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*The
Punjab
Problem
&
The
Sikh
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Akali Demands X-Rayed

ALL PUNJAB and, with it, the whole country, has suffered much during the last three years, and particularly during the last three months. The whole thing began with Akalis being cheated of power, leading to the Akalis making all kind of demands—some reasonable, some utterly unreasonable. Taking the shelter of the Akali agitational umbrella, anti-national elements did what even the Thugs and Pindaris had not done in their day. They desecrated temples. They murdered innocent people. They cut canals. They conspired with Pakistan and smuggled arms from there to make war here.

However, these criminal elements are only a tiny percentage of the population. And they would not have been able to do any mischief if the Akalis had not been cheated out of power—and their reasonable demands accepted. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the Akalis are given a fair share of power—and their demands examined on merit.

FOREMOST in the Akali demands are certain "religious demands". It is said that Amritsar should be declared a holy city *a la* Hardwar and Varanasi. It is also pointed out that no Punjab train has been named after any Guru. Objection is raised to restrictions on the carrying of Kirpan in Indian Airlines and Air India planes. There is a demand that a transmitter should be allowed to be installed in Golden Temple so that Sikhs abroad can listen to live programmes of "Shabad-Kirtan". It is alleged that Government is interfering in Gurdwara management. And there is a demand that an All-India Act should be enacted to bring all Gurdwaras under SGPC. Also it is urged that government should recognise the SGPC as the sole representative of all Sikhs.

We regard the whole country as holy. However, if the Sikhs want Amritsar declared holy city, so be it. Already the sale of tobacco, liquor and meat has been banned in the city centre, where Harmandir Sahib and Durgiana Mandir are located.

Government should have no objection to naming any number of trains in the Punjab after the Gurus and other saintly persons. However, carrying Kirpan is another business. As any civics teacher will explain, we all have a right to carry a walking stick, but this right ends where

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another man's nose begins. The same with the Kirpan. The Sikhs can carry a pen-knife to fulfil their old religious requirement of Five K's—Kesh, Kangi, Kachha, Kara and Kirpan. But they cannot insist on carrying a regular sword or dagger in a plane—or indeed in any public place. Other citizens' right to life and limb cannot be compromised for the Sikhs' "right" to carry a Kirpan.

Government is quite right in not permitting a transmitter inside Harmandir. A transmitter can be used for other than holy purposes. And in any case devotees can listen to devotional music on tape as well as on radio. Incidentally, when it is "Shabad-Kirtan" time in Amritsar, it is midnight in Southall!

The Akali Dal is quite right in its allegation that Government is interfering in their religious affairs. The reason for this, however, is that Akalis are using temples and temple funds to capture power. *Political interference in Gurdwaras will end only when Gurdwara interference in politics ceases.* Let the Akali Dal convert itself into a regular party—and not be an annexe of temple politics—and government will have no interest in interfering in temple management.

There can not be an All-India Gurdwara-Act because most Gurdwaras outside of Punjab are opposed to the proposal.

SGPC is not, and cannot be regarded as, sole representative of the Sikhs. It represents a majority of Sikhs—not all Sikhs.

Government was wrong in using its authority to let Congress Sikhs take over Delhi Gurdwaras. But the example for this was set by the Akalis themselves who, in 1920, forcibly occupied the Golden Temple.

The cause of Sikhi Dharma will be served better by abolishing the SGPC and decentralising Gurdwara management—and not by extending its tentacles to every Gurdwara in the country, and politicising the same.

MANY OF THE political demands of Akalis have great weight. It is a fact that the Congress Government at the Centre has toppled every Akali Government in the Punjab. We have no doubt that there would be no trouble in Punjab today, if the Akalis had had their due share of power in that state. However, Akalis are not the only victims of these toppling politics of the Congress. But they are the only ones to raise this kind of bell on that account. And that can only help the Congress. It is time the Akalis viewed the matter with political maturity and tackled it politically—and not violently.

The Akalis do have a case on Chandigarh. And New Delhi is less than honest about it. The 1970 decision was that Chandigarh will go to Punjab, and Haryana will build its own capital within five years—with a grant and a loan of Rs. 10 crores each, from the Centre.

Another part of this agreement was that Fazilka and Abohar would go to Haryana; that there were some other territorial claims and counter-claims between Punjab and Haryana; that a commission would be set up to sort out these claims; and that Fazilka and Abohar will be transferred to Haryana at the time of these other territorial adjustments.

We do not think that any State has any automatic claim to any city or area. We think the local residents' choice should be the major factor. Perhaps the best solution would be to divide Chandigarh; indeed it has actually been built for easy division, if, as and when necessary. More. Punjab has already built Sahibzada Ajit Singh (SAS) Nagar on the Punjab side of Chandigarh—just in case it does not get Chandigarh. And Haryana has built Panchkula on its side of Chandigarh—just in case it doesn't get Chandigarh. So there is no real problem—apart from the problem of saving faces. But the tragedy is that New Delhi is cheating Punjab on the Agreement. It is bracketing Chandigarh with Abohar-Fazilka, when fact is that Chandigarh was linked to Rs. 20 crores—and Abohar-Fazilka, to other territorial adjustments.

The river waters matter is more complicated. Only a team of experts can decide the matter wisely and well. But the way some Akalis have prevented canals from being dug to carry water to Haryana and Rajasthan, is highly irresponsible. Repeated breaches of existing canals are acts of sabotage. They justify Central control of headworks situated in the Punjab. How would Punjab feel if Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir—the up-stream States, in which all the Punjab rivers rise—monopolized these waters against Punjab's interests?

Two other "political" demands of Akali Dal—Anandpur Sahib resolution and creation of an "Autonomous Region" for them, are actually one demand. Put in simple words, they want an "Autonomous Sikh State" which will have all sovereign powers except, say, Defence, External Affairs and Currency.

We hope our Akali brethren realise that all the 500-odd Indian States had acceded to the Indian Union precisely for only these three subjects. But before long everybody realised that such an Indian State will be too weak even to hold together. And so the old states were abolished and merged and made as integral a part of the Indian State as the

"British" provinces. Do the Akalis seriously believe that the clock can be put back?

If Sikhs are to get an "autonomous region", why not the other communities and/or regions? How does Punjab become a "Sikh area"? Will non-Sikhs be asked to leave? Will they be disfranchised? What about the repercussions of any such course outside the Punjab?

Some of our Sikh brethren like to argue: If Muslims can have a Pakistan and also live and thrive in India, why can't they have a similar dispensation?

For one thing, let them ask Muslim Indians how well they like it all. For another, Sikhs are NOT Muslims. For a third, there is no foreign regime in India today to monkey with the unity and integrity of the Indian Union. India has no intention to revert to 1947—or, as some Akalis would like it, to the eighteenth century. The sooner the Akalis learn to think, speak and act responsibly, the better for them—and for the country.

THE ECONOMIC grievances of the Sikhs—or the Punjab—are mostly the same as those of other states: high prices, much exploitation, concentration of wealth, inadequate central aid.

There is, however, probably less exploitation, and more equality, in Punjab, than in any other state. Other states can only exclaim that if Punjab is exploited, they would love to be exploited—and enriched—in like fashion!

The Punjab rich would not be considered rich in Bombay or Calcutta. And wages are so good in Punjab that lakhs of labourers are attracted from Eastern UP and Bihar. We, however, entirely agree that procurement prices should be steadily raised to encourage production—and make any food imports unnecessary. It is good to remember that procurement prices have about doubled in the last ten years.

The biggest Punjab complaint is that no major industry has been set up in the State. That way no major industry has been set up in Haryana, Himachal, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and several other states. The reason for this is that Punjab—and these other states—don't have the raw materials for big industry.

A second reason is "Security". Other things being the same, big projects are not set up in border areas. When Khrushchov and Bulganin visited India in 1955, they were surprised that we had built the big Bhakra Dam within reach of Paki bombers!

It is no use complaining that the Central Government is not setting up any big project in the Punjab. How is it that no Punjab Government—whether Akali or Congress—has done so either. Why even Punjabi industrialists—whether they are Hindu or Sikh—have set up industry far and wide outside Punjab, but not in Punjab.

On the other hand the Government has invested very heavily in Punjab agriculture. Agriculture is Punjab's Industry. As a result, Punjab and some adjoining areas have become the granary of India. All this food surplus means great wealth.

Also Punjab has more soldiers than any other state. Their emoluments and pensions also add significantly to the wealth of Punjab. And that brings us to the Sikh demand for a higher percentage in the Army.

Although Sikhs are less than 2% of the population, they are 10% in the Defence Forces. That is all-right. Since Punjab is a border state, it is natural that Punjabis should be more interested, and more prominent, in the Army. But the way some Sikh soldiers behaved after June 6, 1984—while the Sikh leaders kept mum—has not exactly strengthened the case for a high Sikh percentage in the Army.

THIS AKALI AMBIGUITY shows in other spheres also. For example they ask for a separate Sikh Personal Law. We can only ask: Where is it? Did it exist in the days of Guru Nanak? Or Guru Govind Singh? Did it exist under Ranjit Singh? Or under the British? Is it there in Guru Granth Sahib? If not, *why do Akalis have to invent differences where none exist?*

We know many in Punjab resent the modern Hindu Succession Law, which gives an equal right to married daughters in ancestral property. They have repeatedly suggested that the married daughter should get a share in her father-in-law's property. That makes lot of sense. But this is not a Sikh issue or a Punjab issue; it is a national issue. Such an amendment would be welcome all over the country. Why do the Akalis have to provincialise a national issue? Why do they have to be crybabies all the time? They keep saying they are second class citizens. Others see them as some kind of super-class citizens. Next only to the business community, Sikhs are doing better than any other community. Why, then, should they be complaining all the time? Is it fair?

Obviously the Akali Dal represents a majority of Sikhs. It should, therefore, have a fair share of power in the Punjab. The Congress has been cheating them of that. This is a political issue on which the Akali

Dal has the sympathy and support of all parties except one. But instead of pursuing this matter politically, the Akali Dal goes off at a tangent, raises all kind of wrong issues and ends up isolating itself and strengthening its arch opponent!

WE HOPE the Sikhs see the inwardness of this situation. We hope they do not provincialise national issues. We hope they do not convert the battle of the ballot into a battle of the bullet. And we hope, too, that they do not adulterate religion with politics—and in the process, muddy both.

□

Let them both apologise

NOT EVERY SIKH is an Akali; and not every Akali is an extremist. But what the Government has done in Durbar Sahib, hurts not only all Sikhs; it hurts all decent men.

IT WOULD SEEM that the Government allowed the situation to get real bad, so that it could then crush it with a big bang—to impress the unwary about how very brave it is.

THE AKALI DAL owes an apology to the country for allowing Gurdwaras to be converted into arsenals. And the Government owes an apology to the country for allowing the extremists to operate and desecrate the Gurdwaras—and then itself desecrating them.

Pagri Sambhal, O Jatta !

Pagri sambhal o Jatta, Pagri sambhal o ...
 Fasalan nu kha gaye kire, tan te nahin tere lire,
 Bhukhe ne khub nichore, ronde ne bal o
 Pagri sambhal O Jatta... ..

Bande ne tere leader, raje te khan bahadur
 Tennon te khawan khatar, bichh dene jal o,
 Pagri sambhal O Jatta... ..

Hind hai tera mandir, usda pujari tu,
 Challega kadon tak, apani khuvari tu,
 Larne te marne di, karle taiyari tu,
 Pagri sambhal O Jatta

Seenay te khave teer, ranjha tu, desh hai heer,
 Sambal ke chal tu veer,
 Pagri sambhal O Jatta... ..

Tussi kyon dabde veeron, usaki pukar o,
 Hoke ekathe veeron, maaro lalkar o,
 Tari do hathar bajje, chhatiyen nu tand o,
 Pagri sambhal Jatta, Pagri sambhal o.....

Revolutionary song sung by Banke Dayal, editor 'Jhang Sayal', at a meeting addressed by Gokhale in Lyallpur on 21 March, 1907. After this, 'Pagri Sambhal Jatta' became the battle-cry of revolutionaries in the Punjab.

[English rendering on the facing page.]

"Mind Your Turban, Oh Jatta!"

Take care of your turban (point of honour), O Jatta,
 (Jat, son of the soil)
 Your crop has been eaten away by insects (foreigners);
 Your body does not even have rags to cover it;
 Hunger has sapped your vitality;
 Your children are crying—
 Mind your turban, Oh Jatta.

Exploiters, Rajahs and Khan Bahadurs
 Have usurped your leadership,
 The three have spread out nets to destroy you;
 Mind your turban, Oh Jatta !

This Hindustan is your "temple";
 You are the "priest" thereof.
 How long will you lie in slumber?
 Prepare yourself for Struggle and Death—
 Mind your turban, Oh Jatta !

Take the arrows on your bare chest !
 You are Ranjha (Lover);
 The country is Heer (Beloved);
 O Brother march on cautiously—
 Mind your turban, Oh Jatta !

You are brave people; why are you afraid?
 Why don't you answer her call?
 Come together and Give a challenge (to the aggressor),
 It takes two hands to clap.
 Bare your chest—
 Mind your turban, Oh Jatta !
 O son of the soil !

A New Charter For Punjab

By : Khushwant Singh, M.P.

Many thoughtful persons have been suggesting as to what should be done to restore normalcy and promote prosperity, in the Punjab.

Here is a valuable comment from Khushwant Singh :

1. This draft is presented for consideration of all Punjabis—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians—as a possible means of restoring fraternal goodwill after the army is withdrawn and in the hope that the new leadership that will emerge will keep prosperity of the State above sectarian interests. In order to do so, it is necessary to share the perspective of events of the past few months.

2. The storming of the Golden Temple on 5-6 June 1984, despite many assurances to the contrary made in both Houses of Parliament, and the resultant loss of lives including hundreds of innocent men, women and children, as well as extensive damage to the Akal Takht and sacred relics housed therein, with concurrent action against most Gurdwaras in the Punjab, has severely wounded the religious susceptibilities of the entire Sikh community numbering over 14 million all over the world. Punjabis of other religious communities who share this grief should come forward to help heal the wounds inflicted on the Sikhs.

3. We do not accept the claims of the administration that it had no option but to storm the Temple with maximum force, never used before in a domestic operation, to capture Sant Bhindranwale and his followers. Nor do we accept the Government's version of the number of casualties, the extent of the damage caused and the quantity of arms, ammunition and narcotics allegedly discovered in the Temple. From the many contradictions in statements made by official spokesmen, it is evident that the administration intended to tarnish the reputation of those killed in the operation, and by inference, the reputation of the entire Sikh community. We demand that the names of those killed in the operation should be published, including the Army casualty lists.

4. We call on all Punjabis to reject any attempt by Government agencies to repair any part of the damaged complex of the Golden Temple and deplore the fact that in spite of strong appeals from all sections of the Sikh community the Government has already undertaken extensive repairs. This task has traditionally been the privilege of the *Sangat* throughout Sikh history and must be achieved only through voluntary service—*Kar Seva*—if Sikh sentiments are to be respected.

5. Hereafter all Punjabis should observe the 6th of June as a day of prayer for those who lost their lives on the 5th, 6th June 1984, and in atonement for the violence done to the Golden Temple. At the same time we must accept the fact that a section of the Sikh community shares the responsibility, along with the Akali Dal and the top Sikh religious leaders, for the initial scirelge committed at the Temple by allowing armed men to take up residence there, fortifying a part of the Temple and using it as a base for hostile action. The 6th of June should also be a day of prayer when Punjabis all over the world pledge themselves to the teachings of their Gurus and the ideals preached by them.

The Akalis failed to take the Punjabi Hindus in their confidence

6. Amritsar should be declared a Holy City. Sale of tobacco, liquor and meat will be forbidden within the walled city. (The status of Hardwar, Varanasi and Tirupati should be checked to make this feasible.)

7. Having gone through this traumatic experience, Sikhs must now undertake a serious introspective exercise covering all aspects of their community. This includes their status as citizens of India, of the leadership provided by different political parties, particularly the Akali Dal which has enjoyed the monopoly of being the sole "Sikh" party and so has received a large majority of Sikh votes as well as of the role and composition of the S.G.P.C. Sikhs must evolve a new religious leadership of the Panth. Obviously serious, fundamental changes are called for. This is the time for deep searching analysis and an enquiry into why and how the present situation has developed. Sikhs must recognise that this is a crisis affecting the entire community both internally and vis-a-vis their future status in the country. There is need for re-thinking on these subjects and cosmetic corrective measures should not be taken seriously.

8. Both existing parties, the Congress and the Akali Dal, have failed the Panjabis. While the Congress has shown no concern for the

Sikh community in its hour of trial, or in honouring the assurances given by them at the time of Independence, the Akalis have exploited religious sentiments, largely to grab political power in the State and at all times to retain their hold on the S.G.P.C. at the cost of the larger interests of the community. In spelling out their demands the Akalis failed to take the Punjabi Hindus in their confidence, and so wrecked their chances of success. Had they acted as a regional party instead of a religious one, the present situation might have been avoided. Instead, by injecting religious sentiments in essentially Punjabi demands they pursued a path which widened the gulf between Hindus and Sikhs, thus playing the same game as the Hindu communal elements.

9. Akali connivance with Sant Bhindranwale in allowing his followers to fortify the Akal Takht and other parts of the Golden Temple, and the reluctance of the Akali leaders to condemn the acts of terrorism perpetrated by Bhindranwale's men further alienated Hindus from Sikhs and weakened the joint demands of the Punjabis. This posture also lost the sympathy of other elements in the rest of the country which otherwise might have supported Punjabi demands.

10. Contrary to democratic tradition, once the two-year *Moreha* had begun, the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal took decisions which took it for granted that the entire Sikh community was behind them. This was certainly not the case. To keep the *Dharam Yudh* alive (and it is debatable in whose interest this was), the Akalis let control slip out of their hands into those of extremists and gave the government the excuse to invade and desecrate the Golden Temple.

11. The general lethargy of the Sikh community, the vast majority of whom did not approve of the growing militant presence in the Golden Temple complex over the past two years, played a vital role in the tragic situation prevailing today. For all these reasons the *status quo* is no longer acceptable. Either the Akali Dal must undergo a total transformation and be persuaded (or pressurized) to change its traditional *modus vivendi*, or else we have to think of a political alternative. Given the massive problems of building up such a force, transformation of the Akali Dal's intrinsic character would seem the practical way.

12. In order to try to rectify the mistakes made by the Akalis, Sikhs must:

- (a) Reaffirm categorically their Indian identity. They are Indians, part of India, and will oppose any proposal to establish a separate Sikh State;

- (b) Amend those clauses of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution which describe Sikhs as a "separate nation" or alternatively explain that "*quam*" does not imply nationhood;
- (c) Re-state that Sikhs do not want a separate Personal Law which, through its proposed provisions for succession and marriage etc., would push Sikh society back into mediaeval times and deprive Sikh women of equal rights in property, marriage and divorce given to them under the Hindu Law. This would be against the Sikh principle of equality between men and women. Sikhs must also resist any attempt to amend Article 25 of the Indian Constitution which, in any case, recognises Sikhs as a separate religious community.

13. Through meetings of Hindus and Sikhs who share the common desire to re-establish a state of communal harmony and peace, we should work for establishing closer bonds with our Hindu brethren, through frank discussions and airing of sentiments dispel the misunderstandings

Wanted : Chandigarh, Canal Waters, Army Recruitment and Heavy Projects

which have developed, and work for a close association when it comes to making major demands on behalf of the Punjab. These will include:

- (a) Immediate transfer of Chandigarh to the Punjab without altering the status of Fazilka and Abohar. Minor boundary adjustments with Haryana, Himachal and Rajasthan may be made in agreement with those States, or refer red to a Tribunal.
- (b) Settlement of the River Waters dispute along the lines the Akalis and other parties had accepted earlier, giving the Punjab a fair distribution of the waters.

14. Establishment of Industrial projects and heavy industries in the Punjab. The State has a legitimate grievance that it has been deprived of adequate industrial development, that there is a lack of flour, textile and sugar mills to process the agricultural produce, that this has led to serious discontent and youthful unemployment at a time when the Green Revolution has attained a certain plateau, and young unemployed can no longer be absorbed in land labour. The Central Government must grant licences for such industries without delay and plan the location of heavy industries in the State on a priority basis, to achieve a balanced economy for the

State. This will help absorb large number of unemployed, often qualified, youth, whose disaffection has helped the Bhindranwale phenomenon.

15. Sikhs have always enjoyed a special position in the Armed Forces. However, their proportion has steadily declined from almost one third during British rule to under 10% today. This is another source of discontent, and there is fear that the present percentage may decline further with the policy of recruitment according to population proportion. Since soldiering is a traditional, integral part of the Sikh tradition as well as being an important source of employment, it is imperative that the percentage of Sikhs in the Armed forces should not be reduced.

Government should take measures to ensure that the "mutinies" resulting from Sikh reaction to Operation Blue Star are considered in the perspective of the unusual circumstances of their occurrence, and do not result in a tendency to distrust the Sikhs. This would be most unfortunate as it would result in even greater alienation of the community. □

Fluctuating Sikh Percentage

In the 1901 census, Sikhs were only 7% of the Punjab population. But in the very next census, in 1911, Sikh percentage had jumped to 11.7 percent. In the last census in 1941, before Partition, Sikhs were about 14%.

This increase in Sikh percentage was due to the fact that traditionally many Hindu families brought up their first son as a Sikh. The fact that the British favoured the Sikhs in land allotment and Army recruitment, seems to have encouraged this traditional trend.

Partition was followed by a forced exchange of population. As a result, Sikh population in East Punjab went up to 33%.

When East Punjab was divided into Haryana and Punjabi Suba in 1966, Punjab got 41% territory and 55% population. The Sikh percentage in the new Punjab was 60.2%—according to the 1961 census. The 1971 census put the Sikhs at 58%. The 1981 census recorded only 52% Sikhs.

This decline in Sikh percentage is due to a variety of factors. Many Sikhs are settling in other states and even going abroad.

Many people from UP and Bihar have moved to Punjab as farm labour.

Rural Sikhs are avoiding large families. They are very much attached to their land. And they hate to see it divided among very many children.

(Manus)

DRI Seminar on The Punjab Problem

The Deendayal Research Institute held a Seminar in New Delhi, June 19, to discuss the Punjab problem in depth.

Those present included Sarva Shri G.S. Dhillon, former Speaker, Lok Sabha, Prof. Rajendra Singh, General Secretary, RSS, Lala Hansraj Gupta, Maj. Gen. U.C. Dube (Retd.), Shri B. R. Nanda, former Director, Nehru Memorial Library, Prof. Maheep Singh, Khalsa College, Delhi, Shri M.D. Shorey, IAS (Retd.), Prof. M. L. Sondhi, JNU, Shri Ashish Nandy, Institute for Developing Societies, Shri Krishanlal Sharma, BJP Secretary, Shri Pradip Bose, Indian Centre for Democratic Socialism, Shri K. Narendra, editor 'Pratap', Nanaji Deshmukh and Shri Devendra Swaroop, Director, DRI.

Many others—including Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora (Retd.), Justice H.R. Khanna (Retd.) and Shri Inder Gujral, former envoy in Russia—could not attend only because of prior engagements out of Delhi.

Shri K.R. Malkani welcomed and introduced the participants.

Shri Dhillon was requested to take the chair.

Here is the substance of the discussions:

MAHEEP SINGH: Sikhs today are in greater agony than at any other time in the last 400 years. History records a "Chhota Ghalughara" (the small holocaust) in 1746 and a "Wada Ghalughara" (the great holocaust—by Ahmed Shah Abdali) in Amritsar, 1762. And now we have this blood-bath. The Sikhs feel that there was a conspiracy to trick them and humiliate them, which is why prospects of settlement were repeatedly scuttled by the Government. Their alienation and isolation appear to be complete.

M. L. SONDHI: I am afraid the Punjab conflict is quite unrealistic and has been rooted entirely in emotional impulses. There was no rational calculation on key issues, nor any serious effort to defuse the crisis situation. The result is an explosion.

The Sikhs feel there was a conspiracy and they have been tricked—Maheep Singh

The Sikhs have not always been communal. The Khalsa College had a Bengali Principal. And the Tribune Trust, set up by a Sikh, has never had a Sikh editor. The accepted beliefs and assumptions in society are crucially affected by the way in which educational institutions shape social consciousness.

I have had the good fortune to study in Khalsa College, Jalandhar. I found the atmosphere bubbling, but also brittle. There would be bursts of self-assertion followed by punishment, sheepishly accepted.

My experience in DAV College was quite different. Here the atmosphere would be subdued, even depressive and confused. Not many DAV students would do 'havan'—or mention it, if they did. The range and type of responses were atomistic rather than holistic.

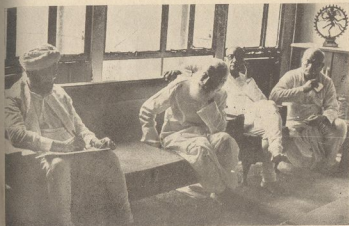
The Sikh mind is at once national and sectarian. During the freedom movement they would say that there should be no reservation for any community. But they would also say that if there was to be reservation for any community, the Sikhs in the Punjab must get 30% seats, which was more than twice their population percentage.

The Sikhs thought the (Moti Lal) Nehru Report of 1929 unfair to them. They have experienced the paradox between nationalism and provincialism time and again and this has undoubtedly shaped their political evolution and orientation.

Another factor in the Punjab situation is the proximity of Delhi. Sikhs feel that New Delhi interferes too much in the affairs of the Punjab and de-stabilises the state.

Yet another factor is the Punjab Press, concentrated in Jalandhar. It is very unbalanced. The editors are friends. But their writings divide their readers into hostile camps. All this has prevented a more sensitive understanding of the internal integration of Punjabi Society, while disproportionate attention is given to the rhetoric of confrontation.

GEN. DUBE: I went to Sandhurst in 1929. I have led Sikh troops for long decades. And I have great respect for them. However, they are very sensitive. I'm afraid Government did not do anything to prepare the Sikh Army mind for the military action in the Gurudwaras. The result is the unfortunate desertions. The British used to take great care to educate



(L to R) Sarva Shri G. S. Dhillon, Hansraj Gupta, K. Narendra, Nana Deshmukh

the Army on sensitive issues. Let it not be forgotten that three-fourths of Sikhs are connected with the Army one way or the other.

Zail Singh broadcast a very good speech the other day. It is not clear why it did not come immediately after his visit to Har Mandir. Also I am sorry to note that the President did not speak one word of thanks for the Army, which performed an unpleasant task with credit. After all he is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

We should, by ordinance, ban the misuse of religious places for criminal and violent activities.

I think important leaders should visit the Punjab and apply balm to wounded hearts. Retired Army Officers should tour the Punjab countryside and meet and address ex-servicemen, who are a very significant section of the local population. Let Sikh Jawans repair the damage to Gurudwaras with 'Kar Sewa'. Even Gen. Dayal can do it.

However, it was very irresponsible of a man like Khushwant Singh to say that no self-respecting Sikh would see the PM. Every conflict is followed by negotiations.

B. R. NANDA: When I was a college student in Lahore in the Thirties, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs used to live in perfect friendliness in the hostels. To this day, these old friendships survive. But meanwhile interes-

Use of religious places for political purposes must be banned by law—Gen. Dube

ted parties incited the masses, by-passed and neutralised the intelligentsia, and effected the Partition of the country. The intellectuals must reassess their role. Let Sikh scholars study the Upanishads, and let Sanskrit scholars study Guru Granth Sahib.

Small words can lead to much misunderstanding. In 1937, Congress Ministry in Central Provinces initiated "Basic Education" and called its centres 'Vidya Mandirs'. The Muslim League had strongly denounced the scheme, alleging that education was being "Hinduised". The matter went up to Gandhiji who sent for the Congress ministers from C.P.; it was explained to him that the word *mandir* did not necessarily mean a 'temple'; as shown by the phrase "*Deh Vyadhi Mandir*" (the body is the abode of disease). Therefore Vidya Mandir meant "abode of learning". Everything looks wrong and unjust, when one's vision is distorted.

I wish the Akali leadership realised that they were playing with fire when they continued a Morcha for nearly three years in a state of excitement; violence was inevitable. Gandhiji withdrew the no-tax campaign in Bardoli in Gujarat in February 1922 when violence broke out in Chauri Chaura in U.P.

PRADIP BOSE: The one result of recent developments in the Punjab is that 'Khalistan' has become a definite issue. The one practical solution to the Punjab problem is a Congress-Akali coalition.

K. NARENDRA: What has happened in the Punjab is the inevitable result of appeasement. And I am afraid that if things follow their old course, worse disasters will follow.

The Britishers consistently wooed the Sikhs. Gen. Nicholson even expressed a desire to embrace Sikhism. Sikh leadership honoured the butcher of Jallianwalla with a Saropa in the Golden Temple. The Congress also has been appeasing the Sikhs; and that has only whetted the Sikh appetite.

Master Tara Singh used to say: "We have opted for India". Would any Hindu say he had "opted" for India? It was only because Jinnah would not recognise the Sikhs as a "nation", but only as a "sub-nation", that the Akali leadership did not opt for Pakistan.



(L to R) Sarva Shri Pradip Bose, Gen. Dube, M.D. Shorey, Malkani, Dhillon.

The Shah Commission awarded Chandigarh to Haryana. But Punjab insisted on getting Chandigarh. When Haryana objected, Akali leader Fateh Singh and Punjab's Akali Chief Minister Gurnam Singh, agreed to compensate that state with Fazilka and Abohar. When Mrs. Gandhi announced this agreement, Akalis celebrated it with illuminations in Har Mandir. But then somebody pointed out that Chandigarh was a white elephant, and Abohar-Fazilka, the hen that laid the golden eggs. And so the Akalis went back on the agreement. Now they want both. Is that fair? Master Tara Singh frankly told Sachar, then Chief Minister: "For public consumption, I say I want Punjabi Suba. But what I actually want is a Sikh Suba."

ASHIS NANDY: Now that Mrs. Gandhi has acted in the Punjab and created the impression of strength, she will sweep the next General Election.

There is an invisible presence in the Indian situation; it is the West. The Western media had been lionising Bhindranwale as "India's Khomeini".

However, let us not be unduly upset over separatist movements in India. The whole world is experiencing it in various ways. For long, UK was the model of political unity and stability. But today, apart from the Irish and the Welsh, even the Scots want full autonomy, yielding only

What worries me most is the effect of Punjab action on the Army—Ashis Nandy

three subjects to the Centre in London. The French Canadians want to separate. And so do the Basques of Spain.

There is another factor. We have developed a self-conscious kind of secularism. Muslim Indonesia has named its Airline as 'Garuda'. But here even if BJP comes to power, it would hesitate to rename Indian Airlines as, say, 'Pushpak'.

On the other hand castes and communities have been politicalised. Zail Singh as Home Minister went and touched the feet of Bhinderanwale, when the latter was camping in South Delhi with a body-guard of twenty armed men.

Today the inwardness of the Akali situation is that it is a Jat organisation. I am surprised at the PM's failure to handle an organisation with such a limited base.

What worries me most about the Punjab situation is the impact it will have on the Army. One by one, key institutions of the State have been corrupted, weakened. The Army has been comparatively free from those evils. Will its current involvement in the Punjab, corrupt and weaken the Army also? That is the question.

KRISHANLAL SHARMA: First the Sikh extremists humiliated the Hindus. The murder of BJP leader Harbanslal was celebrated with a Bhangra dance in the Golden Temple. Now the Government of India has humiliated the Sikhs. And so the end-result is that all Punjabis have been humiliated.

Mrs. Gandhi rushed to Bhiwandi over a riot. Why did she never go to Amritsar, which had witnessed so much violence?

DEVENDRA SWAROOP: Last year, Deendayal Research Institute had organised a dialogue on the Punjab situation, during which Dr. Maheep Singh repeatedly talked of a "Sikh mind". We, as students of Sikh history, starting with the glorious role of the Sikh Gurus in the defence of Hindu culture, did not take it seriously at that time. But now when we have witnessed on the one hand, the continued silence of general Sikh opinion over the murder of innocents by criminals and terrorists, misusing the sacred Golden Temple and other Gurudwaras as their sanctuaries, and, on the other, their spontaneous reaction to the painful but



(L to R) Sarva Shri Devendra Swarup, B.R. Nanda, Maheep Singh, Mahesh Chandra, M.L. Sondhi.

unavoidable Army action for restoring the sanctity of the Golden Temple, we are forced to face the fact that there is indeed today a separate 'Sikh mind'. Therefore, it is very necessary to understand its distinctive traits as well as to know the historical process which has transformed it from a defender of the Hindu Culture and Independence into one of its baiters.

On March 29, 1849, the British occupied Lahore. On March 30, the Golden Temple was illuminated to celebrate the British victory. But the British did not trust them because they had till recently enjoyed sovereign power. In 1851-52, the British declared that nobody was born Sikh; a child became Sikh only if and when he had undergone the 'Pahul' ceremony. The 1855 Census in Punjab counted the Sikhs as 'Hindus'. In 1857 there were only 1500 Sikh soldiers in the British Indian Army. The British even encouraged the Sikhs to shave off their long hair. But 1857 was the turning point. The Sikh Princes' soldiery helped the British. An alliance was forged between the Sikh propertied classes and the British.

In 1872 Namdhari Sikhs launched a Swadeshi movement and came out strongly for cow protection. Seventeen prominent Sikh leaders denounced them as "anti-Panth" and asked the British authorities to crush them. In 1914, the Akal Takht issued a Hukumnama, denouncing Sikh revolutionaries (Ghadar) as traitors (ghadaar) and decreed their social boycott. The British-Sikh alliance was cemented through the new Army policy.

How the Britishers tried to separate Sikhs from Hindus—Devendra Swaroop

Sikhs were recruited in the Army in large numbers. Every Sikh contingent was given a Granthi, to foster a separate Sikh identity. Mr. Petrie Director of Intelligence, announced in 1911 that through the Army they had succeeded in creating a separate Sikh psyche. Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Govind Singh were falsely "quoted" as having forecast and welcomed British rule and Anglo-Sikh alliance.

However, the Courts had no doubt that Sikhs were Hindus. Dayal Singh Majithia bequeathed all his property to a Trust. His wife went to court saying that Majithia was a Sikh and that his will under the Hindu Law was null and void. The Punjab High Court held that Sikhs were Hindus and that the will was in perfect order.

However, the Government persisted in its policy to separate the Sikhs from Hindus. And one must admire the British for their complete success in this game of Divide and Rule. Because the Chief Khalsa Diwan, founded in 1902, got the idols of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, which were worshipped in the Golden Temple, thrown into the Tank, and the Brahmin Pujaris were expelled for ever. It even got an Anand Marriage Act passed in 1909, leading to a separate Sikh marriage ceremony.

As a result of this long separatist process, the Sikh mind in the twenties of the century found itself torn between two contradictory pulls—one, of its inherent patriotic urges, and the other, of this separatist brainwashing of more than four generations. The Gurudwara Reform movement of the twenties carried both these opposite pulls within itself. Although it started with an anti-British posture, it ended into a centralised religious-political control over the otherwise independent Gurudwaras all over the Punjab. This placed immense resources at its disposal, which ultimately found their way into political channels.

It is most unfortunate that after Independence, no effort was made to reverse this separatist process initiated by the Britishers; rather it was carried forward through the politics of vote and power, thriving upon narrow and divisive loyalties. Only a reversal of this process can lead us to a permanent solution of this problem.

The question before the country is: How do we reverse the separatist process initiated more than a hundred years ago.



(L to R) Sarva Shri K. Narendra, Nanaji, Prof. Rajendra Singh, Krishanlal Sharma, Bhanu Pratap Shukla and Pratap Narain Mishra.

B. R. NANDA : Khushwant Singh is right when he says that only scholars belonging to a particular community can fight communalism in that community. Let Sikh scholars tackle the Sikh community.

India was partitioned because all measures of major constitutional reforms—whether in 1919, 1935 or 1947—had to be carried with bipartisan support in the British Parliament. And the Conservatives in 1947 insisted on 'satisfaction' of All-India Muslim League as a pre-condition for Transfer of Power. Gandhiji apprehended this. That's why he said, 'Independence first and Partition, if necessary, afterwards'. But Jinnah knew this too, and so he insisted on "Partition first, Independence afterwards". A further division of the country—in the absence of a third party—is not possible. The extremists who talk of Khalistan will only harm Punjab and put the clock back.

Some people in the Punjab want more river water. They forget that the problem in the Punjab in many areas is not water shortage, but too much water, leading to water-logging. They forget, too, that the Indus Waters Treaty was signed just to make surplus water in these rivers available to Rajasthan. A great deal of false fear psychosis has been created among the people of the Punjab about river waters distribution between the Punjab and other provinces. For example, it is being said that the Punjab will become a desert and Rajasthan will become a fertile State.

Real trouble started with definition of 'Sikh' in 1925—G.S. Dhillon

The Anandpur Sahib resolution wants all but a few subjects—such as Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications—for an autonomous Punjab. An Indian Central Government with only three subjects will not last one month. When Mujib suggested only three subjects for the Central Government of Pakistan, Bhutto was quick to remark that that would reduce the Government of Pakistan to "a widow without a pension".

MAHEEP SINGH: Unreason has played a devastating role. Sikhs are told that Guru Govind Singh had said:

*Jab lag rahey khalsa nyara, tab lag tej deo mein sara;
Jab yeh gaye Yipran ki reet, mein na karoon in ki parteet.*

(I will help Sikhs to rise as long as they remain separate. I will have nothing to do with them if they follow Brahminism). But Guru Saheb had said no such thing. It is a fabrication. On the other hand, Punjabi Hindus were shouting in Amritsar in 1949: "Our language is Hindi and the Gurus belong to us"—as though Punjabi was not their language, and the Gurus didn't belong to Sikhs.

Had there been a proper Punjab, consisting of all Punjabi-speaking majority areas, Ambala, Kangra etc. would all be there in it. In such a full Punjab, Sikhs would be only 40%.

Earlier Swami Dayanand had played havoc with Hindu-Sikh relations by his offensive remarks about Guru Nanak Dev in his 'Satyarth Prakash'.

Master Tara Singh has been condemned as an opportunist. But he it said to his credit that at the time of transfer of power, he refused to meet Mr. Jinnah or trust his "blank cheque".

G. S. DHILLON: Dangerous forces are at work. Earlier, all Akalis were viewed as extremists. Today all Sikhs are viewed as extremists.

I have been in public life since 1936. For long years Congress Sikhs used to control the Gurudwaras. There used to be some Akalis and communists also. The Akalis ousted the communists by dubbing them atheists. In this affair we Congressmen remained neutral. But, soon after, the Akalis turned on us, saying: "Congressmen cannot truly represent the Sikhs". In sheer disgust, Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Gopal Singh Kaumi

Nagoke, Kairon, myself and other senior Congress Sikhs left the SGPC. In 1952, Sachar Saheb once casually said that we could set up a trust to take care of the Gurudwaras. The Akalis were quick to interpret it as an assault on the Panth.

The real trouble started in 1925 when the word "Sikh" was defined to exclude Sahajdharis (those believing in the Gurus but not keeping long hair) and include only Keshadharis (those keeping their hair long).

More mischief followed when the British inspired the Akalis to demand an 'Independent Punjab' for the Sikhs. When talks for transfer of power began, the Akalis asked for a Punjab of their own. The British now asked them to identify Sikh-majority areas for inclusion in such a state. A look into the figures showed that the only Sikh-majority areas were the two tehsils of Taran Taran and Moga.

However, after Partition, Akali minister for rehabilitation, Gianj Kartar Singh, settled Sikh refugees in contiguous areas along the border and created half a dozen Sikh-majority districts.

The real problem of Punjab is not water shortage but water logging—B.R. Nanda

When I was Union Irrigation Minister, the Water Commission, headed by Shri Moorthy of Tamil Nadu, came up with a rational formula for waters distribution. But Bansilal of Haryana, who was then Defence Minister, went into a tantrum. The formula had to be watered down, Zail Singh and Darbara Singh denounced me and the new formula. As a result, in the next elections, they got elected, but I was defeated.

The Akalis themselves suggested that Punjab get the Union territory of Chandigarh, in return for Fazilka and Abohar being transferred from Punjab to Haryana. But later they changed their mind. President Sadat of Egypt once told me the story of the Zebra who was downcast when every other inmate of the zoo was laughing. The following day all zoo was quiet but the Zebra was laughing. Inquiries revealed that the previous day the whole zoo was enjoying the monkey's joke; the Zebra started laughing only the next day because he took all that long to understand the joke. Akali politics remind me of that Zebra in the zoo. They realised too late that the rich Abohar-Fazilka area was more important than Chandigarh.

I think the Government has been insensitive to Sikh sentiments. It should have acted when Atwal, DIG, was murdered. Its belat-

red action has caused much violence, much more suffering and serious damage to Akal Takht. When BBC was announcing the death of Bhinderanwale, AIR was still tongue-tied. The official media has failed.

I get extremist phone calls asking me if I am still alive. I tell them not to worry: just tell me where they want to kill me, and I'll reach there.

The law-enforcing agencies have failed utterly. Smugglers are mixed up with police and politicians. Akalis were openly conferring with retired generals, but Government didn't do anything about it. I was surprised to hear a general say that if the Army entered Golden Temple, he would discard his uniform.

When I was High Commissioner in Canada, I was assaulted by Sikh extremists who are Canadian nationals. Canadian Premier Trudeau threw one of them out, but USA promptly welcomed him in. CIA money is at work. US senators Percy and Glenn are mixed up with these people.

I am glad the Shankaracharya has appealed for healing of hearts. That is even more important than repairing temple buildings. Dr. Baldev Prakash has done well to distribute special Hindu-Sikh unity appeals in every home in Amritsar. Sikh intellectuals must do their bit.

MALKANI : The Punjab problem is three-dimensional. The three dimensions are political, psychological and foreign.

The Akalis are in two minds whether to have a bigger Punjab for more opportunities—which is what Tara Singh wanted after Partition—or a smaller Punjab with a Sikh majority. In the event Punjab has been carved out to have now a bare 52% Sikh majority.

The problem is that Akali Dal cannot rule the state by itself. It can form a coalition either with Congress or with BJP. From 1947 to 1967, it was virtually a Congress-Akali coalition. But in such a coalition the Dal is a junior partner. In an Akali-BJP coalition, the Dal is a senior partner. The Akali Dal, therefore, prefers the latter. In 1967, and again in 1977, we had such coalitions. The trouble is that the Congress Centre does not tolerate a non-Congress Government—and proceeds to topple it.

More basic is the psychological problem. My friend Devendra Swaroop has explained its genesis at some length. The old mahants may have been corrupt and pro-British. But the Akalis erred grievously when they not only ousted the Mahants but also removed the portraits of gods and goddesses which had always adorned the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras.

One begins to wonder if the SGPC Act of 1925 should not be repealed to decentralise Gurudwara control and management. The SGPC budget of Rs. 6 crores, controlled by the Akali Dal, which is open only to Keshadhari Sikhs, has communalised and corrupted Punjab politics. Either the SGPC Act has to go or the Akali Dal must open its doors to non-Sikhs.

Maheep Singh referred to the Sikh psyche. India is a pluralist society. We have not only a Sikh psyche and a Hindu psyche, we have innumerable other psyches—the various caste psyches and the regional psyches. Nobody has any quarrel with any of these psyches. But when this psyche is used as an instrument of separatism, things are carried beyond the limits of toleration. The Sikhs don't have to exaggerate their identity and use it as a challenge to Indian unity.

MAHEEP SINGH : The Sikhs have a general feeling of discrimination. They view the Arya Samaj and BJP as their opponents. They wonder why Punjab Hindus should speak Punjabi and yet deny it as their mother tongue. The editorials of the four Jalandhar dailies are a daily

Masterji used to say 'I talk of Punjabi Suba but I want Sikh Suba'—Narendra

dose of poison. Virendra, editor of 'Pratap', writes that Hindus will stage an Assam in Punjab if Government accepts Akali demands. He says Sikhs can leave India if they don't like it, even as they abandoned Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. I am therefore glad the 'Hind Samachar' group has started 'Jugabani', Punjabi daily, which has already attained a circulation of 50,000. There was a time when all Akalis were viewed as extremists. That was bad enough. But today all Sikhs are being viewed as extremists. It is an impossible situation. Formerly Hindu-Sikh marriages were common. Now they are less so. Formerly Hindu and Sikh Bhatias, Khukhrains, Aroras etc., freely inter-married. Now people still inquire about caste—whether a family is Arora or Bhatia or Khukhrain—but they also ask whether he is Hindu or Sikh.

Language is the best and biggest link. But Haryana has declared Tamil as its third language, just to spite Punjab. Way back in 1949, Bhai Jodhsingh proposed in the Punjab University Senate that Punjabi in Devnagri script be adopted as the official language of Punjab. It was the Arya Samaj majority which opposed that resolution and insisted that the language of Punjab Hindus was Hindi. Shri Guruji of the RSS and Deen-

dayal Upadhyaya of BJS both expressed their disapproval of this unreasonable attitude.

KRISHANLAL : Maheep Singhji has raised the language issue. Today every single party in the Punjab accepts Punjabi in Gurmukhi script as the state language. It has ceased to be an issue. But in spite of that the Akali agitation is stronger than ever before. How do you explain that? The issue is not language; the issue is separatism, and language is only an instrument in this separatist movement.

I think Akali Dal membership should not be kept confined to Sikhs. Maheep Singh seems to think BJP has only a few Sikhs. I would like to correct this impression. Some time back we sent a BJP Sikh delegation to see the President. More than a hundred office-bearers and other activists joined it.

Punjab Hindus have accepted Punjabi; why can't Akalis accept Hindi, and make it compulsory second language in the state?

PROF. SONDHAI : A problem can be solved either by shrinking it, or by a wider coverage of related issues. Solutions can be authoritarian or they can be collective and participatory.

The Punjab situation has been poisoned, and the existing frames of analysis are no longer credible. There has got to be 'catharsis'; that is a purificatory purging. Who is to drink the poison in the system? That is the question.

There is an emotional flood all-round. Where shall we begin to build? Militancy or military logic can't build a social consensus. Should we have an all-India conference to sort out matters and get Punjab out of the vortex of violence through a national and constructive effort? What gestures to make? Should Hindus and Sikhs rebuild Akal Takht with 'Kar Sewa'? When Guru Govind Singh said 'Raj Karega Khalsa' (the Khalsa shall rule), he did not mean Sikhs will rule; he only meant that the pure (Khalis) shall prevail.

The Chinese character (symbol) for 'crisis' is also the character for 'opportunity'. This is not the time to criticise or malign each other, but to handle the situation with political skill and empathy.

Dhillon Sahab as Lok Sabha Speaker successfully dealt with MPs from different parties. Perhaps he can show the way here too. A new political posture, rather than a continuing military posture, will better serve the interests of Punjab.

MAHEEP SINGH : What we need is healthy gestures. Ram Jethmalani's writ for the release of Sant Longowal has come as a very good healing touch. He has become a hero of the Sikhs.

NANDA : Perhaps there can be a dharna against Jalandhar papers indulging in aggressive writings.

There should be bold gestures of friendship and goodwill between the two communities in the Punjab. For example, D.A.V. Colleges should be given strong Punjabi Departments.

ASHISH : Hindu and Sikh perceptions of each other differ. People don't want to be reminded that they were Hindus before. Bengali Muslims are still known as "Neray" that is "those with shaven heads"—an echo of their Buddhist and Vaishnav past. But they don't like to be reminded of it. Sant Fateh Singh would not have liked to be reminded that he was originally a Muslim, duly circumcised.

The allegation of foreign hand in Punjab can be misunderstood because it would cast a doubt on Akali loyalty. After all the arms reportedly

The Punjab solution shall have to be psychological and not electoral—Nanaji

recovered from the Golden Temple are not more in number and fire-power than those in the hands of Chambal dacoits, whom the Government has been wooing.

The nation-state is a quite modern concept. But even so we should not under-rate the strong basic Indian unity. Even Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, hoped to settle down in Bombay after retirement. Indian unity is neither superficial nor brittle—and we don't have to be jumpy about it.

NANAJI : The PM may 'manage' the Punjab situation but she cannot 'solve' the Punjab problem.

The solution will have to be social and psychological—and not political and electoral.

Important people from other states should visit the Punjab.

All Punjabis must accept Punjabi as the first language and Hindi as the second language, without any mental reservations. Only such a unity can ensure a bright future for the Punjab. Punjab will have to throw up a

bright new leadership to usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and amity.

DHILLON : Nanaji is quite right. There has to be a new leadership. The cultural life of Punjab has to be strengthened. We all have common traditions. Punjabi language is a great bond of unity.

In Indonesia even Muslims have Ramayana Kathas in their homes. The first convert to Islam in Surabaya was made by a Maulvi from India who defined 'Allah' in Sanskrit as "Sarva Shaktiman". That was the idiom used. Hindus and Sikhs have to understand each other's idiom. Nobody need lose patience. I was once travelling with Master Tara Singh. A Hindu passenger asked Masterji if he could smoke. Masterji, who was hard of hearing, said 'yes' without understanding. But the moment that man lighted his cigarette, Masterji took out his sword. It took some shouting to explain to him that he himself had nodded approval but that if he objected, the man could be requested to desist from smoking in his presence. Neither Hindus nor Sikhs can afford to think blindly, or act impulsively, like Masterji.

(With the Chairman's concluding remarks, the Seminar ended with thanks to all the participants.)

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News Versus Rumours

Press censorship has done much damage. In the absence of news, rumours take over.

Government says that some 300 persons died in the Army action in Durbar Sahab. Informed sources put the figure at "more than nine hundred". Sikhs believe the rumour of "three to five thousand".

Many Sikhs also like to believe that there were only about one hundred Bhinderanwale men in Durbar Sahab. In the absence of authentic news, they believe that these hundred terrorists bravely killed "two thousand soldiers"!

The Sikhs were Divided on 1857 Uprising

There is an impression that in the 1857 War of Independence, the Sikhs sided with the British. This is only a half-truth. Many Sikhs wanted to join the uprising. Some of them actually did so. It was the Sikh princes who sided with the British for a variety of reasons.

SHRI S.K. BAJAJ of Punjabi University, Patiala, told the Punjab History Conference in 1975 how it all happened :

STRANGELY ENOUGH there has been a general agreement among historians, both European and Indian that the Punjabis, particularly the Sikhs, collaborated with the British during the Revolt of 1857 which resulted in the victory of the latter. While reaching this conclusion, they did not consider some of the very pertinent questions having a bearing on the Revolt. It was a primitivist response to the Western threat, which many non-Western societies experienced at some early stage in the confrontation process. To cite only a few examples other than the Revolt of 1857 in India : there were the Boxer Rebellion in China, the S. Saya Sai Rebellion in Burma, Mau Mau in Kenya and Darul Islam in Indonesia. They invariably went down in history to defeat.

Another question is, whether or not the Sikhs acted as a community in favour of the British. This takes us to the question of the nature of social action in the pre-modern societies. In such societies cohesion has always been far less than in the modern societies because in the rural economics the role of exchange economy was very limited. The links were not very much real between what people actually experienced as economy, polity and society and the wider economic, political or social framework within which a society as a group operated. The aristocracy, including that of the Sikhs, interrelated and, having rudimentary class consciousness, operated at two levels : first, they functioned in part

through their relationship to institutions which expressed or symbolised society as a whole, second, by their legal status and privileges, they had special relations with the supreme political authority, native or foreign. As far as peasantry was concerned the unit of their organised action was either the community or the tribe. In the pre-modern hierarchically stratified society, initiative rested at the top. The peasantry could only display preparedness to follow up a direction but the Kuka Movement was a deviation from this. Therefore, it never produced a general revolt and generally bordered on individual heroism. Another question related to the general character of the Revolt of 1857 is that it was spearheaded by the agrarian-based military elite of the *Poorbias*. Was there any group of this kind of the Punjabis or the Sikhs? In the light of these questions, I would like to analyse the role of the Sikh chiefs and Sikh soldiers.

The most immediate and substantial support was rendered by the Phulkian States. Both Jind and Patiala soldiers not only cleared the road but also protected it from insurgents during the period when the revolt in this region was in full fury. The Raja of Jind personally led his contingent of 800 troops. The Maharaja of Patiala provided eight guns and 6,500 troops—both horse and foot. The third Phulkian State, Nabha, with its eight hundred troops escorted the siege train from Phillaur, and assisted in quelling rebellion in this region. But it seems that the Nabha troops did not fight with enthusiasm. So crucial was the help of these states to the British that, but for it, Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of Punjab, could never have sent reinforcements to Delhi. Kapurthala and Faridkot were two other states in the Jullundur Doab, which provided two thousand strong contingent. It fought about half a dozen battles in Oudh.

In Central Punjab, there was a dispossessed aristocracy which had been browbeaten and rendered inert by a calculated official policy of intimidation and suppression with the beginning of the British Rule in the Punjab. In the opinion of M.A. Rahim: "Disarmament of people, dismantling of fortifications, disbanding of the Khalsa Army, suppression of the Sikh gentry, stationing of large army and police in the Punjab and various other measures were taken to cow down the brave, militant and turbulent Sikh nation into humble submission so that the Khalsa may not be allowed to recover its prestige and reconstitute its army. Evans Bell believes that the Khalsa was bound to feel discomfited for their Gurus had been discredited, their union was dissolved. Dispossessed, denigrated and suppressed, the Sikh aristocracy was not in a position to lead any popular

revolt. Nevertheless Bahadur Singh, the nephew of Sardar Shamsher Singh, Punjodh Singh and Matsundha Singh Sindhanwalia, presented a letter from his Sardars to the Mughal Emperor, soliciting orders from the Emperor to precipitate revolt in the Punjab. The emissary with King's orders was intercepted, so he could not reach his station. This has been further testified by the report of Ghorishankar, secret agent of the British in Delhi who wrote on 28th August 1857 that some Sikhs "have been instructed 'to go to Punjab to endeavour to raise the Manjha in revolt'". On 3rd September, he reports: "Today I heard from an officer that Heera Singh had started from Delhi to try and influence Sikhs to come over to the King's side." He further reports: "the Sikh are coming and going and talking over the state of affairs." The Sikhs of Central Punjab, in the absence of local leadership, came as far as Delhi to secure orders of the Emperor to legitimise their rebellion. But the English with the support of the Phulkian States could always check communication between them and Delhi.

The geographical situation of the Phulkian States, particularly that of Patiala, played a tremendous role in shaping the outcome of the Revolt.

The general impression that in 1857 the Sikhs backed the British, is not correct

The territories of Patiala created a wedge between central and southern Punjab. The support of the Phulkian Chiefs had a very depressing effect on the petty chiefs and landed aristocracy because they could not overcome the attitude of vacillation which a majority of them displayed during the early months of the revolt. It had also very depressing effect on the general populace and more so on the Sikhs, for these princes, after the fall of Ranjit Singh's House from power, had become natural leaders of the Sikh community. What crucial part the Phulkian States played is clear from the remark of Holmes:

"Finding the Supreme Government seriously overwhelmed from all sides, the protected Native Chiefs had occasionally to weigh the case on its merits before they had cast the die...It would not have been surprising on that account, if they had adopted an attitude of passive neutrality. But the protected Sikh chieftains of the cis-Sutlej States in the face of unparalleled temptation and provocation, showed little to cast their lot with the Company."

The probable reasons of the support of the Phulkian States to the British could be three-fold:

1. There was traditional friendship between the House of Phulkian and the British. But this by itself cannot be considered to be an adequate reason.

2. The existence of large military cantonments in Ambala, Ludhiana, Ferozpur, and Phillor must have weighed very heavily in making the decision in favour of the British.

3. The advice of the Raja of Jind appeared to have played a crucial role. He was a clever, senior and experienced influential Chieftain who had seen fighting on the Ridge of Delhi. He sent round word that the British would certainly win in the struggle for supremacy.

As regards the revolt of the Native Army, it was led by peasantry-based military elite. Let us now explore the fact of the emergence of peasantry-based military elite among the Sikh soldiers. In this context it is necessary to know the number of Sikh soldiers in the Company's army. Their recruitment started in 1846 when orders were issued to raise two battalions at Ferozpur and Ludhiana to send them to Sonthal in Orissa for service. At the time of the Revolt there were two battalions, besides a few Sikhs recruited in the newly raised regiments and corps of the Frontier Force. When the revolt broke out, the Mazhabi Sikhs and a few Ramdasia Sikh scheduled castes were recruited in some of the pioneer regiments. Majority of them came from the Phulkian states. It may be pointed out here that the composition of regiments was mixed, consisting of the Mazhabi Sikhs, Rajputs and Pathans, thus exploiting the racial antagonism of these communities. If Bingley is to be given credence that three, instead of two, battalions of the Sikhs were raised after 1846, and partial recruitment was done in various regiments, the total number of Sikh troops could not exceed five to six thousands, including those working in army kitchens. In the Punjab Irregular Force later known as the Punjab Frontier Force, the number of the Sikhs (generally low-caste Malwai) did not exceed 1,000. The Government, however, tried to recruit the Sikhs in the Hindustani Regiments, but it failed to do so because of the opposition of *Poorbias* who thought that these jobs fell within their special privilege. Despite recruitment during and after the revolt, the total number of the Sikh soldiers by May 1858 stood at 13,344 as against 20, 027 Mohammedans.

Despite their small numbers, the Sikh troops participated in the Revolt. The Ludhiana Regiment of the Sikhs mutinied at Benares on 5th June, 1857. Some of the soldiers of this regiment found their way to Delhi to help rebels there, as reports Barnes. Ninety Sikhs of the

23rd Regiment who mutinied at Mhow, were arrested at Agra but they escaped on 4th July, 1857 after they had sworn on the *Adi Granth* to obey orders of the European officers. When the Sikh soldiers in Allahabad under Evelyn Wood heard about the mutiny of their brethren at Benares, they, according to their officer-in-charge, were on the verge of mutiny. At that time Lieutenant Brasyer gathered all the Sikh soldiers about half a battalion, and surrounded them by gun powder trains. He appealed to their feelings and swore by their gods and then threatened that if they disobeyed they would be killed by the explosion of magazine. These soldiers being few in numbers, and far from home, obeyed Brasyer.

The sentiment of distrust continued even after the revolt. The Punjabis of the 12th Regiment of the N.I. stationed at Jhansi mutinied; twenty-one Sikhs of this regiment were rounded up and hanged. In July 1858, the Sikh soldiers belonging to Malwa region mutinied at Dehra Ismail Khan with an object similar to that of the *Poorbia* sepoys who mutinied against the Government last year. In the same year the Government conducted an enquiry to assess the loyalty of the Punjabis for

Sikh troops in the British Army Did Join the 1857 uprising

the purpose of recruitment in the army. The Maharaja of Patiala and the Rajas of Jind and Kapurthala did not consider it safe to enlist them. The Raja of Jind wrote: "The Sikhs rebelled against and killed their own chiefs; is it likely they will care more for British? My own troops have twice mutinied against me and I have no security that they will not do it again." As late as 1859 when European regiments of the Old Company's army wished to drive the Queen's troops out of India by staging mutiny, they sent feelers to the Sikh soldiers for collaboration and not to any other section of the Army. The high-ranking authorities having intimate knowledge of the Indian affairs made various suggestions regarding recruitment when the *Poorbias* refused to serve in Burma. Norton says: "William Bentinck proposed Malayas, Sir Charles Napier advocated Gorkhas; a proposition has lately (around 1856-57) appeared to enlist Africans, another suggested the addition of European companies to every native regiment." But none had confidence in the Sikh soldiers.

In those times military was the only organised institution. The *Poorbia* Brahmins being large in number, spearheaded the revolt; dis-

affection of the classes and castes to which they belonged, percolated in the Army where organised action could evolve. As regards the Sikhs, they were few in number and stationed at places far away from their homes. Seven years period was, moreover, too short for any political issue to get ripe in social institutions and then reach the ranks of military. Since the Punjabis were new entrants, the high caste Brahmins did not welcome them, for they had the exclusive claim to these jobs. Under these circumstances there could have been no chance of serious collaboration. Brandrath, officiating Secretary to John Lawrence, rightly remarked that the Sikh soldiers were often carried away with mutineers but they did not rise in an organised revolt, "partly in consequence of small number, but mainly perhaps because in no case had they any native officers of their own race in the regiment, round whom they could rally."

In the end it may be observed that the foundation of foreign rule can be anything but for the sympathy and the loyalty of the ruled. These Sikhs who fought gallantly for the Company, they did so because they were good soldiers, attached to a regular pay and had the notion of duty, of fidelity to power which gave them bread, says Norton. The Mazhabi Sikhs who sought maximum recruitment at this time were benefited by this occasion, for it gave them elevated social and professional status and also higher rate of pay which they had never enjoyed in their own socio-political system. In fact by their very social position they were alienated in that social order. The Sikhs played a very limited role. There was no express motive or design, as some historians tend to believe, among the Sikhs to support the British. Salahuddin Malik in an attempt to highlight the role of the Muslim in the Revolt of 1857 in the Punjab has done injustice to the Sikhs. His observation about the role of the Sikhs simply demonstrates superficiality of his analysis. He says: "To be sure, it was the Sikhs' hatred of the Muslims and the Hindustanis rather than affection for the British, their conviction in the military superiority of the British and, above all, their love of plunder which had taken them to Delhi and elsewhere...The Sikhs certainly wanted to join the winning side."

When Sikh Landlords & Priests joined hands with the British

JOGINDER SINGH of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, threw a flood of light on the British alliance with Sikh landlords and priests in the wake of 1857, to stabilise their rule. In an article in the Punjab Journal of Politics, 1983, he wrote:

IN THE SECOND HALF of the nineteenth century, there developed among the Sikhs a new pattern of socio-political beliefs and attitudes. The nostalgia for the Khalsa Raj gradually disappeared and reconciliation with the British Raj started. A large number of the Sikh elite accepted the new set-up and responded to Western ideas and values. They decided to protect and promote the interests of the government as well as those of the community and began with the programme of reorientation and readjustment of the Sikhs in the new set-up. In this process, the first thing that crystallised during the period was their attitude towards the British Raj. They reconciled themselves to the new reality and, what was more, loyalty towards the new Raj became an article of faith with them. Secondly, a new trend which took definite shape was the assertion of their separate and independent socio-religious identity. They refused to consider themselves a part of Hindu community and asserted that Sikhism was not a sect of Hinduism. That also determined their attitude towards the other community.

The author is conscious that the understanding of a movement such as Singh Sabha is a difficult venture in view of the variety of factors which gave rise to it. Among these, pride in the rich heritage and traditions of the community, and mutual competition and rivalry between the elites of the three different communities have been well known factors. In this paper, however, the author confines himself only to the responses of the Sikh elite to the policy and programme of the British rule. However, before discussing the role of British policy and administrative action, it may be appropriate to identify the Sikhs whose socio-political beliefs and attitudes we are concerned with. There were, as is well known, several groups among

the Sikhs at this time who observed different rituals and customs. These included, among others, Nanak Panthis or Sahajdharis, Akalis, Udasis, Nirmalas, Nirankaris and Namdharis. We refer here mainly to those Sikhs who were associated with the Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans and, later, Chief Khalsa Diwan. Among them were Sardars, Pujaris, Mahants, Gyanis, Granthis, Udasis and Nirmalas whose leadership was replaced, by the end of the nineteenth century, by that of the educated elite.

There are three reasons for taking up particularly the belief and attitudes of the latter category of Sikhs. One, they constituted a leading section of the Sikhs and were recognised as the representatives of the community by the British. Two, British policies and programmes brought these Sikhs into the forefront as the vanguard of the community. Three, there was a close relationship between their beliefs and attitudes and their social background.

The emergence of this Sikh gentry and priestly class was not accidental but the result of British policies and programmes pursued in the post-mutiny period. During this period, the British Government made serious efforts to make the Sikhs their allies in strengthening the British empire. The rapprochement initiated before the mutiny was leavened by the adoption of a policy of strengthening of feudal basis of society and by making the interests of the Sikhs and British government interdependent. At the Durbar held by Lord Canning, in February 1860 at Lahore, the Governor-General made known the intention of his government to invest outstanding chiefs and jagirdars with "judicial, revenue and police jurisdiction" and further to "consolidate their jagirs". Accordingly, in 1860, for the first time, selected chiefs and jagirdars were made honorary magistrates. Thus the basis of a feudal society was strengthened.

The programme of scattering the lands of the sardars, initiated earlier by John Lawrence, was now abandoned. The new policy permitted the jagirdars to consolidate their estates. The British rulers adopted a general policy of punishing resistance and rewarding obedience. Accordingly, it was decided to grant jagirs to those who showed 'active loyalty' at the time of the mutiny. A large number of princes and sardars happened to be Sikhs and they began to enjoy the solid benefits of British imperialism.

Next to the Sikh feudal aristocracy was the Sikh priestly class. The British officials understood that, like the former, the latter could also become their ally. Through the priestly class, they could control the gurdwaras, and the control of gurdwaras could be instrumental in enlisting

the support of the Sikh masses. The British officials had taken the first step in this direction in 1851-52 when they allowed the priests of some of the historical shrines of Amritsar, Anandpur and Tarn Taran to retain a large portion of their endowments. The most significant step was to enter the lands and properties attached to the gurdwaras, in the names of their mahants as individuals. The management of some of the historic gurdwaras was also put under the control of a government nominee known as sarbrah.

Consequently, the British policy of reviving the feudal order and patronising mahants and pujaris, groomed the landed aristocracy and the priestly class into their natural allies. The British officials, the sardars and the priestly class fully recognized their mutual dependence. The former required some props for their empire, whereas the latter knew that their vested interests could be protected by only being loyal allies of the former.

That the Sikh aristocracy and priests became loyalist in reality is clearly reflected in their memorandum against the Kukas, the Sikhs who

Loyalty to the Raj become an article of faith with the Sikhs

had taken up arms against the British Raj soon after the mutiny. That memorandum, which was submitted to the Lieutenant Governor in a Durbar held at Amritsar on 22 March, 1872, to celebrate the recovery of the Prince of Wales, shows that by that time the former had come out in full support of the British empire. Against the Kukas they extended full support to the government and appreciated the government's "appropriate and effective measures for controlling that 'wicked and misguided sect'."

This Durbar was held to celebrate the recovery of Prince of Wales from illness. The memorandum was signed by the following Sardars and Bhais: Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, Sardar Bakshish Singh Sandhawalia, Sardar Ajit Singh Attariwala, Sardar Jawahar Singh Zafarwalia, Gulab Singh priest of Akal Bunga, Bhai Jassa of Golden Temple, Bhai Gulab Singh Mahant of Ramgarh, Sardar Gulab Singh, Bhagowalia, Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia and Sardar Mangal Singh Ramgarhia the Sarbrah of the Golden Temple.

Simultaneously, the British took some other measures which further reconciled the interests of the British government with those of the Sikh elite. To begin with, the British government introduced substantial mea-

tures benefiting the peasants. The assessment of land revenue was reduced, cash crops were encouraged and irrigation facilities were swiftly developed. The new policy of land settlement also had favourable effect on the peasantry. Compared with the other communities, the Sikhs had the largest proportion of peasants. They, therefore, gained most by the British policy of supporting those who actually tilled the soil.

Special care was taken to avoid over-assessment of the Sikh districts, and in cases of obvious miscalculations, speedy relief was sought to be given. In sum, the privileged position of the Sikh peasants appeared even stronger than before.

The recruitment policy of the British Government was also an instrument for using the Sikh youth for the stability and expansion of the British empire. Punjab was declared as the 'sword-arm of India'. It was decided that the Sikh troops should be one of the main components of the provincial armies. From 1860 onwards, the Sikhs formed a valuable part of the forces sent abroad to China, Afghanistan and to many parts of the vast African continent. They formed "the backbone of local forces as legionaries of the empire", thus making the Punjab, what was later described as 'the bulwark of defence against foreign aggression' and 'the guard-room of the Eastern Empire'. (J.H. Gopal 'the Sikhs, 1970)

The process of mutual dependence between the British officials and the Sikh landed and priestly classes for their respective interests was further strengthened when they interacted at the organisational level. Responding to the liberal concessions of the British officials, they founded Singh Sabha association at Amritsar in 1873 which was aimed at cultivating loyalty to the Crown. They made a special constitutional provision which debarred those Sikhs who had proved disloyal to the government; obviously the reference was to the Kukas. They also decided, as a matter of principle, not to discuss in their meetings anything against the British government. Loyalty to the British government became an article of faith for the succeeding Sabhas and Diwans.

Organisational network of these associations became one of the important channels to promote among the Sikh masses, loyalty to the Crown. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of these associations shot up to one hundred and twenty. The co-ordinating and guiding bodies like Diwans and the Chief Diwan also came into being soon after. The organisational set-up covered a large number of villages and towns of the province. The Singh Sabhaites also founded some centres of their activities outside the province. As a result, their organi-

zations drew a section of the Sikh masses both in the towns and the countryside into their fold.

More significant was the entry of a rising number of educated Sikh elite into these organisations. By the end of the century, the number of educated persons, merchants, professional men and menials, drawn from the Jats, Aroras, Khatri and even a few from the 'depressed' castes, began to increase. The change in their background may be ascribed to the growth of trade and commerce and expansion of literacy in the province. (In 1891, for every 12 Hindus in the professions, there were 6 Muslims and one Sikh in the professions. The proportion was 14 (H), one (M) and 7 (S) in business and 34 (H), 60 (M) and 64 (S) in agriculture.

The leadership primarily came from the educated elite. However, their aspirations were not only socio-religious but also economic and political, more so the latter. In large numbers they joined the Lahore association. To fulfil their aspirations, they sought the co-operation of government officials and made them patrons and members of the associa-

Various Sikh groups observed different rituals and customs

tions. They also aimed at cultivating loyalty and kept the anti-British elements away from their associations.

Appreciating the efforts made by these educated Sikhs, the British officials also joined hands in their endeavours. They helped them in running these organisations, encouraged them to open educational institutions and guided them in the pursuit of important matters relevant to the Sikhs, for example the relevance of modern education to job avenues. They hoped, that the Sikhs, if sufficiently educated, could become good magistrates, munsifs and police officers.

The sympathetic and helpful attitude of the officials was extremely important. The educated Sikh elite began to work in the belief that they could prosper only under British patronage. Comparing their existing condition with that under the Sikh rule, the Singh Sabha of Lahore told Land Dufferin that they were treated better by the British than even by Ranjit Singh.

So contented they were with the British, that when ex-Maharaja Duleep Singh, son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, proclaimed himself sovereign of the Sikh nation in 1887, and asked his fellowmen to rise

against the British, the Sikh elite called him a "pretender" and proclaimed that they would die for their Sovereign Empress and would never accept Duleep Singh as their ruler. Their loyalty to the British became well pronounced. In fact, the educated groups were following the same tradition which the aristocracy and the priests had advocated earlier.

Like the loyalist attitude, the belief in a separate independent identity of the Sikhs was also a result of the intellectual interaction of the educated Sikh elite with the contemporary administrator-scholars. During the eighties of the nineteenth century, British scholars were concerned about the socio-religious identity of the Sikhs. Unless the Sikhs could define Sikhism distinctively they could hardly assert their own identity in the social milieu. In fact, the question of identification of Sikhs was essentially related to their own place which was, by this time, dependent on official recognition.

The issue of distinctive Sikh identity had already been raised and debated in official circles in 1850's. Within a generation, a new political dimension had been given to it by the British administrator-scholars. In order to deal with the Sikhs, particularly after annexing their kingdom, the British had to make a serious attempt to understand the Sikh faith and its traditions. They initiated a project under Ernest Trumpp in 1859. Unfortunately, his work was not well-received as it allegedly defamed the Sikh gurus and their sacred books and religion. However, he made an attempt to define Sikhism and its relationship with Hinduism. He tried to differentiate Sikhism from Hinduism by symbols, although he essentially thought of it (Sikhism) as a part of Hinduism blown up by the contemporary administrator-scholars, that Sikhism was in danger of being assimilated into Hinduism.

Next to Trumpp was Macauliffe. The rationale for Macauliffe's burst of interest in the Sikhs in 1880's is not clear. But he carried Trumpp's theme of 'Sikhism in danger', to its perceived logical end. It became a part and parcel of his writings. In 1881, he elaborated his point in a graphic manner :

"Hinduism is like a boa constrictor of the Indian forests. When a petty enemy appears to worry it, it winds around its opponent, crushes it in its fold and finally causes it to disappear in its capacious interior. Sikhism may go this way. . . ."

However, things did not end there. The subject took a manifestly communal turn at the hands of administrator-scholars whose writings intended to serve the political cause. Having alienated the two major

communities, Hindus and Muslims, immediately after the uprising of 1857, the government was in search of such sections of Indian population which could stand by the British. Accordingly, Lepel Henry Griffen tried first to secure the support of the aristocracy to the empire. Since he was connected with the Punjab, he supported the cause of the Jat Sikhs. In his work on Ranjit Singh, he built up a theory that Hinduism had been ever hostile to Sikhism. He also tried to establish that there existed inherent antagonism between the Sikhs and Hindus at the social level, because Sikhism rejected caste, which was central to Hinduism.

The hostility between Sikhism and Hinduism was made to appear as a historical reality in the writings of other administrator-scholars also. Among these scholars were Gordon, Bingley and Payne. For instance, Bingley reiterated the arguments of Lepel Griffen while explaining the adverse effects of Hinduism on the Sikhs. The chief cause of the decline of Sikhism, as he wrote, was the strong alternative force of Hinduism. While repeating Griffen's argument, he further added, that "the ivy-like vitality of Hinduism enfolds and strangles everything which it has once grasped." He also concluded that Hinduism had been always hostile to

Sikh lands were assessed lightly for land revenue purposes

Sikhism and warned the Sikhs that "in course of a few generations, Sikhism is likely to be superseded by some form of Vaishnavism which is always more popular in times of peace."

Effects of such writings on the educated Sikh elite had been far-reaching. Getting support from these administrator-scholars, they began to interpret their own past on suggested beliefs and assumptions. Craving for their own socio-religious identity, they explained and advocated that Sikhism was not a reformed sect of Hinduism. The Khalsa stated: "Sikhism differs widely from Hinduism in fundamental doctrine; that Sikhs do not consider themselves Hindus, and do not respect the Hindu pantheon or observe their religious rites; that Nanak, though born in a Hindu family, was not a Hindu, but established an independent religious sect of his own." Quoting several verses from Gurbani, legends (Sakhis) and long passages from the works of scholars like Bhai Santokh Singh they interpreted these to mean that neither the Sikh Gurus preached Vedic philosophy nor did they practise Brahmanical rituals and customs. Rather they asserted that the path of Sikh Gurus was essentially different from

the Vedic philosophy. Asserting their own identity, they said they were not Hindus and began to propound their own rituals and customs.

From the assertion of their separate socio-religious identity the educated Sikh elite took the next logical step to establish their independent political existence. The process began from the encounter with the Arya Samajists. The latter refused to consider the Sikhs as separate from the Hindus and rather asserted that they were essentially Hindus. The Aryas rejected the contention of the Sikh elite and argued that what the Sikh Gurus preached was simplified version of the Vedic philosophy, a version in the contemporary dialect of the people; that Sikh Gurus as well as followers had been practising Brahmanical rituals and ceremonies. They also contended that the mode of eating and drinking, and celebrations of festivals by the Sikhs, were akin to those of the Hindus.

Thus, the breach between Sikhism and Hinduism, imagined and projected by the administrator-scholars, started actually taking place among the elites of the two communities.

However, socio-religious antipathy was transformed into political hostility when they began to use their communal organizations to protect and advance their economic and political interests. In the branches of Punjab administration they often gave appointments and jobs to their co-religionists. They also vied with one another in winning over the sympathy of the British officials for their vested interests. Thus a communal competition among the elites of the major communities began and eventually intensified communal rivalry. This communal rivalry took a more serious turn when the Muslim elite launched agitation in 1886 and 1887, transforming the separate socio-religious identities into separatist political identities.

The functioning of local self-governing institutions further accentuated these separatist socio-political tendencies. The municipalities in the towns and District Boards for the rural areas were introduced in the 1870's. In the towns, the municipal committee soon became the focus of religious antagonism. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims fought for control of the new structures. Victory meant prestige and patronage; defeat, loss of influence and face. Due to the "personal interests" and factional politics, law and order became a problem for the local authorities. Since members of a constituency could only vote for their co-religionists, the separate political awareness of the educated Sikhs, like that of the Hindus and Muslims, was further sharpened.

This process of demarcation of separate and competitive politics culminated into the manifestation of communal politics as the British officials tried neither to harmonise the interests, nor to integrate the people. Professed religious neutrality and expediency alike forbade the British government to pursue such policy.

To sum up, the British policies and programmes brought the Sikh landed and priestly classes into the position of leadership of the Sikh community, and made them a major bastion of the British empire. The latter, responding to special concessions by the former, cultivated the loyalty to the Crown. The convergence of interests gave rise to the loyalist beliefs and attitudes among the Sikh elites. Moreover, the rising number of

Trumpp and Macauliffe propounded the thesis of "Sikhism in danger"

educated Sikhs came to the fold of socio-religious organisations. Their close association with the British officials helped to institutionalise loyalty and develop it into a tradition. The administrator-scholars provided them a thesis of separate socio-religious identity, introducing a polarity in the formerly common cultural history of the Punjab. The educated Sikhs interpreted their past on these beliefs and assumptions and established their own socio-religious rituals and customs. The pride of community traditions and rivalry among elites of different communities, were important factors in any understanding of the development of new socio-political beliefs among the Sikh elites during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. □

Real Victors of 1761

Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi in 1739 weakened the Mughals and helped the Sikhs come up in the Punjab. Abdali's loot of Delhi in 1757 further weakened the Mughals.

On both occasions, the Sikhs looted the looters, as they were passing through the Punjab. They could not capture the 'Peacock Throne' only because it was too well guarded. The real victor of the Third Battle of Panipat was not Abdali, but the Sikhs, who now filled the power vacuum in Punjab. They rescued 2000 Maharashtrian women and sent them safely home. And on Diwali day 1761, they entered Lahore. This marked the birth of Sikh Rule in the Punjab.

Sikh Upsurge Against the British 1907-1922

In spite of the Anglo-Sikh alliance in the second half of the nineteenth century, Sikh masses and classes rose against the British in a big way in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This quite shocked the British. In a long piece in the 'Fortnightly Review', London (Sept. 1923), 'Komma', obviously a high British official, wrote:

THE LAST thirty years have been years of astounding progress in the Punjab. New canals have been dug, new railways have been built, new towns have been founded. The arid plains between the five rivers have been converted into one of the granaries of the world. The Sikhs have had their full share of this increased prosperity. They are not, however, contented. Their bins are bursting with corn, and their women are loaded with silver ornaments; but they think only of the water rate they have to pay. They have been favoured and rewarded as have been no other tribe or religion in India, but their thoughts are being turned to what might have been, if a Sikh dynasty had been continued. They own more land, and they are better educated, than at any time before. But they claim the whole Punjab as theirs, and their education is regarded only as a means to vilify their benefactors. There is a homely Sikh proverb which says that the fat buffalo kicks. It may be doubted, however, if the fat buffalo would kick unless it were goaded into doing so. An attempt is made in the following pages to analyse the causes of this discontent.

Of all the famous religions of the world, the Sikh religion is numerically the most insignificant. The followers of Confucius, Gautama Buddha, Christ and Mohammed are numbered in hundreds of millions. The followers of the ten Gurus number less than three million, and practically all of these are in the Punjab. In this part of India, which is popularly supposed to be a Sikh Province, the figures of the last census show that even reckoning as Sikh every person who claims to belong to that religion and some who say that they are partly Sikh—the Sikhs are less than 12 percent

of the whole population against nearly 51 per cent Muslims, and over 35 per cent Hindus. The remaining 1 per cent is made up of Christians (including all British soldiers) and others. How comes it that so small a religious community has managed not only to exist, but to maintain an importance out of all proportion to its numbers? The answer is that the Sikh religion owes its present position entirely to the action of British officers. But for the support it has received from British officers, it would long ago have become one of the minor and less important sects of Hinduism.

It is a fact that the British officer, dealing with alien mercenary armies, has a faculty for inspiring his men with *esprit de corps*. Whether he is dealing with Chinese or Arabs, Sudanese or Felahin, with Pathans or Gurkhas, Mahrattas or Sikhs, he manages to identify himself with his men, and to make them believe as he himself very frequently believes—that they are the best fighting men in the world. He does this not in the least by attempting to foist his own religion or morality on to his men. He has an instinct to discover what is best in their religion or customs, and he is able

"The Sikh religion owes its present position entirely to British officers"

to develop that best in them. Thus when immediately after the Mutiny it became the fashion to enlist Sikhs in large numbers into the British Army, the British officer at once discovered all good there was in the Sikh religion. The lives of the ten Gurus were splendid examples of moral and military virtues. Guru Hargobind and Guru Govind Singh were ideal soldiers. Guru Govind Singh's institution of the Khalsa Dal, or Army of the Chosen, fits in well with the Indian military system. All the rites prescribed by Guru Govind Singh when instituting his military order, were, therefore, strictly followed in Sikh regiments. Thus it was that the Sikh soldier came to be treated as a being superior to the ordinary husbandman, and was told to have nothing in common with the Hindu, and in the regiment to pay no regard to caste. Thus it was that each regiment had its Granthi—or reader of the Holy Granth—under whose supervision the young recruit was solemnly and in due and ancient form, admitted into the Sikh religion, and who later imparted to him religious instruction. Thus it was that the greatest reverence was paid to the Holy Granth, and British officers stood solemnly at attention and saluted when the sacred volume was ceremoniously taken past them. Thus it was that the greetings exchanged between a British officer and his men were those of Guru Govind

Singh. "Wahguru ji ka Khalsa! Wahguru ji ki Fateh! (God's chosen! God's Victory!). Thus it was that the Sikh soldier, having finished his service, returned to his village a devout Sikh, and thereafter kept alive the flame of Sikhism in the midst of the damping influences of the Hinduism by which he was surrounded.

In one respect the British officer failed. He could not eradicate from his men the caste prejudice. Even Guru Govind Singh had not been able to do this completely.

As the Sikhs increased in wealth and education along with the rest of the province, the more educated themselves pursued the teachings of their sacred books. They had been placed again on the right track, and they went along that track with accelerating speed. A body called the Chief Khalsa Dewan was established and a school and college for Sikhs was established in Amritsar. Yet even here they did not dispense with English guidance, and the first president of the committee of their college was an Englishman, the late Sir William Rattigan, K.C. The zeal of the members of the Chief Khalsa Dewan was greater than their organising ability. There were quarrels and dissensions, and eventually in 1909 the Punjab Government had to assume control of the management of the college, being urged to do so by one of the great Sikh chiefs, the late Raja of Nabha. Although this taking over of the management was at the time imperative to save the institution from ruin, yet subsequently it became one of the causes of complaint which the Sikhs had against the Government.

It may be said that up to 1907 the Sikh revival was a movement entirely loyal to the British Government. Many of the rank and file of the movement had served in the Indian Army, and the leaders, who were all comparatively young men, were either the sons of men who had been in the Army, or had close ties with the Army. A prophecy attributed to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, who had suffered martyrdom at Delhi, was frequently quoted. It is said that when this Guru was in captivity at Delhi he was seen to go to the roof of his prison and gaze eastward. The Emperor's zenana lay in that direction, and the Guru was accused of insulting the Emperor by trying to spy at his women. He replied, "I am not looking at your women. I am looking for the coming of that white race who shall rule this country and who shall be my followers." (The East India Co. was then based in the East in Calcutta—Ed)

This prophecy has been so closely fulfilled that it cannot be attributed to Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was put to death as a rebel in 1675. It is probably an interpolation made by some sycophantic writer after the first con-

quest of the Punjab in 1846. The fact, however, that this prophecy was frequently quoted, shows the feeling that the Sikhs had towards Englishmen before 1907. The year 1907 marks the beginning of a period of change. In that year two agitators, Lajpat Rai, a member of the Arya Samaj, and Ajit Singh, a Jat Sikh, began a campaign of public speaking against the Punjab Government. They found fertile ground for their propaganda in the Lyallpur Colony. This Colony was inhabited largely by Jat Sikhs from the Central Punjab. It lies to the west of Lahore, and before 1893 it was a barren waste. A canal was dug, with its head in the River Chenab, which irrigates some millions of acres, converting the barren desert into one of the finest wheat-growing tracts of the world. Plots of this irrigated land were given to men chosen from the more thickly populated districts of the Punjab, and by 1907 a very prosperous colony had been established. Unfortunately, a new Colonisation Act was introduced which caused dissatisfaction, and in this dissatisfied area Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh sowed their crop of tares. A great deal of excitement resulted, but there was no serious disturbance. Orders were promptly issued for the deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, and the excitement

1907 marked the emergence of Lala Lajpatrai & Sardar Ajit Singh

simmered down. It is noteworthy, however, that the Sikh inhabitants of this area, who, more than those in any other place, have received advantage from British rule, are now the most hostile to that rule.

The ill-feeling caused among the educated members of the Sikh community by the decision reached in 1909 that Government should control the management of the great Sikh institution, Khalsa College, has been already mentioned. This ill-feeling culminated in a murderous attack made by an educated Sikh, on one of the English professors of the college in 1914. The would-be murderer tried to commit suicide by taking poison, but survived to receive a life sentence. He came from Lyallpur, the capital of the Chenab Colony.

The Sikhs of the Jat tribes—the tribes most enlisted in the Indian Army—are an adventurous people. As soldiers, they were sent to pass over the sea, and the black water has no terror for them. Many of them served in regiments beyond the seas, such as the Hong Kong Artillery and the Malay States Guides. There they met people from China, Japan and the western State of America, and the tales of comparative wealth told them, induced them to adventure to those distant parts of the world. In

time large numbers of them settled down in British Columbia and in Vancouver, earning high wages as lumbermen and petty shopkeepers. Just before the war the Canadian authorities decided to exclude Asiatics from Canada, and this caused very great dissatisfaction among the men settled there, who knew that if they left British Columbia, they would not be able to return. Before this, some hostile power had been disseminating seditious literature among these Sikhs, and a newspaper had been started called Ghadar (Mutiny). This publication was lithographed in the Persian and Gurmukhi scripts, and copies were sent to India. Many of these copies were stopped in the post, but many reached India, and the results must have been bad, because the publication contained the most virulent abuse of the English together with incitement to murder British officers and to revolt.

Just after the war broke out, towards the end of 1914, a great hubbub was caused among Sikhs by the statement that a Gurdwara named Rakab Ganj, near Delhi, was to be pulled down during the building of the new capital. The statement was false. It was proposed to remove part of the outer wall of the courtyard of the Gurdwara, but the matter was treated as an outrage on the Sikhs, who were called upon to form into armies to go to Delhi to protect their sacred place.

This matter was patched up, but about the same time a stir was made by an expedition conveyed in a Japanese ship, the Komagata Maru, to take Sikhs to Canada in circumvention of the orders forbidding them to enter that Dominion. The ship was re-named the Nanak Dev, and the leader of the expedition was a man called Gurdit Singh. The ship was returned to India under the new Canadian law. There was a serious riot at Calcutta when the ship reached that port, where an attempt was made to land arms concealed under copies of the Granth. Shortly after this there was a return to India of all Sikhs resident abroad. It had been whispered among them that there was to be a rising in India, and they wanted to take part in it. A conspiracy for such a rising was discovered in 1915, and many men were convicted, but except for a few isolated murders, nothing serious happened. The steps taken by the Punjab Government dealt adequately with the situation, and after this abortive effort, matters remained quiet for the rest of the war.

The agitation connected with the Rowlatt Act in 1919 and the subsequent Jallianwala Bagh tragedy affected the Sikhs, but not as much as it did other communities. On the other hand, the enquiry made by the Hunter Committee, and the flood of recriminative oratory which was poured forth during and after that enquiry, swept many of the educated

Sikhs off their feet. In spite of this, up to the end of 1920 the mass of the Sikhs still kept apart.

The ties of loyalty and comradeship formed by generations of service in the British Indian Army under British officers were not to be easily broken. Moreover, Sikhs felt, and believed, that they were the favoured children of the Sarkar, and on this belief they based extravagant claims for rewards for services rendered, or supposed to have been rendered, in the Great War. The fact that the rewards actually granted did not come up to expectation, is one of the causes of their sudden falling away.

The persons who have been the prime movers in all the agitation which has disturbed India in the past few years were fully aware of the various causes of discontent among Sikhs, and are determined to make a supreme effort to capture the community. The Muslim community had in past years kept entirely aloof from this anti-British agitation, just as the Sikhs were doing, but the defection of the Ali brothers and their following gave some ground for the allegations that the Muslims had joined the

Sikh soldiers, fighting abroad, returned home with brave new ideas

Hindus to form a national party. The party could not be truly national until the Sikhs joined it. For this reason and also because the defection of the Sikhs would be a very serious blow to the British Government, introducing as it would an element of weakness into the Indian Army, a very intense campaign was opened against Sikh loyalty in 1920. They were cajoled, flattered, taunted. They were told that they alone remained outside the great confederation which was yearning for life as a free nation. The glories of their great Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign were painted in glowing colours. Their physical bravery and the even nature of the struggle when they fought against the might of the British Empire, were frequently mentioned. Their sacrifices in the Great War, and the utter inadequacy of the rewards granted to them, were loudly deplored. Still, in spite of all this, it is doubtful if the Sikhs would have joined the agitators in large numbers. The agitators had a trump card to play. They could raise the religious question, and they proceeded to do this.

It is difficult for Englishmen who have not been in the East to realise how great a part religion plays even in modern days in the life of oriental nations. An injury to the person, property, or honour of an individual may rouse that individual's hostility and nothing serious may result,

but the slightest interference, or appearance of interference, with his religion will rouse the whole community which shares his religious beliefs.

It has been shown how the preservation of Sikhism as a separate religion was largely due to the action of British military officers, and how the impulse given by them was responsible for the Sikh revival. The effect was visible not only among the castes recruited in the Indian Army, but also among those non-military castes which usually congregate in towns. The townsmen are, as a whole, better educated than the countrymen, and they had all the enthusiasm of converts. They, however, had few ties with British officers, and their enthusiasm had a disruptive effect. Sikhism enabled them to share the glories of the past and gave them hope of a still more glorious future, when they would be leaders in the newly formed Indian nation; but neither in the past nor in the future was there place for the British officer. These men were ready to receive the advances of the Hindu-Muslim anti-English agitators and to further their cause.

There are in the Punjab numerous Gurdwaras, or 'houses of the Guru', which are venerated because tradition assigns to them a connection with important events in the lives of one or other of the ten Gurus. These Gurdwaras consist of shrines in which are placed copies of the Granth, and at which the Sikh prayers are, or should be, recited at stated 'times' daily. For the maintenance of these shrines, certain grants of land, or assignments of revenue, have been made, and there is also an income (which varies according to the fame of the shrine) from offerings made by worshippers. The persons who perform the religious services of these shrines belong to certain religious orders—almost entirely to the Udasi order—and are commonly called Mahants. The office of Mahantship descends from the Mahant to his *chela* or disciple. According to strict rule the Mahant should not marry, but he often does so; and if he has sons, he nominates one of them to be his *chela* and mahant when he dies, or relinquishes office owing to old age. There is sometimes a custom by which the inhabitants of a village are able to dismiss a Mahant of whose conduct they do not approve. Generally, however, it is difficult to remove an unsatisfactory Mahant by legal means. In many cases the assignment of land, or of land revenue, was made to his ancestor personally, and as long as he can prove that he had performed his duties, the Courts will not order his removal. As long as the income from land is trivial, and the Mahant's main source of income is the offerings from worshippers, no great harm is done. Worshippers will not make offerings to a notoriously disreputable Mahant, and thus by refusing offerings they can assure the Mahant's good behaviour. The position is different when, either owing to the great sanctity of the shrine, it

attracts worshippers from a distance who are unaware of the Mahant's private life, or where, owing to the increased income due to canal irrigation, the Mahant can afford to despise the offerings of the faithful. When he is thus independent, he may be as disreputable as he pleases, and he cannot be removed. Mahants are often men very ignorant of their religion, and they have allowed to creep into the ceremonies over which they preside, customs which savour of Hinduism—which is, or should be, anathema to the good Sikh.

This question of the removal from shrines of bad Mahants had been agitated for some time, but a solution without legislation was not possible, and in view of the reforms, Government was not willing to consider legislation till the new Councils had come into being. The more hot-headed among the Sikhs became impatient.

Towards the middle of 1920 a band of them seized a part of the Golden Temple (the Takht Akal Bunga) and formed themselves into a committee to manage that shrine. The Takht (or throne) is one of the most revered Sikh shrines in India. The head of it used to send instructions for

Sikh religious revival, encouraged by the British, boomeranged on them

guidance to all other Sikh shrines. The self-formed committee of management very soon assumed powers over all Gurdwaras and called itself the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which may be translated as "The Honourable General Committee for the Management of Gurdwaras." This committee was from the beginning hostile to Government, and it became the focus of all disaffection. Government tried to win it over by various means, but only strengthened the position of the Committee without making it friendly.

The success attained by this illegal act of seizure encouraged further efforts. Volunteers were called for, and bands of men were formed to take possession of other Gurdwaras, the Mahants of which were deemed to be objectionable. These bands of men were called Akalis. The word means 'belonging to the Immortal', and the name was first conferred by Guru Gobind Singh on a body of men specially selected for military service. Later these Akalis became censors of morals, and later still bullies and tyrants. Ranjit Singh had great difficulty in dealing with them, and he certainly employed effective methods. In modern times the term was applied to an ascetic form of Sikhism, the modern Akali being to the Sikh very much what the Sadhu is to the Hindu, and the Fakir to the Muslim.

The name Akali, chosen for the men who were to seize shrines, had, however, its original application. They were the specially chosen band dedicated to the service of the Immortal One, and they were to risk their lives and liberty in that service. The action which it was intended to take was decidedly illegal. The Aakli bands (or Jathas, as they are called) were to go to the Gurdwara, the Mahant of which was to be ejected, and simply to take possession, willy nilly. Government was unwilling to interfere in the dispute, which at the beginning was one between two sects of Sikhs. This policy of non-interference is one which has always been adopted in religious controversies. It is based on the words of the Proclamation made by Queen Victoria in 1858: "We do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us, that they abstain from all interference with the religious beliefs or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure."

To help the Akalis to reform the shrines, or to help the Mahants to retain them would have seemed like interference in the religious beliefs of one or other of these factions. Government, therefore, kept apart from the dispute, leaving it to the Mahants' party, or to the Akalis, to take such legal action as they wished. If there had been a breach of the peace, the Government would have had to interfere. If the controversy remained a purely religious dispute between two sects of one religion, it might be hoped that a breach of the peace—at all events a serious breach of the peace—would be avoided. Unfortunately, the religious motive was speedily overshadowed by the political motive.

Towards the end of 1920, a stormy meeting of the Sikh League, a purely political body, was held at Lahore. The upshot was a decision that the Sikhs should throw in their lot with the Hindus and Muslims. Even at this time, however, the mass of the rural Sikhs were unmoved. The decision, reached at the Sikh League meeting, affected mainly the town Sikhs. It was important, however, because it showed the direction in which the most vociferous of the Sikhs, who had arrogated to themselves the name of leaders, now was to help the Hindus and Muslims to obtain Swaraj. The meaning was complete Indian independence. To further this object an extensive propaganda and funds were necessary. Both means were made available by the seizure of shrines. Men of the right political stamp could be put in to manage shrines and preach sedition daily and the wealth of the shrines could be thrown over all. Accordingly, after the meeting of the Sikh League, at which the grave decision to join the Hindu and Muslim parties was taken, the movement to seize Gurdwaras was greatly accelerated.

In January 1921, a famous shrine at Tarn Taran, near Amritsar, was taken in spite of resistance, and there was bloodshed, two men being killed. The political nature of the movement was then displayed, because the Congress and Khilafat parties went to Tarn Taran and made political capital of the losses that had been sustained.

The position was now becoming very difficult, and a solution was being sought by which the genuine religious aspirations of the Sikhs, who formed the rank and file of the movement, might be satisfied and kept apart from political questions, when the tragedy at Nankana took place.

Nankana is the birth-place of the first Guru, and the shrine is, therefore, much venerated by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh had made a grant of land and land-revenue to the shrine, but the value of the property at the time of the gift was quite insignificant.

In recent years canal irrigation has been extended to this land, with a consequent enormous increase in value. The annual rental of the shrine is now estimated to be about four lakhs of rupees per annum. The Mahant was a man of disreputable moral character. Consequently, both

Gurdwaras were seized to secure the funds to fight the government

for political and religious reasons the seizure of this shrine was deemed by the agitators to be particularly suitable. A sudden attack was made, but the Mahant had made secret preparations to repel it, and he entrapped and slaughtered 130 men. The actual attack appears to have been unpremeditated and Government was not aware that there had been any preparation for defence. Government was actually engaged in negotiations for a conference to decide this religious question, when the tragedy occurred. The persons who had been implicated in these wholesale murders were soon arrested and put on their trial, and have since been convicted and hanged, or else sentenced to imprisonment for long terms, but the Mahant, the man primarily responsible for the slaughter, escaped the death penalty, the High Court holding that he had exercised the right of private defence, although he had greatly exceeded the powers given him by that right. It was impossible to hand back the shrine to the representatives of the Mahant who had been guilty of this dreadful crime. It was decided therefore, to give it to a specially appointed committee. This committee speedily joined the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, so that body obtained control of the shrine and its enormous revenues. Thus the political parties who were at the back of the movement had gained a great success. They

had obtained the sinews of war and they were furnished with a battle-cry. The martyrs of Nankana were not to die in vain. Every Akali henceforward was to wear a black turban in token of his mourning, and they must demand that all Sikh shrines should be made over to them.

Effective military measures were taken by Government to prevent further seizures of shrines, and a Bill was hastily drawn up by which an enquiry could be made as to the property in shrines and an ad interim committee of management could be appointed. That Bill was rejected by the Sikh leaders. The control of the movement was now entirely political. The last thing that the controllers desired was that any arrangement should be made which would bring peace. What they now wanted was the recovery, not of the shrines only, but also of the lordship of the Punjab and Swaraj for India. However, for the time being, the military dispositions made by the Government produced a comparative calm. The leaders also were consolidating their gains. The movement was no longer purely provincial movement; it was an all-India movement. The Sikhs were now being directed by outsiders—men notorious as agitators all over India—and these men wanted time.

In November 1921, the scene of the interest changed to Bombay, where bloody riots marked the arrival of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales. On the whole, however, these attempts to mar the success of the Royal visit were a failure. In spite of all endeavours, the people were not to be restrained, and in spite of its inauspicious beginning the Royal visit to Bombay was, on the whole, a great success. Calcutta, Madras and other provincial centres had been warned by Bombay, and nothing could be done there. Once more it was necessary for the agitators to turn to the Punjab. The Akali agitation was revived in full force. The manager of the Golden Temple, a nominee of Government, was compelled to resign. He handed the keys of the temple to the Deputy Commissioner for safe custody until a successor should be appointed in his place. Finally litigation by Government resulted, to decide to whom the keys should be given. The Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee claimed them, but as that body was not legally constituted or legally in possession of the shrine, it was felt to be impossible, without the sanction of the Courts, for Government to surrender its trust to them. This failure to comply instantly with the demand that the keys should be delivered to them, was made the occasion of a very serious agitation. The Government at first tried to put this agitation down with a firm hand and many arrests of prominent Sikhs were made, but in the end Government yielded. Early in January 1922, it gave up the keys in circumstances of the utmost humiliation. An Indian gazetted officer went to the Golden Temple and there gave the keys to a

representative of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. All the persons who had been arrested in the course of the agitation were released. Never was there a more shameful defeat. One thinks irresistibly of the capture of Calais by an English king, when the leading citizens had to bring the keys to him, clothed only in their shirts, and with ropes round their necks.

The Punjab Government had humbled itself to the dust before the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, but that body was not satisfied with its triumph. Once more bands of black-turbaned Akalis patrolled the Punjab and threatened to take forcible possession of the shrines. The important shrine of Anandpur, sacred to Guru Govind Singh, was actually seized. Trains were boarded by these gangs, who demanded, and obtained, free passage in the name of the Khalsa and of their Gurus. On one occasion the special carriage in which one of the Ministers of the province was travelling was invaded, and on the Minister's protesting, he was told he and his daughter could travel on the roof.

The time when His Royal Highness was to visit Lahore was at hand. And at one time it seemed doubtful if the visit would take place. Firmer

"It is a misuse of language to call this state of affairs a religious agitation"

counsels prevailed. His Royal Highness came to Lahore, and his visit was a triumphant success—encouraging that strong, silent body of loyalists who had watched with dismay the weakness of Government. Emboldened by this success, the Punjab Government had another spasm of vigour. Orders were issued for the arrest of wandering bands of Akalis. Troops were moved through different parts of the province. Special police were enlisted. The effect of this action was at once apparent. Once more peace was restored, and there was a lull. But the forces of disorder had not been crushed. There had been a slight set-back, but the question of the control of the shrines had not been settled. All attempts made by the Punjab Government to settle the question by compromise had been rejected with contempt by the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and the agitation was still maintained. The pot boiled over again in August.

There is a shrine near Amritsar called the Guru Ka Bagh (the Guru's Garden). The Mahant of this shrine had come to an arrangement with the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee by which the latter was allowed to manage the shrine, but this agreement was said not to extend to the land and garden attached to the shrine. The people put in charge to manage the shrine, began to fell trees in the garden. The Mahant appealed to

the Deputy Commissioner to protect his property, and a force of police was sent out to prevent these acts of theft. Again, the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee called for volunteer Akalis to perform the service of the Guru by felling trees for his kitchen. These volunteers were taken to an appandage of the Golden Temple and there sworn to perform this duty at the risk of their own lives, but without using violence. Bands of them advanced chanting hymns, and tried to walk past the police. They were beaten, and as soon as they had received the smallest hurt, they were packed into motor lorries provided by the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and paraded through the streets of Amritsar as martyrs to the Sikh's religion. Every artifice was adopted to cause enmity to Government. It is significant that the leaders of the all-India non-cooperation movement came to Amritsar to help the committee, among them being Malaviya, the successor of Gandhi, and Andrews, the Anglican ex-priest.

One may say in passing that the semblance of military organisation adopted by the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee is remarkable, and points to very good 'staff' work on the part of those who are behind the whole movement. The Akalis are divided into Jathas or companies, and each company has a commander called Jathedar. The Jathas are called up in rotation, a complete roster of service being kept. As each Jatha arrives, it is taken to the Golden Temple and there sworn to the service of the Guru and to non-violence, and then paraded down the main street of Amritsar, and thence taken to the Guru ka Bagh shrine, which is about ten miles from Amritsar. There is also a complete Medical side, which is organised entirely on the British model, with a director of medical services, surgeons in charge of field hospitals, assistant surgeons in charge of field ambulances, and so on. This branch issues daily printed lists of wounded, with full details of their injuries, or alleged injuries. One is inclined to doubt the correctness of these details, because out of about 1,200 'wounded' men, about 90 percent are described as seriously. It is known, however, that no more than two men have had bones broken, and none have succumbed.

The effect produced on the public mind by the publication of these lists, and of the "official" communiques of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, is, however, to exacerbate public feeling against the Government, which is all that is required by the leaders of the agitation. Government retorts unwisely by issuing counter-communicues, but no one believes the Government, whereas the communiques of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee are regarded as being as true as the words of the holy Granth. The consequence is that in this war of communiques, Government has suffered defeat.

The feeling aroused by the news of its atrocities has been so great that once more Government has changed its policy. It has abandoned the attempt to disperse these bands of men by force, and it has decided to protect the garden by placing a barbed wire entanglement on one side of it. All persons attempting to pass this wire are arrested. The prospect of posing as a martyr by being imprisoned, instead of by being beaten, has greatly encouraged the Akalis, with the result that instead of a daily tale of fifteen or twenty martyrs, the number has risen to a hundred, that being the number arrested daily. These figures may not be thought large, but it must be remembered that for every man hurt or arrested, about a hundred persons are filled with the hatred of the Government by the outpourings of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and its subsidised Press.

It is a misuse of language to call this state of affairs a religious agitation. It is a plain and naked attempt at revolt. To any one who knew the Sikhs of the Punjab three years ago, it must seem astonishing that a community which was bound by such close ties of common interest to the British Empire, which had done so much for the British Empire, and for which so much had been done, should have been changed in a few

The Ghadar movement was launched in America to Subvert Sikh Army loyalty

months from one of the most contented and loyal of the people included in that Empire, to one of the most (apparently) discontented and hostile. Any one who has followed the foregoing narrative will see, however, that the change is not as sudden as it appears to be. The first signs of discontent were visible as far back as 1907, and were due to outside influence. At the end of 1913 a regular campaign against Sikh loyalty was begun. This movement had its headquarters in America, and ended in the abortive conspiracy of 1915 (the Ghadar conspiracy). Then came the attack of the Hindu Congress and the Muslim League, which captured the Sikh political organisation at the end of 1920. From the ground thus gained, the joint forces, now completely unmasked, are attacking British rule in India.

Fortunately the position, though serious, is not desperate. The Sikhs who have thrown in their lot with the enemy for the most part do not belong to the fighting tribes. Their object, which is the disruption of the Empire, is concealed from their more virile followers, who obey them only because they are deceived into doing so by being told that the object is the purely religious one of reforming the Sikh shrines (and most

Englishmen must sympathise with the desire to attain this object). The influence of British military officers still suffices to keep their men loyal, though frequently somewhat puzzled. The Sikh States and their rulers are still faithful in their allegiance to their King Emperor. The mass of the rural civil population have not yet been infected. If the causes of irritation are removed, if the loud-voiced agitators who are inciting the people to 'non-violent' lawlessness are silenced, the situation may yet be saved.

If this diagnosis is correct, then from the first, the political movement must be dissociated from the religious movement. Second the agitators who, on platforms and in the press, are urging the Sikhs to revolt, must be silenced, and if the existing law does not suffice to silence them, extra-ordinary powers must be used to do so. Third, the law which has prevented the reformation of Sikh shrines must be changed so as to accommodate the growing desire of the Sikhs to purify their religion. The time is short, but there is yet time if there is no hesitation.

□

Ranjit Singh's Humour

Dr. Joseph Wolff was an English clergyman in the days of Ranjit Singh. Once Wolff asked the Maharaja how one may get nigh to God. And Ranjit Singh promptly answered sarcastically: "By making an alliance with the British Government, as I lately did with the Lord Nawab Saheb at Ropar!"

He added: "You say you travel about for the sake of religion. Why then do you not preach to the English in Hindoosthan who have no religion at all?"

Singh Sabha & Ghadar Struggle for the Sikh Soul

While the rich continued to lick British shoes, the rise of education and nationalism radicalised the Sikh peasant-soldiers. The former insisted on forms, the latter, on the spirit.

HARISH K. PURI of Gurn Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, elaborated in the Punjab Journal of Politics, 1983, how it all happened:

PRESENT DAY social scientists have been deeply interested in understanding the relationship of caste, religion, ethnicity etc., or what are described as 'primordial ties', with politics. The prevalent Eurocentric culturological approach which underlies most of the contemporary non-Marxist scholarship, assumed the givenness of the 'primordial' factors as social facts which, so to say, determined the political dynamics in a society. It has also been suggested that in their mutual competition for secular material rewards, the culturally distinct communities organised their struggles around their separate communal identities. That has been considered more true of less developed societies. A crucial question to be raised, however, is in what historical situations, under what socio-economic conditions and how, do these ties become more relevant and assume importance in the political process. A study of two significant movements in Punjab, the Singh Sabha and the Ghadar may be valuable for this purpose. These two more or less contemporary organised movements developed two divergent patterns of psychological orientations and structures of beliefs, values and attitudes towards political objects among the people of the same community. This sensitises us to the fact that the so-called 'primordial' ties may not in reality be given facts. These become social facts as a result of the economic and political factors pertaining to a historical situation.

These movements related, by and large, to the people of the same community. Both of these have been credited with pride and glory of the

Sikh community—one for the resurgence of Sikh identity and the other for the deeds of heroism and sacrifices popularly associated with the community tradition. What is conveniently glossed over or ignored is the structures of political orientation developed by these movements. Another important question is how deep are the so-called deep structures and what is it which makes them relevant or irrelevant.

THE SINGH SABHA movement appeared in its effect as a movement for the formation of a separate and distinct Sikh identity by a vigorous effort at de-Hinduisation of the community. Its origin is therefore explained in terms of a marked concern of the community elite with the 'crisis of identity' caused by 'corrupting influences' of Brahminical rituals and practices which had become prominently marked since the days of Ranjit Singh's rule.

What was it which led to the founding of this alternative to the Namdhari movement in 1873? There was hardly any evidence of a fresh spurt of apostasy or serious threat to the Sikh community at that point of time. The conversion of a few Sikhs to Christianity did not pose a big enough problem. The polemics with Arya Samaj was a later development. Those who initiated the movement included landed aristocrats, mahants, pujaris and priests. Among them were also sahajdharis. (Sikhs who don't keep long hair). There was hardly any strong evidence that these leaders had any marked tendency for strict adherence to Sikh beliefs and teachings of the Gurus in their private lives or social behaviour. To the contrary, these leaders were accused of practising casteism and observing prohibited Brahminical rituals and practices. Among them were mahants and pujaris of Sikh temples, a section of people whose blatantly corrupt practices, profligacy and misuse of temple funds and precincts for immoral purposes had led to a radical Gurdwara Reform Movement during the twenties of the present century. The Singh Sabha's point of departure from the earlier efforts at reforms lay in founding the movement soon after a section of its leadership had, in a formal signed memorandum to the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, denounced the (nationalist) Namdharis (Kukas) as the mortal enemies of the Sikhs, appreciated the government's ruthless suppression of the Kukas and paid obeisance to the government for their bountiness and grace.

That formed a persistent pattern of behaviour and activity of the Singh Sabhas, Diwans and Chief Khalsa Diwan. When the Ghadarite revolutionaries from America returned to propagate and launch a rebellion against the British rule the Chief Khalsa Diwan assumed the role

of a vanguard of the British rule for suppression of the Ghadarites. The mahants and pujaris, whose own fall from Sikh norms was provoking the community's contempt and anger, condemned the Ghadarites as *patit* (fallen) Sikhs and enemies of the Panth. Conversely, General Dyer was honoured, at the initiative of the Diwan leadership, with a *saropa* at the holiest of the Sikh temples and was initiated as a Sikh. The rationale of the origin of the Singh Sabha movement, therefore, lay in reasons other than those of resolving the so called 'crisis of identity'.

Two social reform movements—the Nirankari and the Namdhari—had much earlier initiated efforts for restoring the pristine purity of Khalsa norms. Evils of idol worship and Brahminical rituals were condemned. Particular emphasis was laid on the observance of the five K's and initiation through baptism, lest the Sikhs got assimilated among the Hindus.

The Namdhari movement was radical and militant under the leadership of Ram Singh. Its followers came almost exclusively from lower castes. Their own social and economic exploitation at the hands of rich and higher castes, made the former critical of the beliefs and practices of

Sikh terrorists conjured up the spirits of the past to their service

the latter. Their opposition to the cultural influences of the British rule and boycott of the administrative apparatus was marked by greater emphasis on martial compositions of Guru Gobind Singh. Obviously their movement came into sharp conflict with the vested ruling interests of the community and the new rulers. Maharaj Singh and other advocates of 'Khalsa Raj' were also preparing for struggle against foreign rule. The colonial administration needed active strategic support. The founding of the Singh Sabha movement soon after the desperate action of the provincial administration on the Kukas at Malerkotla resulted from the felt urgency and advantage of an alternative course or organised initiative. That appeared to be a promising strategy to contend with the compulsions generated by the political and economic conditions created by the colonial rule in Punjab.

The annexation of Punjab and its incorporation as an agrarian appendix to the imperialist market economy initiated phenomenal changes in the political economy of the province. A vast extension of irrigation canals and colonization of waste-lands contributed to increase in agricultural production. The land settlements and the conception of individual ownership, the cash nexus, and the new system of law and courts introdu-

ced new patterns of privileges and contradictions. The British found in the landed aristocracy and the mahants and priests, who had conspicuously benefited from the economic and administrative measures, natural allies to be conciliated. The latter, in turn, searched for formidable grounds and rationale for recognition as a constituency to be placated.

That search was particularly facilitated by two factors. One related to the new forces generated by commercialisation of agriculture, and the new legal-administrative system. Second was the reorganisation of the Army on the 'fictitious theory' of martial races and the British initiative in fostering distinct and separate religious identity among the Sikh soldiers.

Besides the prosperity of landed aristocracy, the commercialisation of agriculture, the attendant forces of the market economy and payment of land revenue in cash also bolstered a class of traders and money-lenders and inevitably pushed the small and middle peasantry into a nexus of increasing indebtedness and land alienation. The security of law and courts provided to the money-lender an opportunity which he was quick to seize. Rise of civil litigation also promoted a new class of lawyers and pleaders. The introduction of railways, post and telegraph and proliferation of administrative jobs promoted employment for the urban educated. Prominently large numbers of these beneficiaries came from urban Khatri and Arora Hindus. The peasantry in central Punjab districts was predominantly Jat Sikh.

Believing strongly that religious orthodoxy of the Sikh soldier in the army was crucial for his loyalty to the empire, the British military and administrative authorities had decided to enlist only "keshadharis" into Sikh regiments. The new and the earlier recruits were subjected to rigorous observance of Khalsa form and ostensible norms. Several British scholars and historians had warned that pervasive influence of Hinduism might soon absorb the Sikhs in the Hindu fold. Macauliffe, for instance, was categorical in his further observation that "Army falling off from orthodoxy, detracted from the fighting force of the Sikh soldiers". The government, therefore, saw a positive strategic advantage in promoting a strong subjective consciousness of a separate communal identity, particularly in the small and middle peasantry—the primary source of military recruitment. Discussing the contribution made by the British in that regard D. Petrie claimed credit that :

"Sikhs in the Indian Army had been studiously encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation. Their national pride has been fostered by every available means."

Simultaneously, on the other hand, the control of Gurdwaras through government appointed sarbrahs and specially rewarded priests and mahants, was promoted for strengthening of the desired hegemonic influence. It did not matter to the rulers that many in this class of traditional priests and mahants—clean-shaven Udasis, keeping and worshipping Hindu idols in the Sikh temples—promoted by their example, the continued observance of those very rituals and practices which were considered a threat to the separate identity of the community. The promotion of these two different influences was to bring to surface later problems for the British which Petrie described as "curious results" of "this glorification of the Sikhs", the neo-Sikh party, with a "wind in the head" whose "mere existence" was "a constant potential source of danger". A more powerful challenge to it was the Gurdwara Reform Movement during the early twenties of this century. The British, however, generally viewed the two contrary structures as complementary elements in the promotion of a politically advantageous hegemony.

It was in that set of conditions that the Singh Sabha movement was launched. Gradual inclusion of the educated urban Sikhs and trading

Gen. Dyer was made an honorary Sikh and presented a Saropa !

classes in its leadership and conflict with the Arya Samaj strengthened in them the urge and the capacity to assert that Sikhs were a cohesive community which needed to be recognized. In the process it developed among the community, largely in the urban areas, a distinct political orientation based on separate community interests.

It developed a consciousness that the British were their benefactors who regarded them as a chosen, loyal, brave, but less advantaged people and that the well-being and betterment of the community lay in their fidelity to the empire. Loyalty was cultivated as a value commended by their religion. It was believed that the arrival and blessing of the British raj was forecast by the Ninth Guru and thus the Sikhs were "the favourite sons of our Empress Mother", and the people of England were "our kindred brethren". A belief was promoted that the Sikhs never before had that kind of honour and special opportunity of their upliftment; not even under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Howsoever religiously devout, those Sikhs who appeared to be hostile to the British could not be included in Singh Sabhas. The British government's recognition of the the valour and loyalty of Sikh soldiers and the contribution of these soldiers in spreading

the Singh Sabha message tended to strengthen that psychological orientation. The government, on the other hand, regarded the Sikhs 'an exceedingly important military asset' and felt that "any luke-warmness they may develop in attachment and loyalty—must give rise to some misgiving", even "anxiety". Even when someone appeared to emphasise the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh or talk of past glories of the Sikhs, it was considered unethical and an expression of ingratitude. Given that framework, the struggle for promotion of their social, economic and political interests was pursued in terms of their being more loyal than others in the service and defence of the empire. The methods they followed were petitions and memoranda—the so-called constitutional ones.

In the Singh Sabha's stress on strengthening a consciousness of their separate social and political identity, the other two communities in the province were identified as threats to the Sikh community.

Since they fully supported the British agricultural policy, the fas process of pauperisation of the small and middle peasantry, rising indebtedness and alienation of lands did not appear to become a part of their concern, except in the sense that urban Hindu money-lender was identified as the culprit. So that when the paternal concern of the government for the peasantry was aroused, more for political reasons than others, the Alienation of Land Act 1901 ensured that lands could pass only to the specified agricultural castes. It did not check alienation of lands, nor exploitation of the peasantry; it only tended to ensure that the exploiter beneficiary must be from the agricultural castes specifically identified for that purpose by law.

THE GHADAR MOVEMENT, on the other hand, developed just the contrary structure of political orientation. The movement was episodic in character and better known for its dramatic effort to overthrow the British rule by an armed revolution. The patriotism, bravery and heroic sacrifices made by the Ghadarites were productive of legends that have continued to inspire the politically conscious sections.

Who were these people? What were their objective economic conditions? What were the subjective dimensions of their world views and their self image? These are relevant questions. They were small peasant proprietors coming mainly from five central districts of Punjab, mostly from Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, who were compelled by ever worsening economic conditions to seek labour opportunities for livelihood in foreign lands.

The incorporation of Punjab into the imperialist market economy had turned the farmers into "commodity peasants". The British government's policy of land settlement, the new individualist conception of owner-

ship, the cash nexus and the legal system had set in operation a process which had a very distressing impact on the small peasantry. With the rise in price of land, relatively higher creditworthiness of peasant proprietors and the state's demand of land revenue in cash, there occurred a steep rise in the scale of indebtedness among the peasants and consequent alienation of lands. Alarming reports of rising alienation of lands from the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur had started coming as early as 1870-71. By 1891, four million acres of land in the province were under mortgage. The Financial Commissioner of Punjab reported on the basis of "house to house inquiry" in 1893 that the "peasantry was already ruined beyond redemption." It was noteworthy that whereas in 1865 only 5 per cent of the peasant proprietors were seriously involved in debt, an estimate made in 1920 revealed that only 17 per cent were free from it.

Ejectment from land was natural when the peasants failed to repay their debts. The result was a fast conversion of proprietors into tenants-at-will and agricultural labourers. Between 1872-73 and 1902-03, the number of tenants-at-will increased by 36%. The security of the British legal system facilitated expropriation by the money-lender. Denzil Ibbetson disco-

"Glorification of the Sikhs had led to a wind in their head", British Intelligence

vered that their rules and regulations had become "a new engine of oppression" and that their civil courts "stink in the nostrils of the peasantry". Administrative corruption and 'begar' in the service of bureaucracy increased as the officials on tour were supposed to live off the resources of the countryside. Ibbetson had warned in 1889 that "the presence of sturdy peasantry willing to work but unable to support themselves must always be dangerous". The peasant was also a soldier and his discontent posed a serious threat. The Alienation of Land Act apparently meant to relieve the peasantry, however, only substituted the politically advantageous agriculturist tribes for the non-agriculturist money-lender.

Six famines visited Punjab during the first half century of British rule, but those of 1896-97 and 1899-1900 were far severer in their ferocity than the earlier ones. While the price of food crops galloped unchecked, the government, in its wisdom, did not think it sensible to check the export of food grains even during famine years, nor considered remission in land revenue, lest it weakened the 'moral fibre' of the cultivators. Drought of 1905-07 and recurrent epidemics during the first decade of this century were even more devastating, killing two million people in the province.

There was a net reduction of 2.2 per cent in the population of Punjab between 1901 and 1911. In one of his reports to the Governor General in 1907 the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab informed him that plague alone was killing 60,000 Punjabis a week.

This widespread and acute economic distress was turned into agrarian unrest when further provocation was fuelled by some hasty and ill-considered measures such as the Colonization Bill of 1906, a bill to amend the Land Alienation Act of 1901 and raising of water rate of the Bari Doab Canal. The government panicked when they learnt that Ajit Singh's political propaganda was causing disaffection among the Sikh soldiers. Ibbetson, then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, had night-mares of repetition of mutiny. Lord Kitchner intervened. The Colonization Bill was vetoed by the Viceroy. Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai were deported and the agitation was suppressed. Thereafter followed a race for professions of loyalty "in the most ostentatious manner" and an inevitable rise in communal tensions.

That was the kind of objective economic situation when hordes of Punjabis started moving out in search of economic opportunities in foreign lands. By 1910 over ten thousand of them were settled on the Pacific coast of USA and Canada alone. There is hardly any evidence, however, that these emigrants sensed at that time any relation of their economic problems with the British policies and imperial interests. Hardly a few had heard of Ajit Singh and the agitation led by his nationalist political activity was little known to the Punjab villager before the momentous events of 1919-20.

The major influences on the psychological orientation of the people towards politics in the province came from Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha movements, and the army; the latter being a more powerful one. The Sikh soldiers in the army were particularly admired by the British for their bravery and loyalty. Recruitment in the army was a major source of employment. Even with a salary of seven to nine rupees per month a soldier carried a sense of honour and distinction in his community.

Predominant majority of these immigrants being Sikhs, and around 50 per cent of them being those who had served terms in the army, the early form of community activity in Canada and USA centred round issues of maintaining the purity of Sikh norms in a corrupting western milieu. When they experienced discrimination and when the Canadian government imposed restrictions on further entry of Indians into Canada, their major plea for protection of their interests was their 'tradition' of

loyalty and service to the British. In a memorandum presented jointly by Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver, and the Hindustan Association, in 1911, it was stated, for example:

Our first claim is that we are British subjects of proven loyalty. More than 90 per cent of the Hindustanees in Canada are Sikhs. With the name Sikh is linked up fidelity and heroic loyalty to the Empire.

However, the conspicuous contrast between social and economic conditions and political freedom in North America and the conditions back home was becoming a cause for embarrassment and raising of new questions. They were called 'coolies', 'dirty people' and were ridiculed and bullied. The Ghadar movement which emerged in that situation raised questions closest to the minds of these people and provided explanations which appeared more relevant to their concrete life experiences. Why did they leave the peace of their homes to come to distant foreign lands? It was because of the poverty and oppression at home. The teachings of the Ghadar made them conscious of the poverty, backwardness, the famines which killed crores of people in India, the oppression of the

Land Alienation Act 1901 prevented neither alienation nor exploitation

police etc. Their existing humiliation in foreign lands was linked with their misery back home: "Harassed in our country and with no respite available abroad, we aliens have no land of our own".

The questions came to be raised, why was India so backward and her people so famished. The Ghadar provided the answer: It was because they were ruled by a foreign people who were draining away the wealth of India to England. These Punjabi peasant immigrants learnt that it was not the Americans who were making their lives miserable but the British. "If the British treated them like dogs at home, how could they expect to be treated otherwise any place else in the world". A consciousness was growing that "Americans hate slavery and we are slaves". A sense of shame became prominent. The Ghadar taught them that had the Sikh forces not come out to defend the British during the mutiny of 1857, India would have gained Independence long time ago. The need was to prepare for another armed revolution. Revolution—Ghadar, the name of the movement—spelled out their alienation from the British regime and consciousness of the need for its overthrow.

The real source of strength of the British in India, in the assessment of the Ghadarites, were the Indian soldiers of the British army, the toadies, Sikh Sardars, Rai Bahadurs and Khan Bahadurs and a manoeuvred obedience of the people. There was a certain anticipation of Mahatma Gandhi in their belief that if the common Indian people withdrew their support to the government, the British would have no legs to stand on. Political education of the common people by propaganda was, therefore, considered important. The Indians were told that the British "loot you and then beat you with your resources". The people were asked to stop paying land tax and leave the service of the government.

Becoming acutely conscious of the damage done by the Indian vested interests, they blamed the Sikh Sardars who became instrumental in the British annexation of Punjab in 1849 and the rulers of Sikh States whose help to the British in 1857 led to the defeat of rebel forces: "they sold us to the British and themselves became traffickers of the country." The Singh Sabha and Chief Khalsa Diwan leadership was identified as enemy of the nation. It would be the poor masses who would join the revolution. It would be wrong to look up to 'shahukar' for such a purpose. The Ghadarites' hatred for such elements was so strong that they frequently announced "we'll deal with the Whites later, let us deal with the traitors first."

A more important element considered among the forces of revolution, were Indian soldiers. Many of the Ghadarites had been soldiers earlier. A new awareness had now grown that they had been duped for long and had suffered because of "our own doing". They had fought battles for the British to extend the empire. "Suffering bullets, we established the empire. But we found the cruel rulers deceitful", sang the Ghadar poets and warned the soldiers about the "wickedness of the foreigner". They would not be fooled any more and "will never again sing songs of loyalty". Having relatively easy access to the men of their community in Sikh regiments, the Ghadarites expected to win them over to the cause of rebellion.

A significant dimension of their new framework of consciousness was their changed orientation towards religion and the formation of a new identity. Practically ninety-five per cent of the Ghadarites were Sikhs and their psychological orientation had been shaped by the prominent cultural tradition under the influence of the Gurdwaras, priests and the community elite. It was natural that these would play a role in their coming to terms with a new consciousness of objective reality. "Consciousness", as Karl Marx observed, was a "social product" and when people "seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating some-

thing that has never yet existed...they conjure up the spirits of the past to their service..." The significant point is the nature of the interpretative mediation attempted by the Ghadarites and their selection of symbols in order to present what Marx characterised as "the new scene of world history in the time honoured disguise and this borrowed language." That selection and mediation tended to alter the perception of the legacy as also the group's self image.

The interpretation of the community's heritage by the Ghadarites was very different from, almost contrary to, the one forcefully argued by the Singh Sabhas and Chief Khalsa Diwan and somewhat near to that articulated by the Kukas. What appealed to the Ghadarites were such teachings of the Tenth Guru which asked the Sikhs to take up arms when a cause was held sacred. Inspiration was sought from the brave Sikh crusaders such as Banda Singh Bahadur, Dip Singh, Mahatab Singh, Hari Singh and Phula Singh. What really identified the Guru's Singh was, to them, not a ritualistic adherence to external forms, as the Singh Sabhas advocated, but the bravery and self-sacrificing spirit to fight the enemy.

Pro-British and anti-British forces contended for Sikh soul

It is important to take note of the fact that Ghadar poets frequently referred to Khalsa or Panth as a force which Guru Gobind Singh created for the defence of the country, and which fought battles for ending oppressions on 'Mother Bharat'. In that cause they regarded the Khans and the Rajputs, the brave Turks and the Marathas as people with similar ethos. The Panth, therefore, was to be judged by its service in the cause of the country's freedom. The 'dirty' role of Sardars in 1857 was, therefore, regarded as a 'stigma' which, as the Ghadarites strongly felt, had to be urgently removed from the fair name of the Sikhs.

The attempts made in this country for separate community demarcation e.g. by the Singh Sabha, Chief Khalsa Diwan and Arya Samaj, was condemned and often the blame was put not so much on the British, as on the people of India, for playing into the hands of the foreigners. The emphasis was on the formation of new identity of sons of Mother Bharat and on replacing the then existing and developing separatist identities. They, therefore, particularly singled out the leadership of Chief Khalsa Diwan for contempt and ridicule and all those who looked to the British for patronage and privileges. Such leaders were ruthlessly condemned as "dogs of the government" and men of "filthy mentality" who tended to

divide the people for their selfish objectives, "commission agents who exploited their position for lowly material gains."

A much more striking element in their attitude to religion was marked by their stress on the primacy of politics and rejection of preoccupation with matters of religion. Religious concerns were seen as diversionist and thus positively harmful. In their popular folk poetry, one sees a rejection of Pandits and Mullahs or prayers and litanies, for these were positive obstructions to correct political perceptions. A couplet of Harnam Singh Tundilal which was popular with the Ghadarites said that "Old scriptures will do no good, forget about going to Gurdwara, the time has come to wield the sword for the freedom of the country."

Religion could at best be accepted as a private affair and casteism was completely rejected. The evidence of the Ghadarite Babas and common observation of the behaviour of most Ghadarites emphasised that in their social relations they never cared much for questions of keeping long hair and beards or eating *jhatka* or *halal*. This orientation naturally aroused the wrath of the orthodox against the Ghadarites. (*jhatka* is Sikh style for slaughtering cattle with one stroke; *halal* is Muslim style of slowly killing the animal. ed.)

The Ghadar movement's secular orientation was a strikingly novel development in a period when religious nationalism was the ruling pattern in the country. They also frequently referred to the contemporary patriots from Bengal and Maharashtra as their heroes who fought for the freedom of 'Mother Bharat'.

This movement identified British imperialism as a positive menace, not only for Indians but also for all colonised peoples in the world and believed in a community of interests among revolutionary organisations in various politically subject nations. They were convinced that no improvement could be made in any respect without the overthrow of the British rule. That could be done only through a popular armed rebellion. But it was necessary to take care of the vested interests within India

In the framework of ideas of the Ghadarites, making analysis of the objective political situation in the country, considerations of foresight, planning and strategy did not appear to be important. When they 'returned to India to launch a rebellion, most of their compatriots did not understand, much less appreciate, why these people who had left India only a few years earlier to earn money, and had indeed earned well, should suddenly come as 'a bolt from the blue', preaching rebellion. Most of the educated politically alive leaders of the Sikh community thought

the Ghadarites were crazy. The Ghadarites of course failed in their mission. But they made a considerable impact on the future course of politics in the province.

This study of two contending structures of political orientation among the different groups of people from within the same religious community, during broadly the same period of time, persuades us to view group identity formation as an outcome not of any determinist primordial ties but of the social and economic factors of different historical situations and result of ideological mobilisation. Ideological mobilisation can be both a force for social illusions, mystification, conservatism and revivalism as also, on the contrary, a force for demystification in its attempt at mediation between the structure of appearance and the structure of reality. What kind of ideology may be more pervasive at particular times, may be considerably conditioned by the perception of the objective conditions and the character of the ruling interests and ruling ideas. The Singh Sabha movement led by ruling economic and other vested interests generated a consciousness of separate communal identity along with complete loyalty and service to the British raj, the Ghadar Movement did the opposite. The fact that Ghadarites came from the small peasantry facing economic distress became a prominent factor for alternative structure of orientations only when they were exposed to very different social and political reality in which old orientation became problematic to hold. So they could be readily available for a different ideological mobilisation which appeared to provide more adequately, the answer to the problems which disturbed their minds. These two contending orientations appeared to have prepared the ground for another structure of orientations somewhere midway between the two as was manifested in the Gurdwara Reform Movement.

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Dalip Singh's 'Prayashchit'

Dalip Singh was the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was taken to England and there converted to Christianity. He even became a great favourite of Queen Victoria. However, stay in UK disillusioned him completely. When his mother died in UK, he kept her ashes for immersion in the Ganga. He returned to India, did 'Prayashchit', and became Hindu once again. Dalip Singh proclaimed himself "implacable foe of the British people".

The Tragedy of Sikh Politics from 1888 to 1947

"Even during the Sikh rule, no special attention was paid to the upliftment of the Panth. Maharaja Ranjiti Singh made no special distinction between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs while granting favours. In fact the Muslims and the Hindus were more benefited by his rule. The Guru (Tegh Bahadur) truly predicted the advent of British rule, which has showered innumerable blessings on us and has recognised the worth of the Khalsa."

THAT IS WHAT the 'Khalsa Akhbar' wrote editorially on April 21, 1899.

However, this shower of British blessings was too good to last for long. The increasing transfer of power to Indian hands came as the moment of truth to the Sikh upper classes. They started a rearguard action to protect the special position given to them by the British, an action which could not but fail.

As early as 1888 the Chief Khalsa Dewan had represented to Lord Dufferin to recognise them as a distinct community. However, for long, they were too akin to Hindus to be treated separately even by the British. And so the 1909 reforms did not give them any separate representation. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 also did not recognise them as a separate community.

In view of the prominent Sikh role in World War I and the rapid growth of the Freedom Movement, the British did give them 19.1% representation in the 1919 Reforms Act—as against their population percentage of 13 in the Punjab. But even this did not satisfy the Sikhs. And so they tried a variety of ways to improve their political position. In this the Sikhs were encouraged by Punjab Hindus. Any increase in Sikh representation was expected to come from the share of Muslims, who were in a majority in the province. Even Gandhiji wrote in 'Young India' on Aug. 4, 1921, "I regard the Sikh fear about representation at the present stage to be just

fied." The Sikh now wanted "adequate and effective" representation of 33 percent—and nobody could give them that.

One Sikh suggestion was to transfer some predominantly Muslim areas of Punjab to NWFP. Punjab Muslims had no intention to lose their majority—or join the backward NWFP. They suggested that Hindi-speaking Ambala Division may be detached from the Punjab!

The (Motilal) Nehru Report recommended that Punjab and Bengal will have joint electorates with seats reserved for minorities in proportion to their numbers. They could, in addition, contest seats beyond their reserved quota. The Sikhs were furious. They said their representation would come down from 19% to 13%.

They were also unhappy with the Nehru Report for recommending universal adult franchise. They wanted the property qualification to continue, because that increased the number of Sikh voters—and reduced that of the Muslim voters. Under the property qualification, Muslim voting strength was 44%, although their population was 51%. Hindu voting

Gandhiji supported Sikh demand for higher representation

strength was the same as their population, namely 38%. Sikh voting strength was 24%, though their population was 11 percent.

However, democracy demanded universal adult franchise.

The Sikhs took the position that they must have 33% representation in the Punjab, unless Muslims gave up separate electorates and seat reservation throughout the country. And Muslims would not agree to that.

Motilal found the Sikh position so unreasonable that, on one occasion, he said he wished he could efface Punjab from the map of India. And that didn't quite endear him to the Sikhs.

The Sikhs now were so unhappy with the Congress that they threatened to boycott the Lahore Congress session of 1929—and to keep out of the proposed Non-Cooperation movement of 1930. Master Tara Singh disagreed. He said Sikhs must fight for their rights from inside the Congress. Congress also wanted Sikh support for the Lahore session and the impending movement. They, therefore, took the line that since the British had failed to grant Dominion Status within one year, the Nehru Report, to which the Sikhs objected, had lapsed! The Sikhs accepted that explanation.

Baba Kharak Singh—after whom, Irwin Road was renamed in New Delhi—raised another issue. He said he would not take part in the movement unless the “Saffron Sikh Colour” was included in the National Flag, Gandhiji promptly replaced the Red stripe by saffron stripe, though he had killed the unanimous Flag Committee Report in favour of a fully Saffron Flag.

The Sikhs then joined the movement—and about 5,000 of them went to jail in 1930.

Indian leaders having failed to agree at the Round Table Conference, 1931, the British Premier gave his Award on 16.8.1932. He awarded 51.42% seats to Muslims, 27.42 to Hindus and 18.85 to Sikhs. The Sikhs were not pleased.

The 1937 elections in Punjab gave 96 seats to Unionists (representing Hindu, Muslim and Sikh landlords, led by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan) Congress got 18 seats—11 Hindu, 5 Sikh, 2 Muslim. Khalsa National Party sponsored by the Chief Khalsa Dewan got 14 seats. Akali Dal got 10 seats. Sundar Singh Majithia, Leader of KNP, joined the Unionist Ministry. The Akalis now joined the Congress. While Gopichand Bhargava, Punjab Congress leader, welcomed them, another Congress leader, Dr. Satyapal, said: “The game is not to strengthen the Congress but to strengthen themselves.”

When Rajaji made a tactical “sporting offer” to have a Muslim Prime Minister, Master Tara Singh condemned it. Gandhiji objected to Tara Singh encouraging recruitment to the Army, though Congress was non-cooperating in the war effort. He asked Tarasingh to quit the Congress. Masterji did so—“on personal grounds”—and he did not ask other Akalis to leave the Congress. The Akalis were facing not only the British and the Muslims, but also pro-British Sikhs. In this situation, they needed the protective umbrella of the Congress.

The crux of the Sikh problem was twofold: the British had encouraged them to be separate from the Hindus, but many of them found such a separation impossible beyond a certain point; the British had showered many special benefits on them, and the march of democracy could not but sweep them aside.

Tragedy was inherent in this situation.

(‘Kamat’)

Akalis are on the Horns of many Dilemmas

THE SIKHS in the Punjab got separate electorates only in 1919. As against their population of 13%, they got 19.1% representation.

Under the 1935 Act, they got 48.85% representation.

In the 1937 elections, in a House of 175, the Unionist Party of zamindars got 96 seats. Khalsa National Party of rich Sikhs got 14 seats, Akalis got 10. Congress got 18 MLAs—11 of them Hindus, 5 Sikhs and 2 Muslims. The Unionist Party formed the government. They gave one ministership to a KNP man.

While the Unionists swept eastern and western Punjab, Congress and Akalis dominated Central Punjab.

In the 1952 elections, Congress and Akali Dal had an alliance. In a House of 126, Akalis won 13 seats on a 14.7% vote.

In 1957 elections, some Akalis went along with the Congress. But Tarasingh's Panthic Party went it alone, on the ground that Congress was giving them too few seats. The Panthic Party drew blank. Congress won 120 seats in a House of 154. Twenty-six seats went to pro-Congress Akalis.

In 1962, Akalis got 19 seats in a House of 154. Their Poll percentage was only 12—although Sikhs were 33% of the population.

East Punjab was divided in 1966 for a variety of reasons. In part it was a recognition of the heroic Punjabi role in the 1965 Indo-Pak war. Also, Haryana area had a feeling that it was dominated by Punjabi area. They now wanted a separate Haryana as much as the Sikhs wanted a separate Punjabi Suba.

Another factor was the inexperience of Mrs. Gandhi who had only recently then come into office. She readily conceded what her father had steadfastly refused.

Evidently Congress also thought that pleasing the Sikhs and the Haryanvis would get it big electoral victories in both states.

The 1967 elections were a complete surprise for Congress. It did not get a majority in Punjab—and its majority in Haryana did not last one month.

In 1967, Congress got 43 seats in a House of 104. Akalis, 26, and all other parties united to have a coalition government led by Gurnam Singh. It was of this ministry that Zail Singh said at the time: "It is not only in power, it is actually popular!"

The Congress toppled this government by securing defections from Akali Dal—and installing a ministry of defectors—with outside Congress support. It was the same pattern as the Kashmir "coup" of last month. This ministry was led by Gill, who made himself notorious with the statement: "It is either Gill or nil". An even more notorious Congress puppet was Finance Minister Jagjit Singh Chauhan, who is now "President of Khalistan" in USA.

Gill himself became nil and the puppet ministry fell. In the 1969 elections, Congress again failed to get a majority. Akali-BJS majority formed a coalition government. The Akalis even got 15 defectors from the Congress. But Congress again went to work.

The Akalis set up Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, but they declined to have a Dayanand University in Jalandhar. Hindi as medium of instruction was excluded from the Punjabi University at Patiala. While Congress Sikhs prodded the Akalis in their obduracy, Congress Hindus taunted the BJS for not being able to protect Hindu—and Hindi—interests. In this situation, BJS withdrew from the ministry. Chief Minister Badal very much regretted the BJS exit. For quite some time he kept outgoing Finance Minister Dr. Baldev Prakash's room locked—hoping he and his colleagues would come back.

In the 1972 elections, Akalis had lost BJS support. And Congress had allied itself with CPI. As a result Congress got a clear majority with 66 seats.

In 1977, the Akali-Janata alliance won a sweeping majority—Akalis 58, Janata 25, CPI-M 7; Congress 17, its CPI ally 8; Independents 2. When the Janata split at the Centre in 1979, the Akali-Janata government cracked up in the Punjab. Comrade Surjeet Singh worked on Tohra, President of SGPC, and forced the Akalis to break with Janta and side with the Sanjay-Rajnarayan group.

In the 1980 elections, Congress won 63 seats, Akalis 37; BJP just one. In 1972, Congress had joined hands with Communists to keep out

Akalis. In 1980, Akalis returned the compliment and allied with the Reds. But as a result, CPI got 9 seats and CPI(M) 5—something they can never get on their own.

It was this Congress majority in the House, with little popular support, that failed to control violence and was dismissed last year.

In this situation the Akalis are on the horns of more than one dilemmas. If the Akalis join hands with Congress, they are a junior partner not only to Congress, but also to Congress Sikhs. They are treated as a poor relation.

Although Sikhs are more than 50% of the population, quite a few Sikhs don't vote for Akali Dal. This includes traditionally pro-Congress Sikhs. It also includes Sikh scheduled castes—Mazhabi Sikhs, etc.—who

The Sikhs just don't know what to do. Their perplexity is complete

resent the pro-Akali Jat Sikh dominance in the country-side. And Punjab has as many as 24.7 Harijans, including Hindu and Sikh scheduled castes.

If the Akali Dal joins hands with BJP, Congress Sikhs taunt it for "mortgaging Sikh interests to Hindus". If Akalis take communist support, they have to pay a high price for it. The communists not only ask for many seats, they are a serious competitor for Sikh vote. The Hindu vote is divided only between Congress and BJP. The Sikh vote is sought by Akalis, Congress and Communists. Nor is that all. The Akali Dal represents the relatively well off Sikh farmer—and trader. Their interests do not coincide with those of communists.

In this situation the Akalis just don't know what to do. Their perplexity is complete. Any so you even find them following Bhinderanwale, even though they thoroughly hated him.

Gokhale in Khalsa College

UPTO THE YEAR 1900, Punjab was very peaceful and fast developing. And then suddenly things began to happen. In 1901, certain areas were detached from Punjab to form NWFP, amidst much controversy. In 1902 Queen Victoria died—and with that the earlier era seemed to die.

In the same year, Khalsa College Amritsar was completely governmentalised against the wishes of Sikh intelligentsia. People began to laugh at Curzon's name—since 'Kar' means (do) and 'Zan' means woman, in Urdu.

In 1905 the Partition of Bengal shocked Punjab also. Till then British India's foreign policy was conditioned by fear of Russia. And now little Asiatic Japan had defeated Russia, the bugbear of England.

In the same year a big earthquake rocked Kangra. The Arya Samaj entered relief work in a big way. It was something new in India. And it helped bridge the gulf between Arya Samajists and Sanatanis.

In this new and receptive atmosphere, came Gokhale's tour of Punjab. At Amritsar station, Bhai Jodha Singh, Lecturer, Khalsa College, went to have his 'Darshan'. His services were terminated for that reason. On arrival in Lahore on Feb. 15, 1907, his carriage was pulled by appreciative crowds. He addressed Sikh students of Khalsa College, Lahore, in the attached Gurdwara, then known as "Dharmasala". And Guru Granth Sahib was moved to another room to make the dais available for Gokhale to speak from.

It was at Gokhale's meeting in Lyallpur on March 21, 1907 that Banke Dayal, editor of 'Jhang Sayal', for the first time recited the revolutionary Punjabi poem, "Pagri Sambhal, O Jatta!"

Gokhale was no revolutionary. But even his moderate enlightened speeches united the people and gave them new light.

Said Malik Umar Hayat Tiwana, arch-loyalist: "It was his (Gokhale's) arrival here (in Punjab) which set everything in a blaze."

Some of the meetings of Gokhale, Lajpatrai and Ajit Singh were attended by Sikh soldiers. The scared Britishers thought the Fiftieth Anniversary of "1857" was going to witness a repetition of "1857". Britishers sent their families to cantonments. British soldiers slept with rifles by their side. Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were exonerated by Burma. Years later, Amritsar witnessed Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Ajit Singh's nephew Bhagat Singh avenged his uncle's exile by throwing a bomb in the Central Assembly.

Gokhale's 1907 visit had been the catalytic agent that turned Punjab from loyalism to nationalism.

Green Revolution is leading to Red Revolution

Who are the people who joined Bhindranwale in the Punjab? They are half-educated rural youths, products of the Green Revolution—and the Educational explosion!

Education has spread much. But to this day a village school in Punjab is a pretty dismal affair. Most village boys drop out of school. Those who pass Higher Secondary, are encouraged to go to college. However, in the colleges, the village boys—mostly Sikh—are no match for the urban boys—mostly Hindu. Their knowledge of English is poor. Their schooling has been sub-standard. If, as and when they graduate, they can't compete with urban boys on equal terms.

These young men can neither go forward—nor even backward! They think they are too good to plough the field. And other villagers ridicule them for failing to make good in the city. Some of them drift to big cities. Some even go abroad. But quite a few become Naxalites and/or Nihangs, the Sikhs you see in fancy eighteenth century *accoutrements*.

Strange as it may seem, the Green Revolution has also contributed to unhappiness and lawlessness in the Punjab. The Green Revolution has helped the big farmers to become very rich. The small and marginal farmers have little or no surplus to market—but they have to suffer high prices. The Green Revolution, therefore, has increased inequalities not only between Punjab and some other states, but within Punjab itself.

For example Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Kapurthala have forged ahead. Ropar, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur have lagged far behind. Ferozepur, Bhatinda, Sangrur and Patiala have done averagely. Punjab has done better than most other states. Its literacy rate is 30—against a national average of 21. A Punjabi consumes almost thrice as much power as the average Indian. But all this prosperity is very unequally divided.

Even in the same village, inequalities have grown. Formerly a man with 50 acres and another with 20, were in the same "social league". Today the 50-acre-wala has shot far ahead of the 20-acre-man. All this has disturbed the social balance. The man who has been left behind, his sons go *naxal* or *Nihang*! Out of evil, they say, cometh good. But here out of good, has come evil!

The Anandpur Saheb Resolutions

In 1974, the Akali Dal had passed a resolution at Anandpur Saheb, demanding the creation of an "Autonomous Region" for the Sikhs.

Here is the text of the controversial resolution:

WHEREAS the Sikhs of India are a historically recognised political Nation ever since the inauguration of the Order of the Khalsa in the concluding year of the 17th century (1699) and

WHEREAS, this status of the Sikh Nation has been Internationally recognised and accepted by the major powers of Europe and Asia, to wit, France, England, Italy, Russia, China and Tibet, Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal and East India Co. Bahadur, Fort William, Calcutta, till the middle of the 19th Century, and again by the outgoing British and the Hindu Congress Party and the Muslim League of India in the middle of the 20th Century, and

Whereas the brute majority in India in 1950, have imposed a constitutional arrangement in India which denudes the Sikhs of their political identity, and subordinates them as a Cultural entity particularly, thus liquidating the Sikhs politically, by depriving the Sikhs of the control of their own history and exposing them to spiritual and cultural decay calculated to submerge and dissolve them into the saltish sea-waters of inchoate Hinduism, and

Whereas, the Sikhs have been thus shackled and enslaved in unethical and cynical repudiation of solemn and binding commitments and public promises earlier made to the Sikhs by the Hindus while the Sikh representatives in the Indian Constituent Assembly in 1950 refused to become a consenting party to these devious and loaded arrangements and they declined to affix their signatures to the official copy of the Indian Constitution Act, thus promulgated; The Shiromani Akali Dal, in the name, and on behalf of the Sikh,

Proclaims that the Sikhs are determined by all Legitimate means to extricate and free themselves from this degrading and death-dealing situat-

tion, so as to ensure finally their honourable survival, and salvage their inherent dignity, and their birthright to influence meaningfully the mainstream of World History.

The Sikhs, therefore,

Demand, firstly, that an Autonomous Region in the North of India should be set up forthwith wherein the Sikh interests are constitutionally recognised as of primary and special importance as the Public and Fundamental State policy;

Secondly, that this Autonomous Region should include the present Indian Punjab, Karnal and Ambala districts of Haryana, inclusive of Kangra Distt. and Kulu Valley of Himachal Pradesh comprised in Paonta Sahib, Chandigarh, Pinjore, Kalka, Dalhousie, Dehra Doon Valley, Nalagarh Desh, Sirsa, Guhla, and Rattiya areas and Ganganagar Distt. of Rajasthan and Tarai Region of the U.P. recently claimed and colonised by the Sikhs out of thousands of years' old virgin and dangerously infested forests, thus bringing the main contiguous Sikh population and traditional and natural Sikh habitats still parts of and included in India, within this Autonomous Sikh Region as a Region of the Union of India, and

Thirdly, this Sikh Autonomous Region may be conceded and declared as entitled to frame its own constitution on the basis of having all powers to and for itself, except foreign relations, defence, and communications to remain as subjects with the federal Indian Government. May the God of History, the Rider of Blue Horse, help us.

□

"Hum Hindu Nahin Hain"

The first Sikh leader who said 'Sikhs are not Hindus'—and actually wrote the pamphlet 'Hum Hindu Nahin Hain' in 1898—was Kahan Singh, Chief Minister of Nabha. He was a toady. When Khalsa College was to be established in Amritsar, he suggested that it be named "Loyal Lyall Khalsa College". He wanted to flatter not only the British with 'loyalty' but also Mr. Lyall, the provincial governor.

Forty-five Akali Demands

In 1981, the Shiromani Akali Dal submitted a list of forty-five grievances-cum-demands to the Government of India.

Here is the text of the same :

A. RELIGIOUS

1. Interference in religious affairs of Sikhs.
2. No endeavours by the Government for Sikh control over the Management of Gurdwaras in Pakistan.
3. Apathy towards safety of life and property of Sikhs settled abroad and in other States of India.
4. Forcible occupation of the Delhi Gurdwaras in 1971.
5. Applying Land Ceiling Act to Gurdwaras in Haryana.
6. Failure to name any train as Golden Temple Express while 15 trains have been named after other religious places.
7. Delay in awarding Holy City status to Amritsar.
8. Not permitting installation of a transmitter in Golden Temple.
9. Not enacting the All India Gurdwaras Act.
10. Not recognising SGPC as the only representative institution of the Sikhs.
11. Usurping the SGPC's authority in the field of sending pilgrims to Pakistan.
12. Interfering in the Sikh tenets and violating the sanctity of Sikh traditions.
13. Illegal and forcible occupation of Delhi Gurdwaras with the help of the police.
14. Restrictions on carrying of 'Kirpans' (swords) by Sikhs in the National Airlines.

B. POLITICAL

1. Violation of the assurance given to Sikhs for an autonomous region and instead declaring Sikhs as criminal.
2. Ban on 'Punjabi Suba' slogan.
3. Keeping out Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas out of Punjab and taking away control of water head-works and river water distribution.

4. Denial of internal autonomy to the State.
5. Toppling of Akali Governments through illegal corrupt practices.
6. Denial of second language status to Punjabi in neighbouring States.
7. Expressing lack of confidence in Punjabis and disarming them by withdrawing licensed arms.
8. Rejecting the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and following a policy of divide and rule by inciting communal tensions.

C. ECONOMIC

1. Reduction in the recruitment quota of Sikhs in armed forces from 20 per cent to 2 per cent.
2. Nationalising of the Punjab & Sind Bank.
3. Failure to establish dry port at Amritsar.
4. Grant of minimum Central aid to Punjab.
5. Concentration of economic power in the hands of 5 per cent people.
6. Economic exploitation of Punjab.
7. Increase in prices.
8. Paucity of heavy industries in Punjab.
9. Eviction of Punjabi farmers from Uttar Pradesh.
10. Fixation of land ceiling at 7 hectares, but no ceiling on urban property.
11. Not introducing group insurance scheme in Punjab.
12. Denial of loans to farmers at the rates given to industrialists.
13. Non-remunerative prices for agricultural produce.
14. Procuring agricultural produce at cheap rates but selling the same to consumers at higher prices.
15. Failure to safeguard the rights of Harijans and other weaker sections.
16. Non-payment of compensation to the victims of Indo-Pak wars in Punjab.
17. Non-payment of unemployment allowance.
18. Linking of production to the price index.
19. Denial of facilities to farmers and workers under the Employment Insurance Scheme.
20. Forcible acquisition of urban agricultural land at cheap rates.
21. Ban on the sale of rural land within the 5 kms. radius of the corporation limits.

D. SOCIAL

1. Non-recognition of Sikh Personal Law.
2. Projecting Sikhs in improper way in films and TV etc., encouraging anti-Sikh literature and not giving sufficient time for coverage of Sikh literature on Radio/TV.

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What the Sikhs can Learn from Maharaja Ranjit Singh

PRIDE IN THE PAST is a valuable asset for any society. It is but natural that Sikhs should be proud of Ranjit Singh. But it would be doing violence to the memory of Ranjit Singh to look upon him as some kind of a Sikh chauvinist.

Ranjit Singh was of course a Sikh; but he would have been amused to hear that Hindus and Sikhs are any separate or different. He was a wise, just and brave King, who was not only the pride of all Punjab but the hero of all Hindusthan.

At the age of 12, Ranjit Singh succeeded to the Misl (principality) of Sukerchakia. Before long he had emerged as leader of all the twelve Sikh Misls, ruling fifty lakh Punjabis for forty long years. And he did all this without hanging a single person!

He was so popular that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Lahore unitedly invited him to occupy that historic city in 1799—and save them from a bunch of warring Sardars. In 1805 again, all the leading citizens of Amritsar invited him to occupy that holy city and end the system of different chiefs bossing over different 'Katras' of that city.

Although Ranjit Singh was a Sikh, he patronised persons of merit, whatever their community. While most of the field commanders and Jagirdars were Sikhs, most of the senior administrators were Hindus. Dewan Bhawanidas set up the whole civil administration. He was followed by Ganga Ram of Gwalior. The Royal Seal was first held by Dewan Dina Nath and later by Dewan Kirpa Ram. The most important commander-in-minister was Dhian Singh Dogra; he was virtual Regent after Ranjit Singh.

Interestingly enough, the Sikh Sardars showed off their wealth, among other things, by patronising numerous Brahmins!

Muslims also had their share of power. Ranjit Singh recruited Rajput Muslims in his Army. His Chief of Artillery was Ghaus Moham-

med Khan. The Chiefs of the Muslim communities of Sials, Tiwanas, Kharrals and Ghebas were befriended by Ranjit Singh.

Faqir Azimuddin, Foreign Minister of Ranjit Singh, was so respectful of Ranjit Singh that when Lord Bentinck asked him in which eye the Maharaja was blind, he said : "The splendour of his face is such that I have never been able to look close enough to discover."

Ranjit Singh would visit Harmandir on every New Moon and Full Moon, on Divali, Dussehra and Baisakhi. He even greeted these auspicious days with Gun Salute. He specially went to Hardwar in British territory for Ganga-snana. He called his "Protection Tax" as "Rakhi" (Skt. Raksha). All his treaties invoked Hindu gods and goddesses as witnesses.

He asked Shah Shuja of Afghanistan to return the sandal-wood doors of Jama Masjid, Ghazni, supposed to have been looted from Somnath.

Kavi Gwal of Mathura was the chief poet in Lahore Durbār. In his 'Vijay Vinod', he sang : "Maharaja Ranjit Singh protected the Cow, the Brahmin and the Veda. He saved Dharma. He defeated Muslims from Delhi to Kabul. He was specially created by God Himself."

When he knew that the end was near, Ranjit Singh called on a sadhu and made a Sankalp of one hundred horses, all his personal jewellery, and eight lakh rupees in cash. When Bhai Govind Ram asked him to whom he bequeathed the Kohinoor diamond, he said : "To Jagannath of Puri". He then took a tulsi leaf and Ganga-Jal. Bhai Govind Ram said 'Ram' in his ear three times. Ranjit Singh repeated 'Ram' twice and then breathed his last.

As per the custom of those times, four of his Ranis and seven other maids immolated themselves on his pyre. All this while there were recitations of Gita, Guru Granth Sahib and Vishnu Sahasranam.

Ranjit Singh was also troubled by extremists of his day. The Akalis and Nihangs would fight over their respective rights and privileges. But Ranjit Singh left nobody in any doubt that he, as the sovereign, would settle all such issues.

In 1838, when Lord Auckland was to visit the Harmandir, Akalis and Nihangs opposed the visit. But Ranjit Singh warned that he would cut out the stomach of anybody who created any trouble. He also ordered them to illuminate the temple for the occasion.

On an earlier occasion, however, the Nihangs, led by one Phula Singh, had badly compromised the Maharaja. They attacked the Muslim escort of Metcalfe in front of Harmandir—in a bid to prevent any Anglo-Sikh Treaty. This violence, however, divided the people, weakened the Government and destroyed Ranjit Singh's plans to cross the Sutlej and reach the Jamuna.

However, Ranjit Singh was so kind and considerate that he did not hang any Nihangs—not even the ones who once rushed to assault him.

A significant feature of Ranjit Singh's character was his humour. Once his wife Mohran wondered aloud how ugly her husband was. And

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was as much Hindu as any other Maharaja

Ranjit Singh cheerfully said : "When you were getting beauty from God, I was getting power."

Nor did he hesitate to joke about the eye he had lost in small-pox. Having only one eye, he said, helped him look on all religions with an equal eye.

Here was a warrior who did not keep any hawks—but kept a flock of pigeons, whom he fed with his own hands.

A proper study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh should cure the separatist Sikhs of the virus of separatism that has infected them because of the British-period policy of "divide and rule".

(“PANKAJ”)

“Kirt Karo : Nam Japo”

Guru Nanak did not pass on his gaddi to his sons Srichand and Lakhmi Chand. (Srichand's progeny and followers came to be known as 'Udasis' who later came to run most of the Sikh temples.) He handed over to his colleague, Lehna, whom he had renamed "Angad" or "Ang-da", that is of my own limb, son.

Guru Angad's watch-words were : "Kirt Karo, Nam Japo, Vand Chako" (Work, Pray and give Alms).

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D R I DIARY

Beed Project

DR I HAS ADOPTED BEED, the most backward district in Maharashtra, for all-round development with people's participation. During the current year, the district has maintained steady progress in the two tehsils of Ashti and Patoda, adopted so far.

Four years back, the State Government had announced that Beed town had attained cent percent literacy in the 5-14 age-group—and celebrated its "Gram Gaurav". However, a DRI survey revealed last year 1298 children in this age-group who had never seen the inside of a school! Sixty percent of them were Muslim.

On Feb. 11, 1984, DRI launched a programme to educate these youngsters. The programme was inaugurated by Shri R. K. Karanjia, editor 'Blitz'. He said money was being spent but there were no matching results. He looked upon men like Deendayalji and Nanaji as "redeemers" of the poor and the down-trodden.

Nanaji who had studied the problem in depth, welcomed the kids and their parents and blessed the efforts of the public spirited teachers. The occasion was also graced by Vijayaraje Scindia and Ramalinga Swami, veteran freedom-fighter of old Hyderabad State.

GANESH & BEG :

Since then twenty-five centres, with more than fifty voluntary teachers, have been started in the various poor areas.

One day a poor unwashed girl turned up in one of these centres. She was asked to go home, take a wash and come back. But her mother argued: "What has washing got to do with literacy?" Thereupon Achla Tai, in-charge, took the girl to a nearby tap, washed her, combed her hair and then brought her tidily to school. When the girl went back home, her mother realised that she was beautiful! Since then all children come properly washed and neatly dressed. It is now understood that education is something more than Three R's; it means a whole new conception of life.

One of the children Ganesh Mule, now attending a centre, was formerly a beggar. Now he works to live. Mule has also turned out to be



Shrimati Sumati Bai Suklikar of DRI being felicitated on her sixtieth birthday in Nagpur. (L to R) Shri Balasaheb Deoras, Shri Rao Saheb Suklikar, Sumati Bai and Anu Tai Bhagwat, leading social worker of Amraoti.

a bright student. Twenty-eight boys in these centres have now started attending regular school.

Also a special coaching class has been organised for the top five students of class VIII in all the twelve High Schools of Beed. In another two years, the programme will be extended to Class IX and Class X children also. The idea is to make bright students really shine in their academic career.

The Sanskar Kendra for little children is attended by 22 kids. One of them is the 5-year-young son of Principal Beg. When Shri Patki of the Kendra informed Shri Beg that they sang only Hindu songs and recited Sanskrit Shlokas, the latter said it was fine—and that that is how it should be.

DRI's 'Education For All' has created a healthy community feeling in Beed. Elder brothers of those attending Coaching Classes and Sanskar Kendra felt they should also do something. And so they have started a 'Veer Shaiva Mandal'. They are planning a Reading Room and other activities for youngsters.

Nanaji has repeatedly visited Beed and met teachers, students and coordinators.



Kumari Nazatul Nisha, 22, of Rampur Village, Gonda district, "born blind", had her eye-sight restored in a Gonda Eye Camp. The 'miracle' operation was performed by Dr. Ram Kadir of Lucknow standing by her side.

Another project in DRI's hand in Beed is "HEALTH FOR ALL". Rajabhau Khadivale is organising Ayurvedic Health Camps. Since Feb. 1983, over 13,000 patients have been treated in 34 Health Camps held so far. Ten Camps were devoted to special problems—four for Gynaecology, 2 for dental care and 2 for cancer by the Ayurmangalam Trust. In April 1984 a special Camp was held in Beed for mentally retarded children. Another camp was held specially for those suffering bone diseases.

34 HEALTH CAMPS :

Patients suffering serious ailments are sent to specialised hospitals. Shri Khadivale Vaidya has also distributed local nurses' kit-bags (Aaji Bai ke Batuye) in over a hundred villages.

In the course of these Health Camps, doctors have come across some very rare diseases. A nine-year boy in village Kada has no body pores; he cannot perspire; so he exhales sweat through mouth and nose. When it is real hot, he has just to go and sit in a water tank! In Dhanora Dental Camp, we came across a 21 year old man and his 9 year young sister who had never grown any teeth—not even milk teeth.

In another case, the man had no palate in the mouth. From the mouth, you could see the inside of his nose! Efforts are afoot to give him a plastic palate.



George Thiener, editor 'Index on Censorship', addressing the DRI. Seated (L to R) Malkani and Prof. M. L. Sondhi.

BRAVE NEW EXPERIMENTS :

In the realm of agriculture, DRI, Beed, has ventured on a brave little experiment. Thirty seven farmers with an aggregate of 167 acres in four villages—Therla, Karanjavan, Javala and Domri—have decided on joint farming. While farming jointly, they will share the produce in proportion to their land holdings.

The experiments, formally launched by Nanaji, will be watched by the whole district with interest. For Beed is a district with only 6% land irrigated. Much of the land does not earn more than Rs. 100 an acre a year!

A special feature of this joint farm is that as many as 56 acres have been devoted to sun-flower cultivation. KVIC's Bee-keeping Institute, Pune, has made forty "Bee Colonies" available, to see the effect of pollination on sun-flower seed yield. And HICO Products Ltd., has made a new spray available. It is expected to increase sun-flower production by 35 to 52 per cent.

In the 'Lab to Land' programme, DRI has selected 205 families—most of them S.C. or S.T. and all of them below the Poverty Line—for supply of good seeds, manure etc. and technical guidance.

DRI in Beed is also working on cottage industry. Ten pedal-driven Ambar Charkhas have been installed. A special feature of these Charkhas



At the time of the June 19 Punjab Seminar (L to R) Gen. Dube, K. Narendra, G. S. Dhillon, Maheep Singh, Mahesh Khanna.

is that they have twelve spindles—against the "normal" one. DRI has also introduced pedal-driven IRIS looms from Coimbatore. These are the first pedal-driven looms in all Maharashtra!

DRI had planned one lakh tree plantings in this rainy season. However, due to insufficient rains, the target is unlikely to be attained.

For more and faster development work in the district, DRI has formed a Coordination Committee with Prof. R. G. Dhat, Principal, Kholeshwar College, Ambajogai, as Chairman. Other members of the Committee are Shri Nana Velankar, Babanrao Deshpande, Advocate, Dr. G.M. Kulkarni and Shrimati Achalatai Joshi.

Gonda Project

The Gonda Gramodaya Project maintained its progress during the last quarter.

Earlier, the project was looked after by a Director and half a dozen Assistant Directors. The new, more effective, arrangement is to have one Director, with a number of Organising Secretaries in-charge of various areas. The Director, Shri Sharda Prasad Dwivedi, himself is in personal charge of Paraspar Block to make a Model Block of it.



At the July 3, Punjab discussion seated (L to R) Dr. Suraj Prakash, Sitaram Goel, Devendra Swaroop, Dr. Sujit Dhar, Dr. R. G. Gupta, J.P. Mathur, Principal Dogra, Ram Swaroop Bhardwaj and Krishanlal Sharma.

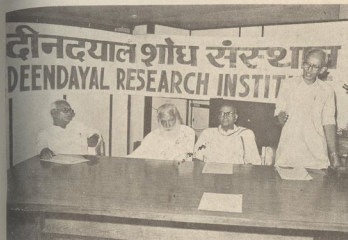
LAB TO LAND :

Gonda has 25 Blocks. It is proposed to have two Gram Swavalamban Kendra (Village Self-Development Centres) in each Block. These centres covering an average of 100 Gram Panchyats—or ten Nyaya Panchayats—will be effective centres of all-round development in the area.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research commissioned the DRI to execute 'Lab to Land' programme for 153 small and marginal farmers.

This programme was a signal success. As against the national wheat crop yield of 7 quintals per acre and the Gonda average of 4 quintals, these farms produced an average of 14 quintals—some of them producing as much as 17 quintals.

This result was achieved by introducing K-7410 variety of wheat. These seeds were fortified with chemicals dressed with *gomutra*. This latter method of seed fortification has been evolved by Prof. Manohar Bapat of Ujjain. It increases production by 30 percent and reduces chemical fertilizer cost by 50 per cent. The whole programme was overseen by Dr. N.K. Bajpai.



Sudarshanji addressing the July 3 Punjab discussion. Seated (L to R) Sarva Shri Nanaji, Lalaji and Rajjubhaiya.

The ICAR was so happy with the programme execution that it has asked DRI to take up 500 more families in Gonda and 200 in Beed District, Maharashtra.

DRI is now engaged in crop experimentation in submerged lands. It is also experimenting for large-scale cultivation of bananas. And it is propagating 'Rachna' variety of peas.

Apart from increased production, the 'Lab to Land' programme has changed the whole outlook of farmers in the area. It has given them a scientific temper and opened up their mind to innovation and experiment. Increased purchasing power has meant an improvement in their quality of life. Farmers in the neighbourhood, not covered by the programme, are also beginning to appreciate the advantages of science and technology.

Nor is DRI confining itself to agriculture. It has taken up cattle development and poultry farming also.

It has been decided to improve the local cattle breed by crossing it with the best Gir and Sahiwal breeds. Ganesh Pathak, who was earlier looking after the cattle farm in Jayaprabhagram, is now touring the district for the purpose.



Patients at an Eye Camp, Gonda.

Thirty unemployed youths were trained by National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) Lucknow in poultry and dairy farming. And now the DRI is settling them in this profession in Gonda.

DRI's cross-breeding facility, now available only at Jaiprabhagram, will soon be extended. It is proposed to maintain one Gir or Sahiwal Bull in each Nyaya Panchayat.

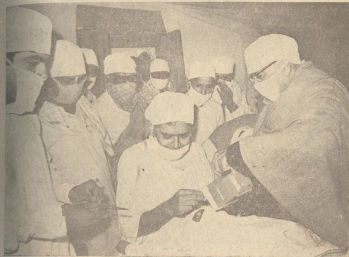
Earlier, Suresh Deshpande was looking after fishery and poultry at Jayaprabhagram. Now he is touring the district for the development of the two lines.

Chandrashekhar Singh, who was earlier ably looking after the Jayaprabhagram farm, now takes care of the local dairy, poultry and fishery also. A survey of rural artisans by DRI is going on with the assistance of NABARD.

19 EYE CAMPS :

During the last season, nineteen Eye Camps were held in the district. Thousands benefited by eye treatment and eye operations.

The local dispensary at Jaiprabhagram treats an average of 150 patients a day.



Doctors at an Eye Camp, Gonda.

Plans are afoot to set up a Pathological Lab, with facilities for urine, stools and blood testing.

Right now, DRI is running only two schools, one at Jaiprabhagram and the other at Gopalganj. But plans are being worked out to educate all children in the 5-14 age group in the ten towns in the district.

DRI's Multi Vocational Training Centre in Gonda is running classes in typing, sewing, radio repair and assembly. And now a new 'Commercial Practices' course has been started.

A major DRI programme is the setting up of seven Rural Marketing and Service Centres in Gonda. Their products are being sold through the Show Room in Gonda town.

DRI in Gonda has acquired a tractor (43 H.P.).

'TERI' ASSISTANCE :

The Tata Energy Research Institute, Bombay, has financed the setting up of an improved—and economical—Gobar gas plant, developed by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.



At the RRRTF meeting (L to R) Sarva Shri Dharma Vir, Nanaji, Malkani, K.K. Pandit, Dr. Patwardhan, Prof. Ram Dimble and Shri Vasan.

Right now prof. D.P. Rao of I.I.T. Kanpur is fabricating a water cooler for Jayaprabhagram. It will be operated by solar power. Financial assistance for this also comes from T.E.R.I.

D R I, Delhi

While concentrating on rural development work in Beed and Gonda districts, DRI has not neglected intellectual activity in Delhi.

The All India Workshop on "Development : Concept and Grassroot Experiment" late last year was a huge success. It gave an intellectual basis to rural development and a rural orientation to intellectual work.

On Jan 27, DRI organised a big meeting to assess the impact of Ekatmata Yagya, involving cross-country religious marches to promote national integration. Speakers included Sarva Shri Harmohanlal, Ashok Singhal, Baleshwar Agarwal and Ramashankar Agnihotri. Swami Ranganathanand presided. It was a memorable occasion.

On March 24, George Theiner, editor 'Index on Censorship', London, spoke to an invited audience on the invisible shackles on the Press in the

"Free World". Among those present were Shri K. Narendra, editor 'Pratap' and Shri Inderjit, editor 'INFA'.

On March 28-29, DRI sponsored an expert discussion on the establishment of a Rural Reconstruction Research and Training Foundation.

Shri Dharma Vira, ICS, former Cabinet Secretary, presided. The consensus was that a RRRT Centre should be started in Gonda and expanded in gradual stages to carry science and technology to the villages through village youths.

On June 19, a one-day Seminar was held to discuss Punjab in depth. Shri G.S. Dhillon, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, presided. A detailed report of this Seminar appears elsewhere in these pages.

On July 3, another important discussion was held in the Institute on the Punjab problem. Prof. Rajendra Singh, General Secretary, RSS, presided.

In 1982, DRI had launched the project 'Youth for Constructive Action'. The object is to bring educated youth in contact with the grim social reality of life in rural India and help them organise constructive field programmes. The programme continued satisfactorily during the current year.

The Science and Technology Cell of DRI continued to organise monthly meets. Some of these meets were addressed by distinguished experts like Dharmapal (Indian Agriculture in the Eighteenth Century), Anil Agarwal (Environmental Problems of Industrialisation in India), Dr. S. V. Patwardhan (A Search for Appropriate Technology), Claude Alvares (Science and Culture) and Sailen Ghosh (The crisis facing the Industrial Civilization).

BIG DAM FOOLISHNESS :

The latest discussion in this series was led by Dr. Bhunbla, former Vice-Chancellor, Haryana Agriculture University, Hissar. Dr. Bhunbla, who is an authority on irrigation, said it had fallen short of expectations. It had neither paid its way, nor made for the expected increase in agricultural production. An irrigated hectare should produce 4.5 tonnes of grains; in India this was only 1.7 tonnes. Meanwhile, the dams had destroyed 5 lakh hectares of valuable forest land. Too many canals had led to water-logging in Punjab and elsewhere. This particularly hurt cotton, ground-nut and pulses crops. That was why the latter two crops had stagnated in India. In Pakistan Punjab, over-irrigation had killed the cotton crops of Lyallpur; cotton crop in West Punjab had moved to Multan area.

Dr. Bhunbla said that only areas with very low rainfall were suitable for canal irrigation. K.D. Joshi asked if irrigation would be suitable for

Beed. And the learned doctor said 'no'. Black cotton soil with its fissures and earth-tremors, was very unsuitable for canal irrigation.

Sailen Ghosh said the good old 'Persian' wheel and minor projects were less expensive and more fruitful than big dams.

MANTHAN :

Our last issue dealt exclusively, and at length, with The All-India Workshop on 'Development : Concept and Grassroot Experiment'.

Many participants in the Workshop had felt that there wasn't enough time to report at length on their respective projects. We, therefore, wrote to them to send us fuller reports on the same—for publication in 'Manthan' from time to time. Many of them have responded. We here will refer to only two corrections sent by two distinguished participants.

Shri Sailen Ghosh writes to say that when the Rihand Dam began to silt up, government dug another big ditch—and so felled many more trees. It did not build another 'dam' for the purpose, as our report had said (page 50).

And Shri Mishrilal Tiwari of Kalyan Ashram writes to say that their honey production is only Rs. 50-60 thousand and not that many lakhs (page 41).

We are happy to be corrected.

DRI FAMILY :

Some time back we had invited friends to join the DRI Family by contributing Rs. 1000/- to its funds.

So far eighty-four friends have responded to the invitation.

We have no doubt that many more will do so before long.

PDD SMARAK SAMITI :

The last General Body meeting of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Smarak Samiti was held in New Delhi on Jan. 10, 1984.

Shri A.B. Vajpayee expressed his desire to step down as Samiti President. He proposed the name of Shri Hansraj Gupta, who was elected President. The Samiti placed on record its deep appreciation of all that Shri Vajpayee had done for the organisation since its inception in 1968.

Shri Govindji Bhai Shroff was elected Treasurer.

Shri K.R. Malkani was elected General Secretary and Shri K. R. Motilal, Secretary.

Shri Nana Deshmukh, Dr. Sujit Dhar and Shri Sudarshan were elected members of the Samiti Managing Committee of seven.

Shri Nana Deshmukh was re-elected Chairman, Deendayal Research Institute.