 acres got only 326 acres here.

As Rehabilitation minister, Giani Kartar Singh aimed at benefitting the peasant proprietors from the West Punjab as much as possible. At that time, there was a suggestion from some ministers with urban back-ground and some prominent Sikh leaders like S. Swaran Singh, then Home-Minister and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke that there should be option to land-holders to get compensation in terms of money. Possibly S. Swaran Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke had taken that stand because they were not refugees and had no stakes in the issue. Giani Kartar Singh stoutly opposed this suggestion and emphasized that the refugee land holders should get land for land even if they had to suffer a graded-cut. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava agreed with Giani's suggestion and this had a far-reaching effect. His suggestion for evaluating first graded Lyallpur district acre at 18 annas, Montgomery acre at 16 annas and Sind acre at 14 annas was also accepted by S. Tarlok Singh, the Director General of the Rehabilitation Department. The Hindu Landlords of Jhang, Multan and Shahpur districts had left 16 lakh acres of totally barren-*Banjar Kadim*-land in Pakistan. In their case, Giani Kartar Singh made them to agree to get nominal compensation in terms of money emphasizing that this land had no value. This decision enables him to allot more land to the peasants of the lower category.⁴

Some utopian socialist leaders suggested that "Start every refugee with five acres of land and distribute the rest among the land-less." But Giani Kartar Singh under the advice of P.N. Thapar, Financial Commissioner, vehemently opposed this suggestion and said 'Do so' if you are dealing with the whole country, refugees or non-refugees. Do not pick up the unfortunates who have lost all.⁵ But later on, when Giani Kartar Singh strongly proposed in the cabinet that all then *nambardars* should be allotted one square land each out of the evacuee pool, he was persuaded by S. Tarlok Singh and S.M.S. Randhawa not to press this proposal.⁶

After permanent settlement of land-holders from the West Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh gave more attention to the land reforms and the allied problems as the revision of land revenue rates. In

1949, he issued orders for compulsory consolidation of land. This work received top priority. The *Kills-bandi* or actual demarcation of rectangles of land measuring approximately 73 by 66 yards gave the streamlined agricultural land a shape pleasing to the eyes. *Katcha* roads leading from one village to another were demarcated in accordance with a survey plan for the whole state. This helped a lot in brightening the life of the villagers. It was a prelude to the green revolution and link-roads of the later years. A new era of rural development and agricultural development, under community development scheme began. The credit of all these welcome changes must be given to Giani Kartar Singh, the initiator of compulsory consolidation.

According to land Alienation Act, 1900, the Khattris, Aroras, Banis and Harijans were declared non-agriculturists. This has always been a source of heart burning and division among the different categories of the Punjabis. Though cultivators, this Act stipulated the Harijans in villages were not to be the owners of the land on which they had built their houses. Giani Kartar Singh as Revenue Minister piloted a bill giving full right to the so-called non-agriculturists to buy land and thus got the controversial land Alienation Act of 1900 repealed. He also gave ownership rights to thousands of Harijan householders living in villages and thus won the sympathy and gratitude of the down-trodden and the oppressed.

In 1948, when Giani Kartar Singh was again the Revenue Minister, he did a great service to the Punjab Peasants by piloting the Punjab Land Mortgage Bank Act. The bill was prepared by Sh. S.S. Puri, who was Registrar Cooperative Societies, at that time. The land holders were entitled to get loans from the bank on the security of their land. This was a very helpful scheme for the rapid development of agriculture in the Punjab. In 1951, When Lala Jagat Narain was the Transport Minister, he proposed complete nationalization of Passenger Transport in the Punjab. Giani Kartar Singh instantly opposed the proposal and it was at his suggestion that some particular routs like Jalandhar-Amritsar rout were provincialised (nationalized) on experimental basis and a ratio of 50% for Government and 50% for non-Government routes fixed to be maintained as a policy. It is also worth-mentioning that when site for Chandigarh was selected for the capital of Punjab in 1950, Giani Kartar Singh was the Revenue and Rehabilitation Minister. The land-owners sought to be displaced for the construction of the city demand land. On the advice of Sh. P.N. Thapar and after it was strongly supported by Giani Kartar Singh, the proposal was accepted by the Cabinet. The land-lords in three Tehsils of Ambalas, Ropar and Kharar were persuaded to place their surplus land at the disposal of the Government by Giani Kartar Singh.⁷

Giani Kartar Singh was not confining himself only to the problem posed by the Department. He took a keen interest in the Minority problem in the Punjab. He must go back a little to see how he did that. During 1946, General Elections, the Akali Dal had secured 23 seats in the Punjab Assembly and S. Swaran Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were its prominent leaders. In March, 1948, they had merged themselves in the Congress. At that time Giani Kartar Singh was the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and it was due to his initiative that 'on March 17, 1948, the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal advised all the members of the Panthaik Assembly party both at the centre and in the East Punjab to join the Congress Assembly Parties forthwith.'⁸

Soon after Giani Kartar Singh announced that the Sikhs would not demand any communal electorate. Instead, they would throw their weight with the Congress and give it complete support if they were offered safeguards. In spite of such a unique gesture of goodwill on his part, as the President of The Shiromani Akali Dal, the communal Hindu Press continued to dub him and the Sikhs as stark communalists. Little wonder that this hurt the feelings of many a Sikh. Even nationalist leader of the Sikhs like Gurbachan Singh Bajwa had to declare "the prevalence of communalism in services is having serious repercussions on the public life in the province..... if we want to avoid a repetition of the past tragedy the confidence of the minority community will have to be won by the majority community."⁹ The Hindi Punjabi controversy further added to the Hindu-Sikh differences.

At the centre, the constituent Assembly appointed an Advisory Committee on the minority and fundamental rights in February, 1948. One of its sub-committees consisting of Sardar Patel as Chairman and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajinder Prasad, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. K.M. Munshi as members was directed to report on minority problems which affected the East Punjab and Bengal.

In the meantime, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, the Chief Minister of Punjab issued a circular in June, 1948 laying down the Education Policy of the State Government, "The Government of the East Punjab has decided Gopi Chand Bhargava's circular stated, that the medium of instruction in Schools in the East Punjab will be mother-tongue of the pupil. The script to be used will either be the Devnagri or Gurmukhi in the last two classes. The school which adopts the Devnagri script in the first two classes will have to use the teaching of Gurmukhi script as additional script from this class onward and vice-versa." This declaration of the Government declaring both Hindi and Punjabi as medium of instruction was not liked by the Sikh leaders. In October, 1948 the Akali Dal passed a resolution demanding separate electorate for the Sikhs at least for the next ten years. Of course, it was not to the liking of Giani Kartar Singh, who had opposed separate electorate for the Sikhs as far back as October, 1947. In his own way, he was working for safeguard of the interest of the Sikhs minority as a minister in the Congress in the Punjab. He persuaded the East Punjab ministry to appoint a minority committee which was done by a unanimous vote of the House in early November, 1948. Giani Kartar Singh persuaded all the Sikh members of the Assembly except Partap Singh Kairon to submit a charter of demands on November, 15, 1948. The main demands in the charter were as under:-

1. Representation to the Sikhs on the basis of 1941 census without excluding the Sikhs who had migrated to the other provinces.
2. The Sikhs be given 5 percent representation in the central cabinet.
3. The Sikhs to have one minister and Deputy Minister in the Central Cabinet.
4. The post of the Governor and the premier of the province to be the Sikhs.
5. 50 percent representation in the provincial cabinet to go to the Sikhs.
6. The Gurgaon district and the Lehari State to be excluded from the East Punjab.
7. 40 percent of the services be reserved for the Sikhs.
8. If the above-demands were rejected, the Sikhs to be allowed to form a new province of 7 districts i.e. Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ambala.¹⁰

The minority committee could not come to any decision and appointed a suba committee of ten members of which 5 were Hindus and 5 were Sikhs. The members were Bhim Sen Sachar, Ch. Lehri Singh, B. L. Chaman, Suraj Mal and Smt. Bhano Devi all of whom were Hindus and Giani Kartar Singh, Swaran Singh, Ujjal Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail and Bachan Singh who were all Sikhs. In spite of their best efforts, they could not arrive at any agreed decision. 'The Sikh-demands like communal weightage and reservation were taken as devices to distort the growth of a healthy and natural political development.'¹¹ Both Giani Kartar Singh and Baldev Singh were making efforts to avoid the clash between the Congress and the Akali Dal which was fast approaching Congress leaders at the Centre were also trying their level best to prevent the Hindu-Sikh confrontation in the Punjab. The arrest of Master Tara Singh on February 19, 1949 was an unfortunate event. In this context, the inauguration of the Patiala & East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) in May, 1948 which was another important event in the Constitution development in the Punjab. Further aggravated the tension between two sister communities.

Giani Kartar Singh who was a shrewd political fully realized that the Sikh can gain only by winning the goodwill of the national leaders and any confrontation with the Central Government could be extremely detrimental to the Sikh interests. On May 27, 1949 when proposal for elimination of reservation for minorities was being discussed, he persuaded S. Hukam Singh to speak against the

reservation and support the stand of Sardar Patel. He also assured Dr. Rajindra Prasad of S. Hukam Singh's support. Ultimately, the advisory committee on minorities rejected the plea for reservation. But in Advisory Committee's report, Para 6, acceptance was given to the 'unanimous' proposal made by the Sikh representatives that some classes in Eastern Punjab namely *Mazhbis*, *Ramdasiyas*, *Kabirpanthis* and *Sikligars* who suffer from the same disability as other members of the scheduled castes, should be included in the scheduled castes so that they get the benefit of representation enjoyed by the scheduled castes. Subject to this change to the above mentioned resolution, the report of the special sub-committee was approved. In all this Giani Kartar Singh was following the policy of getting concession step by step for the Sikhs in an atmosphere of good will. Giani was soon to initiate a move that was to lead to what is called 'Sachar-Giani formula'. He was anxious to serve the cause of the Punjabi language without any further division of the Punjab. He took advantage of the rift in the Congress ranks. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Bhim Sen Sachhar were leaders of the opposing groups. Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters took advantage of this conflict and helped Sh. Bhim Sen Sachhar in ousting Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava from the position of Chief-Ministership of the Punjab. As a bargain Bhim Sen Sachhar agreed to implement a new language formula to know as 'Sachar-Giani Language Formula'. The Punjab Government announced this new language plan for the educational institutions in October, 1949. It was indeed a great achievement on the part of Giani Kartar Singh. This formula became a basis for the achievement of the Punjabi-speaking State of the later days. Under this Formula the Punjab was demarcated into three areas:-

The Punjabi speaking, the Hindi speaking and the Bilingual. The first was comprised of the district Amritsar, Jalandhar, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur & Hoshiarpur and the two Tehsils of Ambala (Ropar & Kharar excluding Chandigarh). The Hindi speaking area was comprised of five district of Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Kangra & Hissar (with the exclusion of Sirsa Tehsil) and two tehsils of Ambala. (Jagadhri & Naraingarh) The remaining area of Simla, Chandigarh & Sirsa was declared as bilingual.

It was provided that in each of these areas the language of these areas would be the medium of instruction in all schools upto the matriculation standard while the other languages would be taught as a compulsory language from the last class of the Primary Stage upto the matriculation standard and in the case of girls in middle classes only. Provision was made for children whose mother tongue was other than regional language provided there were 40 students in the school or ten in each class requiring instruction in the other language.¹²

Though the Sachar formula had far-reaching political effects and had given permanent position to Giani Kartar Singh in the history of the Punjabi-Suba movement it was not a satisfactory solution of the language problem. By giving option to the parents to select the medium of education for their children it created further communal differences in the Punjab. While commenting on the role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Congress Shri Baldev Raj Nayyar in his book "The Minority Problem in the Punjab" writes "In the third category he puts the groups, leader who find membership of the congress party a suitable instrument for the pursuit of either personal or community goals but are ready to forsake that party the moment such goals are frustrated and return to the Akali Dal."¹³

There is no doubt that Sachhar formula was one of top achievements of Giani Kartar Singh. It made way easier for the future Punjabi-speaking state.

From the Sachhar-Giani formula to the Regional formula was only a step. The Draft committee of the constituent Assembly had recommended in December, 1947 the appointment of a linguistic commission to look into and report on the desirability or otherwise of creation of any other proposed province of Andhra, Karnatka, Kerala and Maharashtra. Unfortunately the proposal for creation of a Punjabi-Speaking state was excluded from the terms of reference of the linguistic commission. This commission under justice Dar pronounced against any change in the boundaries of the Punjab.

In fact it killed any hope for it when it observed that the formation of linguistic provinces is sure to give rise to a demand for the separation of linguistic groups. Elsewhere claims have already been made by the Sikhs, Jats and others and these demands in course of time would be intensified and become live issues if once the formation of linguistic provinces is decided upon.¹⁴

Another committee called J.V.P. committee, appointed by the Constituent Assembly and consisting of Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pathabhai Sitaramayya, also endorsed the view of Dar Commission when it reported: "We are clearly of the opinion that no kind of rectification of boundaries in the provinces Northern India should be raised at the present moment, whatever the merits of such a proposal might be."¹⁵

Master Tara Singh, the most influential of the Sikh leader took the announcement as clear discrimination against the Sikhs and the Punjabi-speaking population. He had his reason for feeling that way. It was against the earlier policy of the Indian National Congress which had favoured the creation of linguistic states. It had adopted this policy as far back as 1920 when it had passed a resolution to that effect. Moti Lal report of 1928 had also endorsed this policy.

It was under such atmosphere that a representative convention of the Sikhs in April, 1949 adopted a resolution making Punjabi-Suba as the objective of the people of the Punjab. Hukam Singh also sought the demarcation of the linguistic state on the basis of Punjabi. The Akali leaders emphasized that their stand was purely national; and democratic. The Akali leadership could not convince the national leaders about the immediate need of such a small state. That was because of the general feeling even among the Sikhs that Jawahar Lal Nehru could never think of discriminating against a brave community like the Sikhs.

Giani Kartar Singh who was Revenue Minister of the Punjab Government in 1960, was convinced that it was not an appropriate time to start an agitation for a Punjabi-Speaking state. While addressing a conference of the Harijan's at Jalandhar on July 18, 1950, he opposed the demand by saying "the Sikhs were in majority only in two Tehsils TarnTaran (Amritsar) and Moga (Ferozepur) hence the demand was unjustified."¹⁶

One of these days the Shiromini Akali Dal issued a show-cause notice to the Panthik M.L.A.'s why they should not leave the Congress party and have a bloc of their own. On July 20, 1950 the executive committee of Akali Dal adopted a resolution directing all M.L.A.'s who got elected on the Panthik ticket to resign forthwith from the Congress and create a separate Panthik Block in the Assembly Party,¹⁷ the directive was conveyed to Baldev Singh, the Defence Minister, Government of India and Giani Kartar Singh and Isher Singh Majhail, two Akali Ministers in the Punjab Cabinet.¹⁸

The Sikh legislators held a meeting at Ambala on July 23, 1950 to consider the situation and set up a five-man sub-committee including Giani Kartar Singh to decide about the issue after meeting the Akali Dal High Command. Among those who attended the meeting were Baldev Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Isher Singh Majhail, Gurbachan Singh Bajwa, Swaran Singh, Dalip Singh Kang and Narinder Singh. They decided against leaving the Congress Party. The only members who abided by the directive of the Shiromani Akali Dal was Jaswant Singh Duggal.

Giani Kartar Singh and his supporters in the Congress Assembly Party were then convinced that the question of Punjabi language and script had almost been settled by the Sachhar Formula and the question of a Punjabi-speaking state could be settled by mutual good-will and not by adopting an agitational approach. The displaced persons were still to be properly settled. There was no harm if the Punjabi waited for some time more. But it did not take Kartar Singh and his supporters long to realize that the communalists among the Hindus were out to harm the interest of the Sikh. Giani Ji was specially pained when in the 1951 census the majority of the Hindus in the Punjab disowned their mother tongue Punjabi and Hindu organizations successfully persuaded Punjabi-speaking Hindus to declare that their mother tongue was Hindi.¹⁹ The political atmosphere in the Punjab was

being polluted by the stark communalists and Giani Kartar Singh was feeling frustrated, that was natural. Even important members of the Congress Party were showing hostile attitude towards the Sikhs and their democratic demand of a Punjabi speaking State which was including PEPSU.

From now onwards Giani Kartar Singh started drifting away from the Congress. He decided to quit the party in 1952 when he was defeated by a small margin by a somewhat unknown person Gurdial Singh in the Kartarpur Assembly election. He was piqued that even the Congressites had tried their level best to oust him from the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He went back to the Akali Dal and soon after appointed General Secretary of the Akali Dal. He was soon backing in the Punjab Legislature once again as an Akali. He was elected member of the Punjab Legislative council in 1952. He fell seriously ill for sometime but recovered his health in the beginning of the year 1953.

As a practical politician Giani Kartar Singh fully realized that to control the Sikh masses and to prepare them for a struggle for the attainment of a Punjabi speaking state control of S.G.P.C. by the Shiromani Akali Dal was a must. After partition, the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee was in the hands of nationalist Sikhs headed by Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. The ruling Congress party had given them all possible support. He worked day and night to oust this group the S.G.P.C. and ultimately succeeded in doing so. He in the annual election in October 1952, he got the Akali Dal's nominee Pritam Singh's Khuranj elected as President of the S.G.P.C. It gave the control of S.G.P.C. the major statutory body to the Akalis which thereafter played a major role in the politic of the Punjab. The election of the S.G.P.C. came to be the barometer of the strength and support of the Sikhs to the cause of the Punjabi Suba.²⁰

In the beginning of 1953, Romulu, a prominent Andhara leader sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra Pradesh. The Central Government appointed a one-man commission consisting of Justice Wanchoo to demarcate Andhra province. The creation of Andhra Pradesh encouraged Sikh agitation for the Punjabi Suba. The Shiromini Akali Dal issued manifest emphasizing that an autonomous Punjabi speaking Province alone would give the Sikhs the needed security.²¹

Giani Kartar Singh as General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal also contributed in a big way to proper development in the PEPSU. That was the time when the Central Government was trying to oust the Pro-Akali Premier, S. Gian Singh Rarewala's of the United Front Ministry. In March 1953, the centre suspended constitution in PEPSU even when the united front ministry had a majority and could run the administration. This greatly disappointed Giani Kartar Singh and other leader of the Akali Dal who took it as a clear proof of the hollowness of slogans of democracy and secularism proclaimed by the Congress leaders. This further convinced the Sikh leaders that the only remedy for all these ills and discriminations was the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state including PEPSU. On September 30, 1953 an Akali Conference was held at Anandpur Sahib and the demand for early formation of Punjabi Suba was reiterated.

It appeared that now the demand for Punjabi Suba would not be resisted for long. After the creation of Andhra Pradesh the demand for linguistic States was being voiced in many parts of the country. As a consequence, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru made a statement in Parliament on December 22, 1953 to the effect that a commission would be appointed to examine "objectively and dispassionately" the question of the reorganization of the states of the Indian Union, "so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as the nation as whole is promoted." Mr. Fazal Ali was appointed the chairman of the commission with Pandit H. Zuzru and Sardar K.M. Panikar as its members. The appointed of the Commission was welcomed by the Sikh leaders as it gave them an opportunity to place their case for the Punjabi Suba. The working committee of the Shiromini Akali Dal submitted its memorandum giving convincing facts and figures.

Punjabi Suba enthusiasts were disappointed. The Commission submitted its report to the Government of India on September 30, 1955 and it was released to the Public on October 10,

1955. The Commission recommended that PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh should form part of the Punjab.²² According to the commission the linguistic complexion and the communication needs of the Punjab did not justify the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. The creation of such a state was likely to disrupt the economic life of the area. There was no case for a Punjabi Speaking State because it lacked the General support of the people in inhabiting the area and because it was not to eliminate any of the cause of friction from which the demand for a Punjabi Speaking State had arisen. The Punjabi Suba was to solve neither the language nor the communal problem. On the other hand it might further exasperate the feelings already being nursed. PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh were too small to continue by themselves. Having regard to the economic and administrative links between PEPSU and the Himachal Pradesh on the one hand and the present Punjabi State on the other, the merger of these two States in the Punjab was justified.²³

The Akali leaders denounced the report as “decree of Sikh annihilation” and threatened to start a passive Resistance movement.²⁴ In the meantime the election to the S.G.P.C. was held in early 1955 and the Shiromani Akali Dal entered the contest on the basis of the Punjabi Suba demand. The Congress Party organized a Khalsa Dal to fight these elections. That move was resented by the Sikh masses a good deal. Giani Kartar Singh made it a question of prestige and collected a big amount of money from the landlords of Ferozepur district including S. Parkash Singh Badal and S. Narinder Singh to fight Congress Khalsa Dal.²⁵

The congress separated 1955, S.G.P.C. election. The Khalsa Dal contested 132 seats and won only three. Akali Dal contested 112 seats and won all of them. 23 seats were won by the Desbhatag Board consisting of communists and other progressive parties opposed to the Congress. This greatly raised the morale of the Sikh leaders who had been fighting for the attainment of Punjabi Suba. A counter agitation by the Arya-Samaj-Jan Sangh groups launched to save Hindi and in support of Maha-Punjabi Suba caused a lot of tension among the different communities in the Punjab.

Under the instructions of Bhim Sen Sachhar, the Chief Minister of Punjab, the district Magistrate Amritsar promulgated an order on April 6, 1955, banning rising of slogans in support of Punjabi Suba or Maha Punjab. The Akali Dal decided to start a morcha against the order on May 10, 1955 and Master Tara Singh along with ten others courted arrest on May 10, 1955 by raising the slogans and thus defying the ban.

Giani Kartar Singh, Kabal Singh, Bhai Permanand Jhansi and some other prominent leaders were arrested on May 16, 1955. Some of the old Congress leaders like Abdul Ghani Dhar, Prof. Mota Singh, Sri Ram Sharma and Ch. Sri Chand of Haryana supported the Akali agitation. By the first week of July, 1955 nearly 8000 volunteers courted arrest. The agitation was a success. The ban on shouting slogans was lifted by the Punjab Government on July 12, 1955, ‘to mark the great occasion of Mr. Nehru’s triumphant return from peace Mission abroad.’ But Master Tara Singh and other prominent leaders were not released till September 8, 1955. A convention of all parties and organization of the Sikhs was called at Amritsar on October 16, 1955. It fully supported the demand for creation of a Punjabi Speaking State.

On October 24, 1955 a deputation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala, Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Hukam Singh met the Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru, for nearly two hours in the presence of Pandit Pant and Maulana Azad but the meeting failed to end the crisis. On 14th of January, Bhim Sen Sachhar resigned and S. Partap Singh Kairon, the strongman of Punjab, became the Chief Minister on January 21, 1956.

Giani Kartar Singh along with Master Tara Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Hukam Singh met the Prime Minister on October 24, 1955. The talks could not produce any fruitful results. On November 10, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Amritsar and went to Darbar Sahib to pay homage, as much to the great Sikh temple as the Sikh community. He was received by a big

crowd and the Akali leaders including Giani Kartar Singh presented to him a *Saropa* on behalf of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.). This created tremendous goodwill on both sides. The Sikh leaders mentioned above met the Prime Minister again on November 22, December 23, 1955 and on January 22, 1956 and presented their case for the creation of the Punjabi speaking state with great emphasis than ever before.

In February, 1956 All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.) decided to hold its annual session at Amritsar. Akali Dal also decided to conduct its tenth annual conference at the same time and in the same city. On February 11, 1956 the city witnessed an historic procession of the Sikhs. It was a sea of humanity. One million Sikhs moved in vast sea of humanity. Jawahar Lal Nehru was stunned by the hold of Akalis on the Sikh masses.²⁶ Giani Kartar Singh who was General Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal at that time was the force behind the Akali Conference.

Obviously influenced by this historic conference the Cabinet Sub Committee of the Central Government resumed talks with the Sikh leaders and a delegation consisting of Giani Kartar Singh and other prominent leaders met the committee. On February 11, 1956, Giani Kartar Singh unfolded the plan given by the Sub-Committee about the proposed Reorganization of the Punjab State at a meeting of the prominent leaders at Delhi and vehemently pleaded the case for a Punjabi Suba. In the beginning of March, the final plan of the Government, commonly known as Regional Formula was accepted by the members of the Sikh delegation consisting of Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Bawa Harkishan Singh. A general meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal was called at Amritsar on March 11, 1956. Gian Singh Rarewala sought approval of the General Council and Giani Kartar Singh succeeded in over powering the opposition and got Dal's acceptance of the Regional Formula. In the final voting only S. Amar Singh Ambalvi recorded his dissent, with the proposal to accept the Regional Formula.

According to Regional Formula, the member of the Punjab Legislature were divided into two groups, one comprising elected members of the Punjab Assembly from the Punjabi speaking region and the other from the Hindi speaking region. Any measure affecting a particular region was first to be considered by the members of the region before coming up for plenary consideration. The Sachhar Language Formula was to continue and in addition, it was agreed that the official language of each at the district level and below would be the language of the region. The Punjab was declared a bilingual state which recognized both Punjabi in Gurmukhi and in Devnagri script as the official language of the State. The advice tendered by the Regional Committees was normally to be accepted by the Government and the State Legislature. In case of a difference of opinion reference was to be made to the Governor whose decision was to be final and binding. Department of Punjabi and Hindi were to be set up and provision made for the establishment of Punjabi University.²⁷

After the acceptance of Regional Formula by the general body of the Akali Dal on March 11, 1956, Giani Kartar Singh and Hukam Singh, who was elected Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha after the Akalis acceptance of the regional formula and Gian Singh Rarewala started talks with Maulana Azad and U.N. Dhebar, President of the Congress, for the merger of Akali Dal members in the Congress. Giani Kartar Singh started in the meeting of the working committee of the Aali Dal that for the ultimate good of the Akali Dal, it was essential to join Congress. He considered that three conditions were necessary before such a move could mature. These three were (1) that there should be congress committees on regional basis; (2) that the Akali Dal should be allowed to maintain its position by having a certain political status; and (3) that there should be proper adjustment of seats.²⁸

Giani Kartar Singh continued his talks with Maulana Azad up to September, 1956 before realizing that the Congress was ready to allow the Akali Dal to continue itself to social, cultural and religious activities, but would not allow it to participate in the political affairs.

On September 30, 1956 the Working Committee of the Akali Dal and about two hundred Jathedars, General Secretaries and other leaders assembled at Amritsar on the instance of Giani

Kartar Singh. A resolution proposing merger of the Akali Dal in the Congress was moved by Ajit Singh Sarhadi and seconded by Harcharan Singh Hijdiara. Finally, it was decided to have another meeting of the general body of the Akali Dal on November 20, 1956. This meeting was attended by 322 delegates from the Punjab and other States. The merger resolution passed earlier was endorsed with only five dissidents. Master Tara Singh supported the resolution.

After the merger of Shiromani Akali Dal in the Congress, the Congress High Command nominated three Akali leaders on the state election board. They were, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Hukam Singh and S. Ajit Singh Sarhadi. But they soon found that they were being given shabby treatment by the Punjab Congress leaders. The erstwhile Akalis were given 23 Assembly seats and three Parliament seats. Master Tara Singh strongly protested, but it was too late. All the same in the press-conference on February 14, 1957 he said, "Now I am not bound by the Akali-Congress compromise, because the Congress has dishonored us."²⁹ The pro-congress Akalis including Giani Kartar Singh looked upon Master Tara Singh as getting impolitic. Giani Kartar Singh was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly from the Dasuya-Tanda constituency of Hoshiarpur district defeating Dr. Jagjit Singh by a margin of more than 10,000 votes. S. Partap Singh Kairon was elected Chief-Minister of Punjab on April 3, 1957 and he included two erstwhile Akalis, Giani Kartar Singh and Gian Singh Rarewala, in his cabinet. Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Revenue and Agricultural Minister and this once again gave Giani an opportunity to play constructive role in the development of Punjab. The first and foremost aim of Giani Kartar Singh after talking oath as a minister was to normalize relations between Akalis and the Congress Party and besides getting the regional formula properly implemented. The Arya Samaj started an agitation the language clause of the Regional Formula. Its Hindi-Rakhsha samiti wanted Punjab to be made a bilingual State. The Government took hold and practical stand. It assured that Hindi as a national language will be given proper place in Punjab and Giani Kartar Singh while addressing a big conference said, "that no regional language can challenge the status of the national language."³⁰

Giani did a number of other things as a minister. Punjabi University Patiala was established with his efforts. He took advantage of clause No. 14 of the Regional Formula which stated that the departments of Punjabi and Hindi would be set up and efforts be made for the establishment of Punjabi-University.³¹ In a meeting of the Punjab-Zone Regional Committee, Giani made Sh. Ram Dayal Singh M.L.A. a close associate of his, move a resolution 'demanding that in the Punjabi Zone medium of instruction in all the schools should be Punjabi.'³² The resolution was passed by a majority vote but its implementation threatened to create political complications. As a compromise, Partap Singh Kairon accepted the proposal for establishing the Punjabi University at Patiala. On August 5, 1960, Giani Kartar Singh through the Punjab Government got issued a notification for appointing a commission consisting of the Maharaja of Patiala as its Chairman and 12 renowned educationists to give shape to this decision.³³ By the ordinance of the Government of Punjab dated April 30, 1962 the Punjabi University was established and colleges within ten miles of Patiala city were put under its jurisdiction. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the President of India, inaugurated the University and Bhai Jodh Singh appointed its first Vice-Chancellor. Credit must be given to Giani Kartar Singh for getting another University established in the Punjab. It was Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana. His efforts were reputed for the establishment of this university. He was then in charge of the Agricultural Department besides a few others. Giani Kartar Singh got interested in cleanliness in public life. He supported the dissidents in the Congress Party who were collecting material on the Corruption charge against the Chief Minister, Partap Singh Kairon. They put 25 charges against the Chief Minister. They divided these charges into three categories viz. charges of corruption, charges about miss-use of power in the interest of his family and friends and lastly charges regarding irregularities in the administration. The Chief Minister was supported by the Congress High Command and later on, he

tried to get rid of Giani Kartar Singh but the High Command did not allow him to do so. Giani Kartar Singh also now took interest capturing strategic positions for his own men. For the Chairman of the Punjabi Regional Committee, he and his associates supported Seth Ram Nath against S. Darbara Singh enjoyed the support of the Chief Minister. By his clever moves, he got the former elected. This was another feather in the cap of Giani Kartar Singh. It made the Chief Minister angry. Kairon deprived Giani Kartar Singh of the important portfolio of Revenue and Local Bodies and made him a minister of only Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and games on August 19, 1958.³⁴

Giani Kartar Singh found himself in a delicate position. The Chief Minister was hostile to him. On the other hand, Akali leaders like Master Tara Singh did not like his attitude towards the Congress party. He strongly believed that the Regional Formula should be given a proper trial and was convinced that his approach to the problems of the Sikhs and Punjabis as a whole was more practical and enduring. The Sachhar Formula had later on resulted in the Regional Formula and his view, the Regional Formula was a major step towards the attainment of Punjabi Suba. He did not like the frequent outbursts of Master Tara Singh who was stating, 'I will be compelled to re-open the demand for Punjabi Suba.' Giani thought of cutting Master Tara Singh to size. As a shrewd Politician Giani Kartar Singh knew fully well that so long as Master Tara Singh was the President of the Shromini Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee, he was a force to reckon with. He decided to deprive the Master of this office.

The annual elections of the office bearers of S.G.P.C. were to be held on November 16, 1958. Giani Kartar Singh who had only recently resigned from the Akali Dal joined hands with the Communist Group in the S.G.P.C. and sponsored Prem Singh Lalpuri for the President ship against Master Tara Singh. There was hectic activity and Giani Kartar Singh's candidate was able to defeat Master Tara Singh by 77 votes to 74. It was a great bomb-shell in the Akali circles and in a way it was the beginning of the renewed confrontation between the Akalis and the Government of the Congress Party. Though his critics doubted the bonafides of Giani Kartar Singh, but he wanted to strengthen the position of the S.G.P.C. and in all sincerity suggestion the amendment of the Gurdwara Act, 1925.³⁵ His main aim was to give representation to the old PEPSU area, on the S.G.P.C. The management of historic Gurdwara in PEPSU was under the PEPSU interim Gurdwara Board and all the members of the Board had been nominated by the Government to S.G.P.C. According to the proposed amendment, the PEPSU interim Gurdwara Board was to be abolished and its members made members of the Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. An electoral College of 3000 Sikh voters including Sikh Legislators of Parliament and both the Houses of the State from the PEPSU area, heads of the registered Sikh Institutes, Sikh members of the municipal committees in PEPSU and the then 12 members of the Interim Gurudwara Board of the PEPSU area were to co-opt 35 additional members of the S.G.P.C. General body. The Sikh Gurudwara Amendment Bill attaching all the PEPSU Gurudwaras in the S.G.P.C. was piloted by Giani Kartar Singh and was passed into an Act on December 31, 1958. It was a spectacular achievement and had a permanent effect on the Sikh politics and religion. Vast resources of these Gurudwaras enhanced the prestige and power of the S.G.P.C. and in 1960 when the Shiromini Akali Dal captured power in the S.G.P.C. they realized that their earlier fears were unfounded. But for the personal efforts of Giani Kartar Singh, the Gurudwaras in the PEPSU would not have come under the control of the S.G.P.C. Even the congress leaders, including Partap Singh Kairon, the Chief Minister of Punjab, could not visualise that Giani Kartar Singh was indirectly serving his community and that this amendment was against the future interests of the Congress Party.

Master Tara Singh took this decision about PEPSU Gurudwaras as a direct interference in the administration of the Gurudwaras by the Government and at the second Punjabi Suba Conference at Chandigarh threatened to start a mass movement on this issue. He announced that he would

soon organize a silent procession at Delhi. He said, he would do that on March 15, 1959 but was arrested on March 12 along with S. Atma Singh, S. Hargurnad Singh and S. Sarup Singh M.L.A. The procession was taken out on the fixed date. Master Tara Singh was released on March 21 and he met the Prime Minister on April 11, 1959. When Master Tara Singh announced that the Akali Dal would fight the next S.G.P.C. elections on the Punjabi-Suba issue as its basis, it was taken as a challenge by the Congress Sikh and Giani Kartar Singh organized a 'SADH SANGAT' Board. On October 24, 1959, Giani Kartar Singh resigned his minister ship to devote his entire time and energy to defeating Master Tara Singh. The elections were held on January 17, 1960. The Shoromini Akali Dal secured 132 seats out of 139. This was a signal for a big agitation for Punjabi Suba. On March 15, 1960, the Akali Dal Working Committee directed the Akali Legislators to leave the Congress but only five of them abided by this directive.³⁶

Giani Kartar Singh carefully watched the long Punjabi Suba movement from 1960-66. Conventions and conferences were being addressed by the important leaders. Thousands of Volunteers were courting arrests. Sant Fateh Singh and Master Tara Singh had started and then ended their fasts getting some secret assurances by the Central Government. Giani Kartar Singh had his own methods of achieving his goals. He did not follow the methods of fasts and had no faith in the leadership of the Akali Dal. Harcharan Singh Bajwa, a prominent Akali leader writes, "In April, 1961, Giani Kartar Singh confided to me smilingly that almost entire Action Committee of the Morcha and the working Committee of the Dal which were running the Morcha within the walls of the Darbar Sahib were on the pay of Partap Singh Kairon."³⁷ Jawahar Lal Nehru's Secretary, B.N. Malik in his book, "My days with Nehru" writes that Sant Fateh Singh's manouvres to oust Master Tara Singh from Sikh politics found solid support from Partap Singh Kairon. After Sant Fateh Singh broke his fast on January 9, 1960, Giani Kartar Singh created a strong lobby in the Congress Party in favour of a Punjabi-Speaking state on purely linguistic basis.

"When the Indian Parliament passed the Bombay Re-organisation Act, 1960, the President gave his assent to this Act on April 25, 1960."³⁸ Giani Kartar Singh took advantage of this situation and met Shri Morarji Desai, then Finance Minister of India, who belonged to Gujrat and argued with him, the case of a Punjabi-speaking State. Shri Desai was convinced but told him frankly that until the proposal was put forth by Partap Singh Kairon, the Chief Minister of Punjab and a strong favorite with the Prime Minister, no one will hear him.³⁹

When Master Tara Singh started his fast on August 15, 1961, there was a lot of speculation and tension in the Punjab political circles. The fast continued up to September 30, 1961 When Malik Hardit Singh came with a message to him that the Government of India was ready to appoint a High powered Commission to examine the cases of discrimination against the Sikhs and the demand for Punjabi-Suba.⁴⁰ The fast was given up and the Central Government appointed three men Das Commission to investigate the question of discrimination and other grievances of the Sikhs. The Commission in its report emphasized that the non-formation of a Punjabi Speaking State was in no way a discrimination against the Sikhs. It may be interesting to know that though Giani Kartar Singh was outwardly criticizing the demand for Punjabi Suba, he was ready to resign as a Revenue Minister and plunged into the Punjabi Suba agitation. "During Master Tara Singh's fast, he made up his mind to resign as a Minister of the Punjab Government, and went to Delhi along with his political Secretary Kabal Singh, to consult his friends. He opened his mind to S. Raghbir Singh Panjhazari, M.P, but was shocked to know from him that Central Government has a definite secret report that Master Tara Singh will be persuaded to break his fast without fulfilling his aim soon. He met Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, advisor to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and tried to convince him about the genuineness of the demand for Punjabi Suba. In the meantime, Partap Singh Kairon received a C.I.D. report that on his way back from Delhi that Giani Kartar Singh will go directly to Darbar Sahib

Amritsar to join Master Tara Singh and he ordered that Giani be arrested before he reached Amritsar. But Giani Kartar Singh stayed back at Delhi after knowing the minor story of the Akali politics and lost faith in the bonfire of the Akali leadership.⁴¹

During the general elections of 1962, Giani Kartar Singh was again elected as a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly from the Dasuya-Tanda constituency. He defeated Dr. Jagit Singh by a narrow margin of 300 votes. He was again appointed Revenue Minister in the Cabinet headed by S. Partap Singh Kairon. In the same year in October, Sant Akali Dal captured S.G.P.C. and this started further struggle between Sant Fateh Singh and Master Tara Singh. Giani Kartar Singh was supporting the Sant group and was watching the political situation very carefully. The claim for Punjabi Suba took a feverish turn when on 25th August, 1965, Sant Fateh Singh who had earlier met Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri decided to go on fast unto death from 10th September onwards and to immolate himself on 25th September in the case of non-acceptance of Punjabi Suba demand. He had to suspend his fast due to Indo-Pakistan war but on February 28, 1966, Sant Fateh Singh once again announced that he would immolate himself after the dead line of one month.

Just after the end of the Indo-Pakistan war, Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, Home Minister of India appointed a Punjabi Suba Parliamentary Committee of 21 members in consultation with the Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, with S. Hukam Singh, the then Speaker, Lok Sabha as its President. The committee included Dhanna Singh Gulshan, Surjit Singh Majithia, Uttam Singh Duggal and S. Joginder Singh. The Committee continued its proceeding even after the death of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on January 11, 1966 at Tashkant. On behalf of the Sikh Ministers, of the Punjab legislative Assembly Party, Giani Kartar Singh and S. Harcharan Singh Brar presented a strong case for the establishment of the Punjabi Suba before the Parliamentary Committee on January 11, 1966. In that meeting Giani Kartar Singh emphasized that the Sikhs were always nationalists to the core and their demand for Azad Punjab at the time of partition was only to contract the creation of Pakistan. He presented the old files of the prominent dailies-Partap and Milap, in support of his contention. He also disclosed that in 1947, some rich Hindu businessmen had rendered substantial financial help to Akali Dal in support of Azad Punjab, as they were then convinced that it was the only way to counteract the demand for Pakistan.⁴²

Giani Kartar Singh also sent a delegation of eighteen Congress M.L.A.s under the leadership of Balwant Singh to present their memorandum in favour of Punjabi Suba. It was, of course, one of the over 2200 memoranda sent to the Committee. Ultimately on March 15, 1966, Parliamentary Committee recommended that the hilly areas of Punjab should be handed over to Himachal Pradesh and no areas from Delhi, U.P. or Rajasthan be added to a new Hindi-speaking State named Haryana. The Committee recommended the formation of a Punjabi speaking State. The Home Minister presented this report to the Lok Sabha on April 16, 1966. Earlier the Congress Working Committee in its meeting on March 9, 1966 passed a resolution recommending to the Union Government the formation of a state with Punjabi as the State Language out of the existing Punjab. It was a momentous decision with far reaching effects. In a way, it was the fulfillment of the aspirations of old leaders like Giani Kartar Singh, who had been able to create a strong lobby in the Congress Party in favour of a Punjabi speaking State.

On April 23, 1966, Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, Home Minister of India, announced the appointment of a Boundary Commission which was presided over by Mr. Justice Shah of the Supreme Court of India and included Sh. S. Dutt and Shri M.M. Phillips. The direction given to the Commission ran as follows, the Commission shall examine the existing boundary of the Hindi and Punjabi Regions of the present State of Punjab and recommended what adjustments, if any, are necessary in that boundary to recur the linguistic homogeneity of the proposed Punjabi and Haryana States. The Commission shall also indicate the boundaries of the hill areas of the present State of Punjab which are contiguous to

Himachal Pradesh and have linguistic and cultural affinity with that territory. The Commission shall apply the linguistic principle with due regard to the census figures of 1961 and other relevant considerations. The Commission may also take into account such other factors as administrative convenience and economic well being, geographical contiguity and facility of communication and will ordinarily ensure that the adjustments that they may recommend do not involve breaking of existing tehsils.⁴³

The Commission started its work on April 28, 1966. Once again, Giani Kartar Singh played a leading role in getting maximum areas for the Punjabi speaking States.

Giani Kartar Singh presented a memorandum signed by 44 Congress Leaders to the Shah Commission emphasizing that the areas under the Punjabi Speaking State should be enlarged and demarcated purely on linguistic basis. He personally pleaded merger of major part of Kangra district in the Punjabi Speaking State emphasizing that Kangri is a dialect of Punjabi and all those areas having less than 3000 feet height from the sea level are always termed as plains. He fought his last battle for the inclusion of Una tehsil in Punjab. He sent numerous delegations of the Panchayats of the Una tehsil in favour of inclusion in the Punjabi Speaking State. He made an emotional appeal to the Commission for inclusion of Anandpur Sahib in the Punjabi Speaking State. He stressed that the Sikhs have already lost Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev in 1947 and now the birth place of Khalsa should not be snatched from them. He also proved that Nurpur Bedi close economic and cultural connections with Garhshankar tehsil of Hoshiarpur district. The credit for getting Anandpur Sahib, Nangal Township and Nurpur Bedi for Punjab goes to him, but he was pained to find that the Shah Commission which had been directed not even to break a tehsil, divided the land of eight villages comprising Naya Nangal into Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Had he not attached the village of Kaddukhera of the Abohar Sub-tehsil, a border village on the side of Haryana in Muktsar tehsil, earlier, Abohar and Fazilka would have gone to Haryana in 1966.⁴⁴

The Commission submitted its report in May 1966. Some areas which formerly belonged to Punjab were given to Himachal Pradesh and the rest of the Punjab was divided into the States of Punjab and Haryana. The majority of the members of the Commission recommended that Chandigarh be given to Haryana. The Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966 was passed by the Indian Parliament and it received the assent of the President, on September 18, 1966. The new States of Punjab and Haryana were inaugurated on November 1, 1966. The Akali Dal again started agitation for inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab and ultimately the district disputes between the States of Punjab and Haryana were referred to the arbitration of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India.⁴⁵

The architect of Azad Punjab had reached his destination in the form of Punjabi Suba after waiting and struggling for a long time and that was in a way the end of and culmination of both his ambition and political career, after this, Giani Kartar Singh was just a pathetic figure of the Punjab Politics and even God was not kind to him. His health was deteriorating day by day.

Like Churchill, the hero of the Second World War, Giani Kartar Singh was defeated in the general elections after he had led his people to victory. He failed to get elected in 1967 from the Dasuya constituency of the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1967. Afterwards, he also fell seriously ill and in disgust resigned from the Congress party. He carefully watched the agitation for inclusion of Chandigarh and Punjabi speaking areas of Haryana in Punjab, but was not able to play an active role. Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Chanan Singh did not want to bring him into line again. So much so that in 1969 when S. Gurnam Singh, Chief Minister Punjab wanted to appoint him Chairman of the Punjab Subordinate Services Selection Board in appreciation of his services to the Akali Party, they directly pressed the Chief Minister not to give him such a recognition.⁴⁶

But this hardly counted with this selfless worker. In March, 1970 when S. Parkash Singh Badal, his old devotee and admirer became Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Chairman of the Committee for taking back Punjabi Speaking areas from Haryana and Himachal

Pradesh. He toured different areas of the Punjab and gave useful information and guidance to the Chief Minister. In 1971, he fought for membership of Lok Sabha from the Hoshiarpur constituency on Akali ticket against Darbara Singh, a prominent congress leader, but was defeated. That was his last political Endeavour.

In the end we can say that Giani Kartar Singh was dedicated personality in every field we have already discussed in our paper. He had to fought big agitation and faced criticism from his fellow contemporaries. Despite of this he did his best to resettle the refugees and provide them land and other facilities regarded by them. He realized the need of education in this area. Two universities were established with his efforts viz. Punjabi University, Patiala and Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana. During struggle of Punjabi Suba Movement he never seen back although he had same issues but he worked as a team contradictorily. We appreciate his efforts in this concern.⁴⁷

ENDNOTES

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Supervisor's Certificate Research Papers

It is to certify that Baljeet Singh has got one research paper published in the following reputed journals:

- Paper entitled **Role of Giani Kartar Singh in Resettlement of Refugees and Punjabi Suba Struggle (1947-1966)**

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled "**Role of Giani Kartar Singh in Punjab Politics**" Embodied the work carries out by **Baljeet Singh** himself/herself under my supervision and that is worthy of consideration for the award of the Ph.D. degree.

Supervisor's signature

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Dr. Balraj Singh
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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, **Baljeet Singh**, certify that the work embodied in this Ph.D. thesis is my own bonafide work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. Balraj Singh** from **March 2017 to June 2022** at Department of **History and Punjab Historical Studies**, Punjabi University, Patiala. The matter embodied in this Ph.D. thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree/diploma.

I declare that I have faithfully acknowledged, given credit to and referred to the research workers wherever their works have been cited in the text and the body of the thesis. I further certify that I have not willfully lifted up some other's work, para, text, data, results, etc. reported in the journals, books, magazines, reports, dissertations, thesis, etc., or available at web-sites and included them in this Ph.D. thesis and cited as my own work. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the University.

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This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my/our knowledge.

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PREFACE

Giani Kartar Singh considered as one of the makers of Modern Punjab was born on 22 January, 1902 in Chak no. 40 Jhang Branch in the Lyallpur District. Giani Kartar Singh showed his flair for politics even as a child. He read newspapers and was especially impressed by the writings of Bhai Parmanand, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri and Lala Lajpat Rai. All this evoked political, social and religious consciousness in his tender heart. He participated in Gurdwara Reforms Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and other important movements of Punjab politics. Due to this reason he was called 'Brain of the Sikhs'. After partition he performed as Rehabilitation minister and settled all the problems with a heavy hand. He fought the battle for Punjabi Speaking Suba which Punjabis were able to get in 1966. He passed away on the morning of 10th June, 1974.

In the present research work an attempt has been made to know what circumstances motivated Giani Kartar Singh to join Akali Movement. The leading role of Giani Kartar Singh in Gurdwara reform Movement 1920-1925, its effects and the achievement of Gurdwara bill in 1925 has also been discussed in detail. The role of Giani Kartar Singh in Civil Disobedient movement has also been discussed. His role in the election of 1937 to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and why did he decide that election should be fought in collaboration with the Indian National Congress has also been taken up. After the elections, the compact group of the Akalis under the joint leadership of Giani Kartar Singh and Sampuran Singh merged itself in the Congress Legislative party to form a strong opposition to the Unionist party. There was need to explore how he did manage to get the benefits for the Sikh community through the cooperation of Congress Party. The Muslim League passed what was called the Pakistan Resolution in March 1940 and that placed the Sikhs in very critical position. How Giani Kartar Singh exhorted the Sikhs to act independently of both the Congress and the Muslims League by realizing about the weak position of the Sikhs and to seriously think about their new line of action. Counteracting to the Pakistan

demand, Giani Kartar Singh propounded to the Akali party to take up the issue of Sikh State. He had organized a special Akali Conference at Amritsar on May 13, 1944 in support of the demand for Azad Punjab. The study has also defined the real nature of the Akali politics before and after the partition and what role was played by Giani Kartar Singh in the politics and in the Punjabi Suba movement. The Study has analyzed how Giani Kartar Singh had played a vital role in the transfer of population from the east Punjab to the west Punjab and vice versa and his achievements to implement the new laws for the welfare of refugees. The serious efforts have also been put in to examine the role of Giani Kartar Singh after partition as a Revenue, Rehabilitation and Agriculture Minister from 1949 to 1952 and 1957 to 1967 for the settlement of the refugees and his policy and programme for the economically weaker upliftment of section of society and the Punjab. There is a need to highlight the meaningful role of Giani Kartar Singh in the Sachar-Giani Formula and Punjabi Suba Movement. The study has sought to represent what efforts were made by Giani Kartar Singh for the establishment of Punjabi University at Patiala and Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana in 1962.

Chapters:

This work is divided into six chapters including the findings and conclusion. The first chapter is titled **Contemporary Political Milieu and the early life of Giani Kartar Singh**. Giani Kartar Singh has shown his flair for politics even as a child. Giani Kartar Singh then only seventeen was deeply affected by the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. He actively participated in a student's conference held at Gujranwala in 1920. During his college days at Khalsa College, Amritsar, he was an eye witness to two most important events in the development of Akali Movement, the 'Key Affairs' and the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha.

The second chapter is titled **Role in Punjab Politics 1920 to 1946**. In 1930 Giani Kartar Singh took part in the civil disobedience movement and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Along with Mangal Singh, he had expressed and represented Sikh ideas on Nehru report. Giani Kartar Singh

spear headed the opposition to the communal award. At that time, Giani Kartar Singh tried his best to unite the two factions of the Akalis one led by Master Tara Singh and the other by Giani Sher Singh so as to work together for a solution favorable to the Sikh community. Giani Kartar Singh favoured Azad Punjab Scheme as a solution of the Sikh problem.

The third chapter titled **As President of Akali Dal 1946-1948**. The Cabinet Mission proposals were moved by Ujjal Singh and seconded by Giani Kartar Singh. Baldev Singh was nominated as the Sikh representative to the Interim Government which was sworn in on September 2, 1946. On July 15, 1947 Giani Kartar Singh, the president of Shiromani Akali Dal issued a press statement in which he said, "The Sikhs will not rest content till the boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85% Sikhs in India. Giani Kartar Singh made his last desperate attempt to get a favorable award from the Redcliff Commission.

The fourth chapter is **Role in Punjabi Suba Movement**. Giani Kartar Singh was inducted in the Ministry as a 'Minister of Education and Revenue'. During his tenure of office, he tried his level best to promote the cause of Punjabi language and literature. Under 'Sachar Formula', Punjab was demarcated into three areas, the Punjabi speaking, the Hindi speaking and the bi-lingual. Giani Kartar Singh (the then Revenue Minister Punjab) remarked that the Sachar formula and the rights given to Sikh Harijans were the achievements for which they could justly feel proud.

The fifth chapter titled **As Revenue, Rehabilitation and Agriculture Minister (1949 to 1952 and 1957 to 1967)**. Giani Kartar Singh became a Minister for Revenue and Rehabilitation in Gopi Chand Bhargava Ministry. He also gave ownership rights to thousands of Harijan householders living in villages. In March, 1970 when S. Parkash Singh Badal, became Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Kartar Singh was appointed Chairman of the Committee for taking back Punjabi Speaking areas from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

The last chapter is the **Conclusion**. In this chapter the researcher have discussed the findings of the study.