

HARCHARAN SINGH BAJWA

FIFTY YEARS
OF
PUNJAB
POLITICS
(1920 - 1970)

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**Fifty Years
of
Punjab Politics
(1920—1970)**

**Harcharan Singh
Bajwa**

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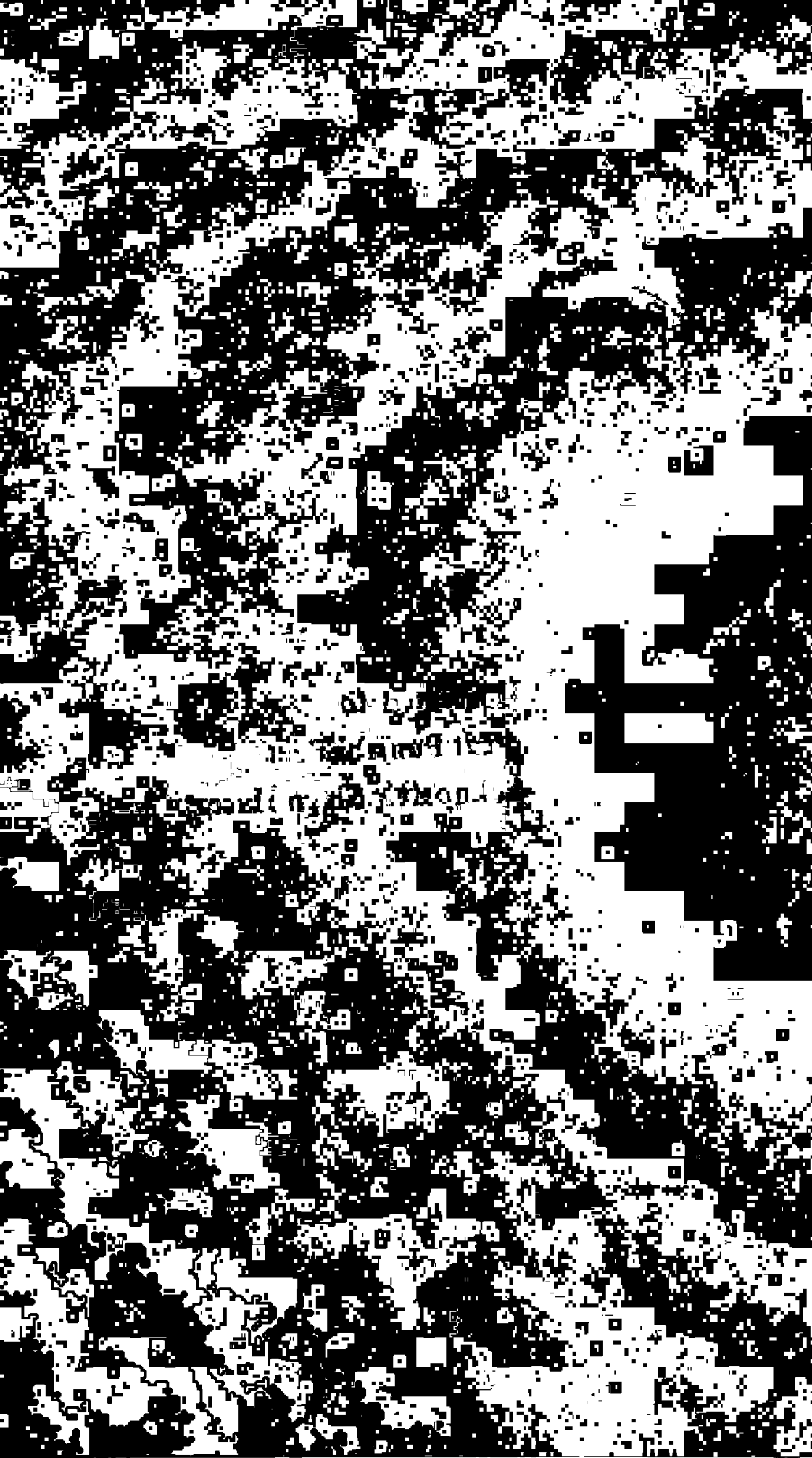
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**Dedicated to
great Punjabi Poet
Sukhpalvir Singh Hasrat.**



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Master Tara Singh



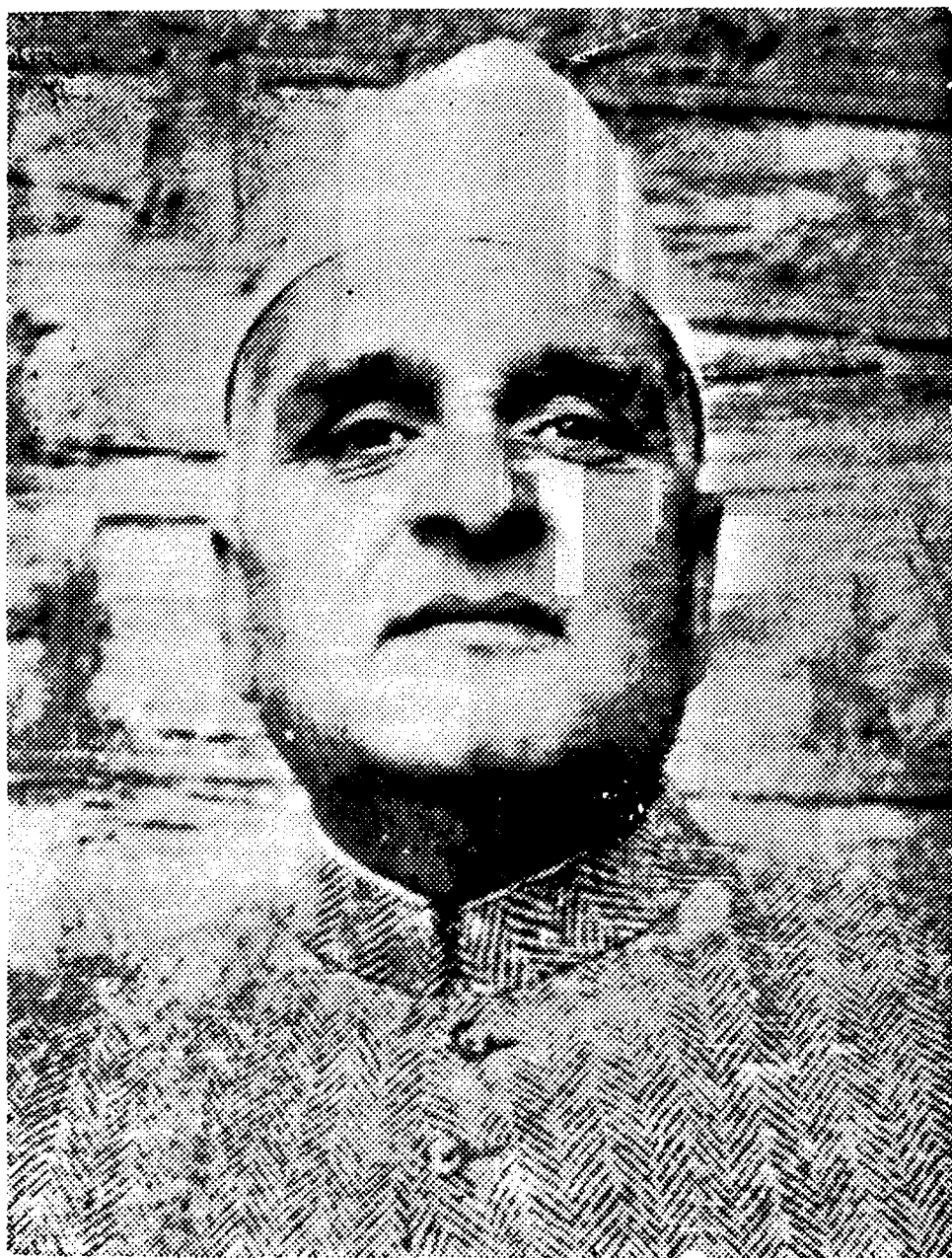
Gyani Kartar Singh



S. Baldev Singh



Gopichand Bhargo



Bhim Sain Sachar



S. Gian Singh Rarewala



S. Partap Singh Kairon



S. Gurnam Singh



S. Lachhman Singh Gill



S. Parkash Singh Badal



S. Atma Singh

AUTHOR



S. Harcharan Singh Bajwa

FOREWORD

The foreword to a work such as this is sacred no less than awesome, alluring no less than excruciating and exciting no less than rewarding. While the task of penning this foreword was entrusted to me I thought it was too much to borrow tiny glow-worm's intermittent flashes to herald entry of readers into a wonder-house built by one who roamed in the labyrinth of contemporary political history of the land of five rivers for a space no short of half a century. A ripenend and matured septuagenarian holds out in this work a Kaleidoscope of panoramas at once illuminating and stunning, melodramatic as well as critical and compelling heart-searching while steering the wheel of destiny of Punjab in the light of our accumulated experience.

This book is small in bulk but its rich content overflows it. Here is a fount where future historians will pause and drink to their fill. The startling revelations of this book will take the political world by storm. Sardar Harcharan Singh Bajwa's piercing observation of the political Vicissitudes of the Sikh community at once congeals in the pages of this book; his association with the political struggle of the Sikhs during the period preceding and following partition of the country petrifies in this book. Thus in this work the life-blood of a master-spirit percolates. There can be no experience more exhilarating than assimilating the events since lived by grand men like the

author of this book. Sardar Harcharan Singh Bajwa kept a diary of the day-today political events which he has exhibited now in the book-form. However this book does not spell the full inside story. He has reserved some of the post-partition events for a subsequent publication. Between the shining stars there were sable interstices which Sardar Bajwa leaves uncommented in the present work. Nevertheless the startling follies of the men of note occasionally do figure in this book. There is much more to be said, but opportune time for telling the whole truth has not yet arrived. Actually the manuscript of this book was ready in 1971 but it could not be published earlier due to some unavoidable hurdles.

Guru Gobind Singh is the guiding star of the Sikh Community. His was a balanced personality. He was the ideal scholar and unique soldier in one; never before him the Codified word succeeded fleshy Guru. Guru Gobind Singh declared while passing away his merger in the totality of the Khalsa and his injunctions to the Khalsa obligated gripping pen and sword simultaneously. The tradition bequeathed to us by Guru Gobind Singh identified chivalry with scholarship but unfortunately his ideal of balanced and total personality did not fructify. The evolution of the Sikh community has been lop-sided to the extent of ignoring scholarly standards which we inherited from the great Guru. We spilled lot of blood. One of our grand progenitors offered at the altar of faith his whole frame limb by limb and others offered martyrdoms on forked wheels. But our contribution in the academic fund was rather scanty. This book is destined to find its place in the shelf which has works from Sainapat, Koir Singh, Kesar Singh Chhibbar, Sukha Singh, Sewa Singh, Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh and that relieves the anguish to some extent. Sardar Bajwa was an actor on the political stage. He assigned to him the role of politician first and of writer later.

The brain-drain has been the tragedy of Sikh Community. Even non-Sikhs like J. D. Cunningham and Max Arthur Macauliffe spilled blood for Sikh community. Cunningham spoke plain truth and one stroke of Lord Dalhouzie's pen removed him from the service, with no Sikh reacting to the heinous crime which British Government Committed. Macauliffe found no place in crematory, the christians having disowned him and the Sikhs closing doors of crematorium to him, styling him as a christian. About fifty years back the Sikh community spotted Sardar Harcharan Singh Bajwa as the first man whom they wished to salvage from the brain drain movement which stalked our land for long. But the result was that after he had been Executive Member of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee and Working Committee of the Akali Dal continuously for thirty years long, he had no alternative except to resign. His was the step which normally none would take and he is the man whose book will remain a milestone on the road which Sikh Community treaded.

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Chandigarh

Ajit Singh Baagha,
6. 6. 1978

INTRODUCTION

When I was born on 15 November 1908 at Kalaswala in District Sialkot (now in Pakistan) two centuries had already elapsed since the creator of Khalsa Community, Guru Gobind Singh, ended his earthly sojourn and merged his identity in the totality of the Khalsa. From the birth of Guru Nanak to the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikh Community had already a heritage dating back to 239 years. After that the Sikhs passed through untold persecution which was relieved only by their wresting the Punjab in 1765. Maharaja Ranjit Singh planted his flag at Lahore fort in 1799 i.e. a century after the creation of the Khalsa in 1699. The readers of history know that as a prelude to arresting political power the Sikhs had paid its price in several instalments. Guru Arjan scorched his body, Guru Tegh Bahadur held out his severed head to the Moghul assassin, Bhai Dyala boiled himself, Bhai Mani Singh offered his body limb by limb, Bhai Taru Singh volunteered to Moghuls a bowl sliced from his head, Bhai Mehtab Singh, Bhai Subeg Singh and Bhai Shahbaz Singh ended their physical frames on forked wheels and Bhai Dip Singh offered his head at the altar of the shrine of Guru Ram Dass. We bought freedom with blood and lost it while we tore ourselves from the Guru.

When I was born in 1908, the Indian National Congress was already 23 years old. The episode of the unsuccessful bid to partition Bengal was a tale of three

years back. The sacrifices of Bhai Maharaj Singh dated back to six decades. The Kuka movement had already done its role. The Singh Sabha movement had its limited encounters with the anti-Sikh elements which had encroached amidst us.

The blood of Sikh Community was seething to recapture lost political dignity.

Like other youth, I had my schooling. My father, Subedar Piar Singh, then sent me to Lahore for college education. I was admitted in Dyal Singh College. This College having been named after the Sikh Chief Dyal Singh, my thoughts turned to the Sikh heritage. The Sikhs were rulers, I said to myself and I questioned whether they would be Contented with just studying in schools and Colleges or founding some colleges or other institutions. It is a fact that in Lahore the academic institutions were progressively swelling and the Sikh role in that sphere was leading. But the institutions are means, not ends, Akbar Allahabadi laments that this so-called outstanding achievements of the mediocres are limited to graduation, service, superannuation and death. At least I was not satisfied with just cramming a few sentences and collecting a few certificates. Books serve for study, for ornament and delight, says Bacon. But the question is: Are ornament and delight our destination? The answer is No. What really merits is the contribution made for the Community's cause. When I was student I ever cherished the scholarship of our prophet, Guru Gobind Singh. But I also dearly prized the heritage of statemanship which he bequeathed us. My hostel room in College days was a rendezvous of patriots and politicians no less than that of poets and writers. I remember the day when in 1929 the Indian National Congress held its session at Lahore. I was then a third year student. Three Sikh leaders knocked at my door. I got up and finding myself face to face with our yeomen, namely, Gyani Gurmukh Singh Musafir,

Teja Singh Akarpuri and Principal Ganga Singh, I was full of joy on seeing my privileged guests. "We want educated youth" they said to me. "My services are at your disposal", I replied. "We have entered your name as special invitee-member of the Akali Dal Working Committee", they announced.

What followed after this was the struggle for fulfilment of the sacred cause of liberating the Sikh Community from the chains which tied them. "Man is born free, but he is every where in chains," said Rousseau and nothing expressed the Sikh situation better than this observation. I had already been allotted a niche in the Sikh political war-house and I strived hard to accomplish for this Community whatever was possible.

In 1931 I was a regular member of the Akali Dal working Committee and I continued as such for thirty years i.e. upto 1960. By 1931 I graduated and studied law. I had been a close associate of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and I utilised my services to defend his case, I knew that his martyrdom was a writing on the wall, but my admiration for him clung me to him till his last day. My participation in Lahore Shahid Ganj Agitation resulted in my arrest under false charge of murder. The trial lasted for eight months when I was acquitted with the grace of God.

I was elected member of the S. G. P. C. from Sialkot constituency in 1936 and I remained executive member of this supreme religious body of the Sikhs for 25 years.

In 1937 I was the youngest member of the Akali Dal Parliamentary Board.

In 1940 I played major part along with Gyani Kartar Singh to give final shape to Gurdwara Amendment Bill. In the same year the Muslim League passed a resolution that their destination was Free Pakistan. The partition of the country appeared not a distant stage.

Congress wanted to succeed British government whereas Muslim League wanted to secede from India. The

Muslim League endeavoured to throw a bait to the Sikhs, offering them to give them a "Sikh State" within Pakistan.

At this stage the reminiscences of horrors which the Moghul government had perpetrated on the Sikhs right from the days of Guru Arjun to the establishment of the Sikh sovereignty set the Sikhs athinking. How could they jump from the frying pan into the fire which they had already tasted abundantly between 1606 and 1765 ?

The Muslim League wanted to devour the whole of Punjab and had they been successful, the Harijanvis of today would have waded the waters of Sutlej, Beas and Ravi for the blessings of the rulers. Then there would have been no Chandigarh and accordingly there would have been no city which could be a bone of contention between the Punjabis and Harijanvis. Then the Muslim League hordes would have trampled the Harijanvis and khalsa and by this time there would have been no vestige of Sikh glory in the land of five rivers. But Guru did not will wholesale obliteration of the Sikh glory and the Sikhs spurned overtures of the Muslims and held their promises to scorn. The Muslim intentions were clear to them as day. They did not join the Muslim Camp. The Sikh leader Master Tara Singh tore to shreds the Muslim League flag which had been planted on the Lahore Assembly hall, declaring that unless Punjab had been divided, the Muslim League flag meant unauthorised and foul play with Hindu and Sikh sentiments.

In 1945-46 the Akali Dal repeatedly and hectically conferred to devise ways and means to save Sikhs from what seemed to them to be the joint Muslim-British Conspiracy to exterminate the Sikhs root and branch. During these days Jinnah expressed a desire to have a talk with Master Tara Singh. The meeting was arranged in a private house in Model Town, Lahore. Master Tara Singh reached the venue of the meeting half an hour before the scheduled time. I was very much happy to have him with

me in advance of his proposed talk. Actually I wanted his extradition from the venue of the meeting. Master Tara Singh was a well-intentioned and seasoned statesman but at times he used to be short-tempered and sentimental. Jinnah was spreading a snare for him and we did not want our leader to be entrapped. If he had been entrapped, that would have meant a death blow to the Sikh Community. Accordingly I intoned in Master Tara Singh's ears that it would be impolitic to trust Jinnah. I took him to the bath-room and through its back door he escaped away. In the meanwhile there came Gyani Kartar Singh, escorting Jinnah. The British Governor had already forewarned me that Jinnah was out for beguiling the Sikhs and that he was bent upon revenging the Sikh seizure of political power from the Moghuls. Moreover the Sikh State should have been Carved out by the Britishers in the middle of Pakistan and India as demanded by the Akali Dal. We had not to beg it from the Muslim League.

Akali Dal had appointed a three member deputation of Master Sujan Singh Sarhali, Kartar Singh Dewana and myself to plead with the Britishers that if division of Punjab was inevitable the Indo-Pakistan border should be delimited keeping in view the Sikh interests. Again and again this deputation had parleys with Mr. McDonald, Mr. Jenkins, Ginsford and Sir Henry Craig impressing upon them that neither Jumna, nor Sutlej, Beas or Ravi could be the border of Pakistan. The Sikhs wanted Chenab as the boundary.

On 15 August 1947, the Pakistan became a reality. The Sikh population was split up in two halves. The half population left in Pakistan had no alternative except exodus to this side of the border and unprecedented carnage was their lot. I led a caravan of two lac Hindus and Sikhs from Sialkot to this side of the border. In the undivided Punjab the Sikhs had not majority even in a single district. They had majority in two Tehsils namely,

Raikot (Ludhiana District.) and Tarn Taran (Amritsar District). But the valour of the Sikhs on account of which they had been counted in the past remained no more a desideratum of political distinction. Now what mattered was the vote. ✓ The history-making potency, chivalry, ambition and sacrifice remained no more as the criteria for sovereignty. In bewilderment I took along me Bhupinder Singh Man and Gyani Kartar Singh and the trio of us knocked the door of Dr. Ambedkar. We solicited guidance from him and quick he was in prescribing the recipe of our peril : "If you had cast lots with Pakistan, you would have been a minority there. In joint Punjab you were a minority except in two Tehsils which too were not contiguous. In Eastern Punjab, too, you are a minority. If you clamour for Sikh State, it will be a cry in wilderness. Why don't you ask for a Punjabi speaking State? Congress is committed to linguistic basis for reorganisation of the States. They can defer satisfaction of this demand, but they cannot oppose it for long. I have told you the way. You can have Sikh State in the cloak of "Punjabi Suba". Our faces brightened. We knew that narrow mindedness of Patel had left little scope for our carving out a de jure Sikh State. But here was the way to get de-facto Sikh State.

We launched struggle for Punjabi Suba. The Punjabi Suba is now a reality.

✓ On 20th February 1948 we held Akali Conference at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi. The venue of the conference was close to the Central Government headquarters. The Government banned the Conference but we defied the ban. As many as six persons delivered speeches— Beside myself Ajit Singh Sarhadi, Amar Singh Dosanjh, Gurbakhsh Singh Advocate, Jathedar Sohan Singh Wahila and Gaini Baldev Singh Panipat delivered speeches. All of us were arrested. Master Tara Singh was arrested

earlier on 19 February at Narela Railway Station.

In 1948, Udham Singh Nagoke, Swaran Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh and Baldev Singh dissolved Assembly Akali Party and joined Congress. They proclaimed that henceforth Akali Dal's concern would be to preach Sikh religion. This was a great shock to us. At this juncture only Pritam Singh Gojran, Amar Singh Ambalvi, S. Bhag Singh, Sarup Singh and Giani Dhanwant Singh were left along with me as the votaries of Master Tara Singh, who vehemently proclaimed that Akali Dal would retain its political character to safeguard the Sikh interests.

It was in April 1952 that the Akali Dal appointed me as Adviser to Rarewala Ministry in Pepsu. This was the first non-Congress government in independent India. This United Front Ministry was in fact a Panthic Ministry formed with the help of the *Jat Group* of Haryana. I was deputed by Master Tara Singh and Sardar Hukam Singh to take over as advisor of the ministry. I enjoyed full confidence of the members from Haryana area because I had had Very Cordial relations with Ch. Chhotu Ram. We twice defeated the no-confidence motion in the Assembly. In spite of the fact that United Front Ministry was in majority, the State was placed under the *President Rule* in March 1953.

The Nagoke group continued hobnobbing with the Congress government at Centre and left no stone unturned to paralyse the Punjabi Suba campaign.

On Dec. 26 & 27, 1953 the Akali Dal held a Conference at Fatehgarh Shib. On Dec. 27, 1953 Pepsu congress with the help of Dharam Arth Board of Colonel Raghbir Singh, which was controlling the management of Fatehgarh Sahib Gurdwara, invited Jawahar Lal Nehru in the Fatehgarh Sahib Gurdwara to address a rival conference. I was an eye-witness of this historic and dramatic event. As soon as Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru arose to speak, a band of young sikhs including Gursewak

Singh, Trilochan Singh, Amarjit Singh etc., led by Sardar Atma Singh snatched the microphone from the stage and did not allow the 'mighty' Prime Minister of India to utter even a single word. The news was flashed throughout the world in newspapers and Radio and Master Tara Singh, talking to me later on the same day observed: "The courageous sikh band of Sardar Atma Singh has secured what the Akali Dal could not have achieved with a crore of rupees. Our success consists in forestalling the ugly bid of the opponents of the Punjabi Suba movement".

In Punjabi Suba Morcha of 1955, Master Tara Singh had instructed me to go underground to take care of press publicity. This was a task which was not less important than actual struggle and I gladly shouldered the task. I remained in Delhi and kept close liaison with the national press.

I must say that Master Tara Singh boldly resisted the domination of illiterate persons of the Nagoke group, but when he bowed before Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Chanan Singh I resigned from the working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal in 1960. It was the infiltration of illiterate elements in Sikh politics which make it impossible for me to remain member of the working Committee of the Akali Dal.

I have had the privilege to work with such distinguished men of the Punjab as Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh, S. B. Mehtab Singh, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh, Sardar Hukam Singh, Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala, Gyani Sher Singh, Sardar Amar Singh Sher-e-Punjab and Sardar Bhag Singh Gurdaspuri.

However the political struggle was never my sole preoccupation.

From 1928 to 1942 I was General Secretary of the All India Punjabi Sabha. During this period we held not less than twenty big Kavi Darbars. It was in these

grand functions that our poets such as Feroze Din Sharf, Nand Lal Nurpuri, Gurdev Singh Man, Gurdit Singh Kundan, Teja Singh Sabar, Widhata Singh Tir, Barkat Ram Yuman, Dewan Singh Mehram and Avtar Singh Azad were patronised and honoured.

In 1930 I was general Secretary of the Central Khalsa Youth League. Sardar Harnam Singh Advocate was the President of the League. The Central Khalsa Youth League was the fore-runner of the various Sikh Youth organisations which subsequently emerged here and there in the country.

I have ever loved association with the educational cause. I was President of Khalsa School, Sialkot from 1938 to 1947. I founded Kalaswala Khalsa High School in 1938 and was its Manager right upto partition. In 1947 I got this school replanted at Qadian and continued as its Manager till 1962. In 1948 I offered my services for re-establishment of Sikh National College at Qadian and was Member of its managing committee till 1962. This important institution was nourished and developed by the great educationist and scholar Bawa ~~H~~ Karkishan Singh who was its Principal upto 1962.

At the moment I am sixty three years old. In the book written by me I have portrayed in simplicity and good faith the dept I owe to the Sikh tradition and the events which I have myself witnessed in the context of the destiny and ambition which Sikh Community has set for it and the sacrifices of the Sikh Youth for the cause of the Community. All the facts and dates mentioned in this book are based on my personal diary which I kept regularly from 1930 onwards.

I have written this book to narrate some important events and to depict the role of some prominent persons in the making of the history of the Punjab during last fifty years. How far I have succeeded, it is for the readers to judge.

Civil Lines, Qadian
(Distt: Gurdaspur)

Harcharan Singh Bajwa
20.10.1971

Shiromani Akali Dal

Shiromani Akali Dal, the most representative organisation of the Sikhs came into being on December, 14, 1920 at Amritsar.

The Gurdwara movement in Punjab popularly known as *Akali Movement* gave a great impetus to the British politics to get Pro-Muslims in the pay of the administration. The Sikhs of Punjab under the leadership of Baba Kharak Singh, Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabar, Teja Singh Samundri Mehtab Singh, Master Tara Singh, Sardar Sardul Singh Kaveeshar of Lahore, S. Amar Singh of Shere Punjab S. Bhag Singh Advocate of Gurdaspur fought for the emancipation of Gurdwaras from the control of Mahants. This Gurdawara Movement gave birth to Shiromani Akali Dal which was one of the most important events in the history of the Punjab. The British Government unfortunately got afraid of the growing power of the Akali Movement and fearing this gave political support to the Congress in the Indian struggle of freedom. This course led the British Government to support the Mahants and the relations between the Government and Khalsa Panth became very strained. The Panthic situation took serious turn and the Nankana Sahib tragedy, Guru Ka Bagh Morcha and Darbar Sahib Keys (Chabian) struggle gave great impetus to the Akali Movement and British Government got perplexed and felt helpless to cope with it. The Government wanted to come out of the struggle, but the Sikh leaders of Akali

Movement got intoxicated with the initial successes they achieved against the Government. They got themselves involved in the Nabha Question. It was purely a political question and the British Government was compelled to fight to the finish over this political issue which was bound to affect the security and sovereignty of the Government over Indian states. The sentimental speakers like Bawa Harkishan Singh were mainly responsible for throwing the Sikhs into Nabha agitation. The Nabha agitation proved a great set-back to the political power of the S. G. P. C. and S. G. P. C. leaders had to admit their defeat in this struggle.

Their propoganda and the exploitation of Gurdwara platform and the top sacrifices of the Sikhs in the 20th century, specially the incident stopping the running train at Panja Sahib by the one S. Partap Singh and the spirit of sacrifice for a cause was very well established. The Panja Sahib event and Jaito Morcha stunned the British Government and the government became cautious to get rid of the Akali Movement fearing that it may ultimately affect the Sikh Army of the country. S. B. Sant Singh of Jandiala Guru, an intelligent police chief of Punjab along with Sir Joginder Singh, Principal Jodh Singh and S. B. Buta Singh of Sheikhpura was able to convince S. B. Mehtab Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh, Principal Teja Singh and other moderate Sikhs, who were among the Akali leaders against whom seditious case was going on in Lahore Fort for the last three years to settle the Gurdwara question through Gurdwara Bill. The British diplomacy succeeded and the Akali leaders in the Lahore Fort were divided into two groups. One group led by S. B. Mehtab Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh became supporters of the Gurdwara bill and were released from the Lahore Fort on 25 January 1921.

The other group led by Master Tara Singh, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi, S. Bhag Singh Advocate of Gurdaspur,

Master Sujan Singh of Sarhali and others decided not to accept the Gurdwara Bill. This led into division in the Akali Sikhs much to the relief of the British Government and Sir Malcom Hailey, the Governor of Punjab, got full appreciation of the British Government, in taking out grace from the Akali Movement. The political students of History will have to take into account both aspects of the Akali Movement, political as well as economic. The Akali Movement brought Sikhs great reputation in the political field through their untold sufferings and Indian National Congress and its diplomatic leaders exploited it fully for their national struggle against British Imperialism. The Akali Movement turned the Khalsa Panth anti-British in day to day walks of life and the Punjab in which the Sikhs had a very important and dominating position began to be weakened in the administrative sphere of the Government. The Sikhs had to throw political lot with the Congress and the Akali Dal and the Sikh leadership was practically thrown into the lap of the Congress. The moderate Sikhs known as the Chief Khalsa Dewan led by Sir Sunder Singh Majithia went into background and the leadership of the Sikhs passed into the hands of Akali leaders like Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Mangal Singh, M. L. A. Baba Kharak Singh was elected as the first President of the S. G. P. C. The British politics ultimately succeeded in weaning away the bulk of the Muslim community from the Indian National Congress. These events in the country made the position of the Khalsa Panth in the Punjab politically weak since the Government of India Act of 1935 came into operation and the provincial autonomy was inaugurated and the Punjab fell under the regime of Unionist Government and Sir Sikander Hayat was elected as the first Chief Minister of Punjab. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram held the key position and as Chief of the Unionist Party his labours of ten years bore fruits in putting the Unionist Party

Government in saddle. Sir Sunder Singh Majithia joined the Punjab Cabinet on behalf of the Sikhs as Head of the Khalsa National Party. The policy of the British Government basically changed and they decided to support Muslims in Punjab in day to day administration. The Sikhs lost all political connections with the Government. This anti-Sikh policy led to the growth of domination of Muslims in the political field of the Punjab. Fortunately this period produced Mian Sir Fazal Hussain, a strong, staunch and influential lawyer of Batala as their leader of pro-government group among the Muslims. The all India policy of the British Government further weakened the Congress so far as the Muslims were concerned. There was a race of diplomatic fight between the British politics and Mahatma Gandhi to keep Muslims of India with each. but Sir Sikander Hayat expired on account of heart failure, thus suddenly disappearing from the active scene of Punjab politics and his death placed Punjab into the hands of Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram and S. Baldev Singh and the chief-minister-ship fell to the lot of Khizar Hayat Tiwana. By this time the Akali Party had grown wiser and the financial support of S. Baldev Singh made the position of Master Tara Singh very stable and secure.

The Second World War brought in its wake new opportunities for the Sikhs. The combination of Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram and Sardar Baldev Singh worked very successfully and Sardar Baldev Singh through natural sweetness and humility built up the lost power of the Panth against all odds.

Sardar Baldev Singh and Panthic politics

The fortunes of Akali party and the Khalsa Panth took a new turn and new leaf in the history of the Khalsa Panth was opened through the diplomatic moves of Gyani Kartar Singh Lyallpuri and Gyani Sher Singh,

Master Tara Singh was afraid of the group of Majhails which was newly composed of Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke, S. Isher Singh Majhail, Sohan Singh Jalal Usman, S. Teja Singh Akarpuri, with Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke as their leader. Jathedar Teja Singh Akarpuri in heart of hearts was supporting S. Baldev Singh through Giani Kartar Singh to wrest power for the Panth in Government circles. S. Baldev Singh's work was very difficult in the Cabinet, as he had to carry on with a strong colleague and a very towering personality of Ch. Chhotu Ram and on the other hand he had to carry on with Master Tara Singh as the leader of the Akali Dal. S. Baldev Singh did very well and we can deem him as a successful Minister and representative of the Panth in the Cabinet in those difficult days. His main achievement was to carry on with Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and Gyani Kartar Singh as two important wings of the Akali Party. He achieved full success and as long as he remained Minister in Punjab, he was able to keep them into one single party as the backbone of the Panthic strength and unity. He was assisted by a very capable official, a strong genius, a loyal lieutenant of his boss and most honest man of his times Sardar Sant Singh, P.C.S., Development Secretary, Punjab Government. On account of the Sikh role in the history of the Second World War and the political achievements which the Panth secured during this period Sardar Sant Singh's name will be remembered with respect and gratitude. I can say from my personal experience, because I had the opportunity to come in close contacts with him as the Executive Member of S.G.P.C. during Sardar Baldev Singh's Ministership in the Punjab and the Second World War that Sardar Sant Singh's ability was second to none. He was a real match with the talented Muslim I.C.S. officers, who were working for the creation of Pakistan during the unionist regime.

He could brief S. Baldev Singh in time. The Muslim I.C.S. officers like Mr. Muhayyudin and Sir [Assindin I.C.S., Mr. M.A. Rahim, I.C.S., Mr. Akhtar Hussain, I.C.S., who were holding key posts in the Secretariat were intellectual giants and very sweet to meet and talk, but were Muslims first and every thing afterwards. S. Baldev Singh had a very long commodious social table. He would spend everything to achieve anything for the Panthic power. He had his advisers like Ch. Kartar Singh, Malik Hardit Singh and Sardar Mehar Singh Chadda but he never allowed the Panthic prestige to be lowered down. The personal sweetness of S. Baldev Singh spoke for itself. He turned to the support of British I.C.S. officers in the key posts of the Secretariat of the Punjab Government to keep check on the communal activities of the Muslim I.C.S. officers. His personal Secretary S. Anup Singh, younger brother of S. Abnasha Singh, Secretary Punjab Asembly, was real asset to S. Baldev Singh. He was man of word and Panthic to the core of his heart. He would never allow his enemy to cross over him diplomatically and would not allow Sardar Baldev Singh to be misled by any Muslim I.C.S. Officer. The British officers were looking to S. Baldev Singh for support in the war efforts and recruitment. The sweet Sardar made full use of this opportunity. The Diplomatic battle at the Secretariat level and Government level continued with full force and it was very difficult and onerous task for S. Baldev Singh, because in the British regime the real power lay with the Secretariat key posts, who were responsible to carry and implement the policy and programme of the Government. The Governor had the vast powers and was real head of the Government. The details of the administration were carried on by government's executive head with the knowledge of the Governor. The Muslim I.C.S. officers had a dominating influence over the Government and were very

capable of implementing their communal policies and were trying every device to build the Muslim power in the State.

The Second World War and the Akali Politics

The famous historical announcement of Mr. Churchill in British Parliament that "I have nothing to offer you but tears, but all I can say is that Hitler may win many battles but we will win the War", remains a universal truth.

The students of political history cannot ignore the basic events, which led the British Government to change its policy regarding the Muslim support in day-to-day administration. The problem of the recruitment of Indian Army and events of Second World War shook the British Government from head to foot and Hitler's knocking of France within a short time and the retreat of British forces from Denmark created peril to the security of England. The reverses of the British forces from Denmark created great panic with the British Government and wave of despondence went all round the country and the War officials in England gave great caution to the Government of India at Delhi to look into the changed circumstances of the War. These events had immediate change in Punjab politics and the head of the Punjab State, Sir Henry Craig, the Governor of Punjab, who was in the political pocket of Sir Sikander Hayat, was transferred and Sir Bestland Glancy took over as new Governor of Punjab with special assignment to appease the Sikhs politically and elicit their support for the recruitment of Sikh soldiers for Indian Army. Major Short of the 47 Sikh Regiment was deputed as Chief Liaison Officer to give impetus to recruitment. He was assisted by S. Sant Singh P. C. S. who had good connections, both political and social, with Akali leaders. Major Short first approached the moderate Sikh leaders

and retired Sikh officers of the Indian Army. Sir Sunder Singh's death removed from the scene a powerful moderate Sikh leader who had during his time his full say with the British Government and the moderate Sikhs were left as political orphans after his death. Sardar Baldev Singh by his sweetness and social habits was able to carry Sir Joginder Singh, the intellectual Sikh giant, embodiment of sweetness and culture. I had the opportunity to come in close contact with him during my student life. He was the student of Dyal Singh College, Lahore and Secretary of the Central Khalsa Youth League. One small example of his humility, sweetness and courtesy is that whenever you rang him up to have time for interview at his bungalow, he would always speak simple sweet Punjabi and would reply that you were welcome to his house in the evening and would join him in *Sodar Rehras* and have meals with him. He would never call his residence as bungalow. He was a great writer in English and had been Chief Minister of Patiala State. He was a short-sized, well-built gentleman and a flowing mobile beard lent great gesture to his personality. He continued as Minister of Development and Agriculture for thirteen years in Punjab, but when the New Reforms of 1937 were inaugurated he told the Governor and the Panthic leaders that he had decided to retire and that he would not seek entry in the New Ministry of Punjab. He politically advised Sir Emerson, the then Governor of Punjab, to ask Sir Sunder Singh Majithia to come to the field and organize the moderate Sikhs. Sir Emerson was a strong imperialist and was pro-Muslim. He had seen Shahid Ganj agitation and his support to the Muslims in the diplomatic field against the Sikhs was very clear. The Akali Dal and S. G. P. C. with Master Tara Singh at the helm of affairs acted very well and were able to give good fight to Sir Emerson in the press and on the platform and created a great agitation,

exposing the Governor's out-of-the-way political support to the Muslims in the Shahid Ganj Agitation. The repressive policy of Sir Emerson failed ultimately to subdue the Sikhs and Akali Party through the support of the Press was able to defeat Sir Emerson, the Punjab Governor and the Government of India was compelled to recall Sir Emerson in mid-term of his tenure of the office of Governorship of the province. The pressing events and the reverses of Britishers against the aggressive Hitler made the events take a speedy turn and Master Tara Singh's interview with the Viceroy and the top officers paved the way for new era in Punjab regarding the pro-Muslim policy of the British Government in day-to-day administration. The Muslim I. C. S. officers got a great set-back and Mr. Macdonald, the then Home Secretary of Punjab Government, became the Chief Adviser of the Governor, Sir Glancy, on war efforts and the other administrative matters. Gyani Kartar Singh's dream to change the policy of the government in political matters became a reality. Gyani Kartar Singh by this time had gained a great strength and diplomatic Major Short by his superior canvassing at the table was able to bring him round that Sikhs as Martial Community should not oppose War efforts, as the Sikhs were a Martial race and their economic and social future basically depended on the Army service. Gyani Kartar Singh collected younger elements in the S. G. P. C. and Master Ajit Singh Ambalvi, Amar Singh Dosanjh, Gyani Dhanwant Singh, Amar Singh Ambalvi. Sardar Sarup Singh and myself offered Gyani Kartar Singh full support in his new mission. Fortunately there appeared on the scene of recruitment a shrewed military officer Major Sujan Singh and he was deputed with Major Short and Col. Kill Roy with headquarters at Jullundur to find out means and measures to give impetus to War recruitment among the Jat Sikhs. Major Short was plainly told by

the moderate Sikh leaders that though they were pro-War supporters but the Akali Party under the leadership of Master Tara Singh could only deliver the goods. So British Liaison officers engaged heart and soul to obtain support from the Akali leaders in the S. G. P. C. By this time there had been a great change in the complexion of the Punjab politics. Since Sardar Baldev Singh joined the Punjab Cabinet and Sir Joginder Singh joined the Viceroy's Executive Council, the political Sikhs were able to hold their own. Sardar Sant Singh Advocate, M. L. A., Sardar Sant Singh, P. C. S. and Gyani Kartar Singh mustered the great force in the Akali politics. Gyani Kartar Singh was able to wean away from Nagoke group Master Sujan Singh of Sirhali who was a powerful canvasser, self-less political worker and trained Akali leader. He had the ears of Master Tara Singh and full say with domestic kitchen of Master Tara Singh. He was a very shrewed, tactful, reasonable, very sensible leader of the Panth with simple habits. He was a great anti-Muslim and always afraid of growing political power of the Muslims in Punjab. He served as a loyal lieutenant to Gyani Kartar Singh and brought him to the level of first adviser to Master Tara Singh and played a great part in canvassing the British officers of government of India, to open a new page in the political relationship of the Sikhs and not to place the Sikhs of the Punjab at the political mercy of the Muslims. Sardar Sant Singh who was a good parliamentary speaker and good table canvasser and great well wisher to build the political strength of the Panth succeeded in bringing about the radical change in the policy of the British Government regarding the Khalsa Panth. Had he not been socially miser and advocate he would have entered the Central Cabinet instead of Sir Joginder Singh. His misfortune was that he belonged to Lyalpur, where he had to put up with Nagoke group under the leadership

of Udham Singh Nagoke. That was a well-knitted group which had among its members more than twenty towering leaders spread all over the province. The time had come, when they wanted to assume independent power and were trying to shake off the leadership of Master Tara Singh, who was putting breaks over the diplomatic efforts of Nagoke group who were all along exercising to throw the Sikhs in the lap of Indian National Congress. Nagoke group could not understand the modern change in the British policy and except one or two leaders the Jathedar group was comprised of not very educated persons. They could hardly adjust to the new circumstances and the reverses of the British Government in the Second World War.

Gyani Kartar Singh with the combination of Gyani Sher Singh dominated Master Tara Singh in the S.G.P.C. politics. Gyani ji got Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke elected as President of the S.G.P.C. and Master Tara Singh resigned to make place for new entrants. This change in the S.G.P.C. leadership was fully exploited by Gyani ji to keep away the activities of Nagoke group from active Akali politics. Gyani Kartar Singh through his diplomatic tactics was able to arrange the Khalsa Defence of India League with headquarters at Lahore with S. Raghbir Singh Rajasansi as its President and the Maharaja of Patiala and Sir Joginder Singh as the Chief Patrons of the League. This organisation satisfied aspirations of the moderate Sikhs, who wanted to help the War efforts. S. Kartar Singh Dewana, who was right-hand man of Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram in the Akali party was elected as its Propaganda Secretary. The establishing of this organisation satisfied the British Government that Sikhs as political party will not oppose the war efforts in India. The political credit of this organisation added to the political strength of S. Baldev Singh in the Delhi Government circles. Master Tara Singh plainly

told moderate group that he would not personally offer individual satyagraha started against the war efforts by the Indian National Congress and would not openly oppose any important leader of the Akali Party in offering satyagraha in his individual capacity under the banner of the Congress, but the Akali Dal officially would not take part in this movement, so that recruitment of the Sikhs in the Army may not suffer. This bold stand of Master Tara Singh saved the future of the Sikh Panth and the position of the Sikhs in the Indian Army was not jeopardized. The situation was difficult and it was a very up-hill task to change the attitude of the Sikh masses to constitutional thinking from the agitational trend of mind. Sardar Baldev Singh's leadership in the Punjab cabinet helped a lot in this mission, who through his courtesy and accessibility was able to convince the Sikhs at large that this was the only way to rebuild the power of the Panth. It was also desirable to counteract Mahasha Krishan of Daily Partap who was a strong pro-Hindu and supporter of the Congress in All India politics. Mahasha Krishan strongly opposed the joining of S. Baldev Singh in the Punjab Cabinet and gave him a great political trouble, when he smelled that by the inclusion of S. Baldev Singh in the cabinet the Sikhs might improve their political influence and the Hindus in Punjab might suffer by this move. Sardar Baldev Singh acted very well and very cautiously and upheld the flag of non-Muslims in that great struggle, when the Muslims were craving forcefully to build power in the State. S. Baldev Singh as Development Minister well protected the interests of peasants and trading community during the War and got rid of the Muslim power in the Punjab. The organisation of Khalsa Defence of India League gave a constructive work to the unemployed among the Sikhs and hundreds of graduates got the Emergency King's Commission in the

Indian Army. By this time S. Baldev Singh was able to bring out an Urdu daily, the *Ajit* from Lahore to cope with the propoganda of Hindu Press, who by this time had realized that the Khalsa Panth was turning new leaf in their political policy by gaining their strength. *The Ajit Daily* fulfilled the long-standing need of a Daily, which could give support to the Panth in its political activities. The appearance of the Daily Ajit greatly encouraged Master Tara Singh, who was afraid of Hindu press. The S. G. P. C. leadership provided a backbone to the activities of the Khalsa Defence League and provided some of their young eloquent speakers like Sohan Singh Dora, Baldev Singh Balbeer, Jagjit Singh Bataia and Gyani Arur Singh. The young speakers and propogandists worked very successfully as a team under the leadership of Sardar Kartar Singh Dewana and S.B. Beant Singh of Gurdaspur, a well-read organiser and Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Department as well as Honorary Secretary and Controller of Finance. This organisation caught the eye of the British politicians and the credit of the success of its activities and the recruiting results among the Jat Sikhs of Punjab went to the credit of Governor Bertland Glancy This credit was fully utilised by Sardar Baldev Singh to build the political strength of the Panth.

The Governor actively turned against the Muslim League and Mr. Shaukat Hayat s/o Late Sikander Hayat was dismissed from the cabinet. It was a great political event that opened successfully new leaf in the political history of the Punjab. The intelligent and shrewd Muslim I. C. S. officers in the Government took it very seriously and were taken aback at this radical change and they saw that future of Muslim power in Punjah had received a serious set-back. Before appreciating this great step of the Governor, the student of political history in Punjab will give full credit to S.

Baldev Singh's diplomatic efforts to convince Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram to change pro-Muslim tendencies and began to plead before Ch. Sir Chhottu Ram that Pakistan was bound to appear in one form or the other after the Second World War. Ch. Sir Chhottu Ram held S. Kartar Singh Dewana in high esteem and always listened to him with love and affection. He appreciated S. Kartar Singh Dewana, myself and Gyani Kartar Singh and we started canvassing Ch. Sir Chhottu Ram, on the future of the Muslims in India, and we were able to bring to our viewpoint that strong man of conviction and a man of few words, very straight-forward politician and very dependable friend and supporter of political friends in time of difficulty. He would never let down his friends in any way at any cost. The political intelligence and fidelity of Ch. Sir Chhottu Ram had placed a check on the tide of Muslim power within a very short period of his working in the Government. We have just to probe deep in these events. Ch. Chhotu Ram, a great pro-Muslim supporter, was sitting in the cabinet and Sikander Hayat's attitude was a serious question. Sardar Kartar Singh Dewana was a great propagandist and had a good financial position among the Akali leaders. He was very hospitable and could undertake a great social and financial risk in order to achieve his objective. He had the ears of Maharaja of Patiala and on account of his agricultural activities and farming at Sardarwala near Nankana Sahib he had planted a beautiful garden which the Maharaja of Patiala visited in 1942 and it was a grand historic occasion. We were fully able to open a new chapter in Punjab politics. He was a self-made man and rose to such high position by sheer dint of labour, hard work, honesty and integrity of character and the strong will he possessed in his practical life. We were able to convince Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram that though he had served the Muslims of

Punjab by his sweat and hard labour during the past fifteen years, yet the Muslims were drifting towards Muslim League and that he would be compelled by the coming events to cast his lot with non-Muslims. The attack of Mr. Jinnah on Punjab Ministry and refusal of Khizar Hayat Tiwana to sign the pledge of Muslim League provided solid proof to Ch. Chhotu Ram of our view-point and we were greatly encouraged in our diplomatic efforts.

The Punjab in the post-War period and the period of the provincial autonomy [has yet to produce a politician of Sir Chhotu Ram's qualities of head and heart. He was one of the most honest workers, quite simple in habits and man of promise and he used to remark when in jolly mood: "*Abolish the Congress High Command if you want me to be a Congressman*". His economic vision and anxiety to improve the lot of down-trodden tillers of the soil in the Punjab and get them full relief from debt is a mile-stone in the economic development of poor agriculturist, who used to be born in debt and die in debt. He was a great writer on Indian economics and hard-working political leader and a man of desk. We will have to analyse him historically and politically at least in a full book for his proper assessment. However we will briefly describe him in the historical perspective.

The Jat Leader

The name of Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram in the early 20th century in Punjab politics is known to every student of the Punjab history. The petty town of Rohtak, very backward in the Punjab Politics, produced a Napoleon, a middle-sized iron-willed and eloquent mass speaker who changed the basis of Punjab Politics and set the people, even the rural dumb and mute millions of Punjab, to the new line of thinking on the economic front and established a Unionist Party with Sir Fazal Hussain as its Head. The Punjab politics was dominated by capitalist classes and they had full control over the administrative machinery of the province. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram was very intelligent and could probe into coming events with telescopic intelligence. The Congress struggle for Independence from the British rule had taken long roots in the Indian soil and under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi backed by Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai took turn of mass political struggle. *It was the growing power of the Indian National Congress which compelled British politics to turn to Muslims for support in Indian politics.* The change of basic political policy of the British Government in India placed Muslims at advantageous position and this had a full swing after the Mont-Ford Reforms in 1921. The Mont-Ford Reforms and the introduction of dyarchy in the administration of Punjab changed the basic political trend of Indian

Politics. The Congress was the spearhead of political parties of the country. The increasing influence of Mahatma Gandhi with rural Indian masses made the Congress a great national movement. The Congress party entered the Central Assembly with great strength and enthusiasm under the leadership of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. The party was given the name of Swaraj Party. It played a great part in raising the morale of Indian masses and the Opposition began to feel secure in the future of Indian politics. The eloquent speakers like Sh. Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the backing of Indian press provided a great opportunity to Nationalist India to expose the British imperial policies and served as beacon light to wake up Indian masses from political slumber.

Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram was shrewd enough to understand the changing basic policy of the British Government in India. The Punjab being the Muslim majority province gave right lift to Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram in his political policy and the Unionist Party played the role of first rural economic party in Punjab politics. This change of British policy made the intelligent Muslims conscious of the coming political power and they decided to throw their lot with the Unionist Party in order to gain power and influence in the administration. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram was the real field worker and great organiser of the party and within a short time became an important leader of the Rural Punjab, particularly the Jats of Punjab. The Muslims put complete faith in Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram and the Unionist Party ruled Punjab politics till 1940, when Mr. M.A. Jinnah came with Pakistan Slogan. The events of Punjab history had a great bearing on the future policies of the British Government in India.

The Revolutionary Movement

The Revolutionary Movement in India took a serious turn after the *lathi-charge* of Lala Lajpat Rai at the time of Simon Commission's visit to Lahore, which led to the death of Lala Lajpat Rai and changed the political complexion of the National movement. Baba Kharak Singh led the Black Flag Demonstration against the Simon Commission in the capital of Punjab. Sardar Sardul Singh Kaveeshar, Dr Satyapal, Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal and S. Mangal Singh Akali, M. L. A. (Central) played a great part in making the demonstration a great success. The young leadership of Students' Union headed by Sardul Singh (then student of Law College, Lahore), Shri Varinder, Sh. Ranbir Singh of the Milap, Ladha Ram, Mr. Atam Parkash, Sh. A. C. Bali and Sh. Yash of Milap exhorted Congress workers for demonstration. The three nationalist colleges of Lahore, the D. A. V. College, the Dayal Singh College and the S. D. College, played the main part. This demonstration shook the Punjab Government and the Government of India from top to bottom, and wave of happiness and enthusiasm went all over the Nationalist World and the press-propaganda gave a great impetus to the success of the demonstration. The death of Lala Lajpat Rai filled the youth of the country with great indignation and anger and it was being discussed in young circles that Lalaji's death must be avenged, the force should be met by physical

force to check the tide of repression let loose by the British Government. Mr J. M. Scott, I. P., the Sr. Superintendent of Police was spotted as responsible for man-handling Lala Lajpat Rai and precipitating the crisis at the time of demonstration. The Nationalist India and the entire Indian Press of Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Allahabad made a capital out of this event of Lala ji's death, because Lala Lajpat Rai occupied a very prominent position among the Indian Leaders and he was second only to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. After few months at 4.30 p. m. in the chilly December evening of 1928 Mr Saundrus, Assistant Superintendent of Police, was shot in the broad-day light before his office on the road near the residence of the Principal of D. A. V. College. The culprits made good their escape before the Police machinery could operate. The broad-day light shooting of the IPS officer in the capital of the Punjab terrified the British Government from head to foot. The D. A. V. College and the Dayal Singh College were the main targets for police repression. Though all out efforts were made to arrest the culprits, no tangible results were achieved and no arrests connected with the event were made. Sardar Sant Singh, the C. I. D. Chief of the Punjab, advised the high-ups in Delhi to wait till this revolutionary group committed a second event somewhere in India and observed that this would lead to the capture of real culprits. This theory worked well and the wave of repression was temporarily stopped, but the high British officers were really terrified. In top meeting of the Imperial Police officers the action of Mr. Scott was the subject of great criticism and the British Politicians in the rank of high class officers termed it as most unfortunate event which let down the prestige of the British Government to a great deal. All the high class Police and I. C. S. officers were secretly

cautioned and advised to adopt administrative restraint in day-to-day business.

S. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw bomb in the Central Assembly Hall at Delhi. Nobody was physically hurt, but they offered themselves for arrest, This great political event turned the new page in the political struggle of the National Movement. Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, took the earliest opportunity to dissociate the Congress with this violent event. The Congress leaders followed suit. The young generation of India who were sick of long policy of Congress non-violence felt jubilant over this great event and the name of Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt became the talk of every household and every political table in the country. The throwing of bomb in the Central Assembly gave new enthusiasm and new programme to the youth of India and this led to the Lahore Conspiracy Case and young men were arrested throughout the country and specially in Punjab. This Conspiracy Case was being conducted in the Central Jail Lahore and Mr. Siri Krishan was appointed Special Magistrate to try this case.

This case prolonged for couple of years and Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were sentenced to death and others to various terms of imprisonment. B. K. Dutt was sentenced to life imprisonment. S. Bhagat Singh and his colleagues decided not to prefer any appeal though they were persuaded by their admirers and friends like Sh. Varindra, myself and Shri Ranbir. S. Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were executed on 22nd March 1931 in the Central Jail Lahore and were cremated at the River Sutlej near Hussaini Wala Headworks under the Military and Police Guard. The execution of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev threw young India into despair and anger. In spite of best efforts of Mahatma Gandhi the National heroes could not be saved from the gallows. Punjab got full credit of Bhagat Singh's

martyrdom in the cause of freedom. The young India decided to follow in the footsteps of S. Bhagat Singh. The two major contributions of Punjab in the National movement for liberation of India from the British yoke are the real mile-stones in the struggle for freedom. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the great sacrifice and the part played by young Punjabis and particularly by the Sikhs in that movement made Punjab as the spear-head of national struggle. The sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev gave propelling thrill to the national movement and added another glorious chapter to the annals of the sacrifices of the Punjab. The students of political history cannot ignore the treatment meted by the Congress High Command, specially under the very nose of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, to Bhagat Singh's family after the country achieved independence. *This in fact is a great black mark on the face of Nehru Government. This treatment meted out to those who sacrificed their all for the country's cause is a matter of shame for a free country.* Bhagat Singh's sacrifice was a great event of the 20th century and the swing of the political force, which was the result of this great sacrifice was fully utilized and exploited by the Congress High Command. The sacrifice of S. Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev gave new aspiration to fight against British Imperialism and the younger generation became disgusted with Congress politics. The younger generation was convinced that India could not win freedom from the powerful well-organised British regime by peaceful and constitutional methods. The Bharat Naujawan Sabha was organised by L. Kedar Nath Sehgal of Lahore, a trusted colleague of Dr. Satyapal and Sardar Kishan Singh, the revered father of Sardar Bhagat Singh. Bhagat Singh's sacrifice had another effect on the administration of Punjab. The Muslim police officers who played a leading part in the investigation of Bhagat

Singh case were given high promotions and honours. The Punjab police officers were boosted and typical empire-builder police officers were brought to Punjab from Delhi. The Poince and administrative I. C. S. ring in the Punjab was strengthened and tightened. The sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and his companions left an indelible mark on the political history of the country and particularly of the Punjab. Dr. Satyapal, with his limited resources, looked after the father of S. Bhagat Singh, the brave old man Sardar Kishan Singh and served him heart and soul. S. Kishan Singh was made to enter the Punjab Assembly through efforts of Dr Satyapal, Sardar Mangal Singh M. L. A. (Central) and S. Kedar Nath Sehgal. The legislative position, though a poltical honour, served as a great financial help to the already oppressed political family. It is a hard fact that administration of the Punjab became more pro-Muslim after Bhagat Singh's sacrifice.

The Communal Award

and

Unionist Government

Those who have studied the actual background of Punjab politics have to take into account the part played by Sir Fazal Hussain, a very shrewd lawyer and pro-British Muslim politician backed by the British I.C.S. Officers, who had told the British Government in London through their representative, the Governor General and Viceroy of India that the only effective and democratic weapon, with which they could fight the popular struggle of Indian National Congress for freedom was to wean away the Muslims of India from the Indian National Congress. That was the only way to prolong the British rule in India. The matters were decided at the upper and high level of policy-making at London and the Imperialist of stern type, Lord Wellington, took over as Viceroy and Governor General of India. There was a strong diplomatic and field battle to crush the Civil Disobedience Movement of Mahatma Gandhi, when he presented a blank cheque to the Muslims through His Highness Agha Khan, who was in fact a political and diplomatic agent of the British Government. The students of political history cannot make out any case of Mahatma's great strategic and political blunder in making use of H.H. Agha Khan and putting his political reliance in him at that critical moment. Mahatma Gandhi

returned from the Round Table Conference empty-handed and was compelled to resort to Second Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931, thus throwing the Punjab under the heels of Communal Award and granting the Muslims in Punjab the statutory communal Majority. This gave a rude shock to Panthic leadership, which could not secure anything at the moment. Master Tara Singh, who also commanded the Nagoke group of Akali Dal remained shut in Shahdara Gurdawara as his entry to Lahore District was banned by the Government. The moderate Sikh leaders like Sir Joginder Singh and Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Raja Sir Daljeet Singh and Col. Buta Singh, members of Council of State, could only confine themselves to the issuing of statements, but the political battle of the Panth could not be achieved by mere statements. The grim battle ahead could only be fought at the Guru-Ka-Bagh level Morcha and the British Government could be brought to political senses only through continued and strong sacrifices. We have to look into details of the conditions of the Panthic leadership at that stage. Baba Kharak Singh was in minority and the circumstances compelled him to throw his political lot with Gyani Sher Singh and his party, who were losing ground in the Panth. Baba Kharak Singh could only lead in the circumstances, but Master Tara Singh would not allow him to take the command. Sir Joginder Singh, who was a real politician and could very well understand the back-ground of the British policy, explained to the Akali leadership the grim circumstances of the battle. The Congress hopelessly betrayed the brave and martial Sikhs by adopting the policy of *'we neither accept nor reject the Communal Award'* and left the Sikhs as political orphans in the political life of the country. Their home-land, Punjab, was placed in the political hands of communal Muslim Majority backed by powerful British I. C. S. officers. The Sikhs

had spent more than a decade in the lap of the Congress since 1919, after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. The Punjab struggle for freedom depended on the Akali leadership and the entire sources of the Gurdwaras were utilized by the Akali leadership to give political battle to British Imperialism against all odds. The Sikhs had severed all political connections with the British Government and gave a long battle to shake the prestige of the British Government through hard and untold sufferings, economic as well as physical, in the Akali Movement. We may not go beyond our central point of the fate of Akali leadership, when the heavy blow of Communal Award fell upon them in very odd circumstances. The Akali leadership called a Panthic Conference at Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's Smadh at Lahore on July 24, 1932. Baba Kharak Singh was a terror for the British Government and the Government used all diplomatic sources to keep Baba Kharak Singh away from the active field through his nephews Risaldar Sunder Singh, Nirmal Singh B. A. and his non-political son Prithipal Singh. Baba ji's nephews had taken to Maharaja Patiala's service by this time and their interest was that Baba ji should not jump into the Movement. Master Tara Singh could not tolerate Baba ji even at the cost of losing the Morcha at that critical stage. The future of the Sikhs was sealed and the Congress left them alone to plough their lonely furrow. The Conference was presided over by S. Avtar Singh, Bar-at-Law of Gujranwala, a third-rank leader in the Akali leadership, because Master Tara Singh group of which S. Isher Singh Majhail was the field-worker could not be persuaded by S. Sant Singh Lyallpuri and Sir Joginder Singh to give presidentship to Baba Kharak Singh at that critical juncture. It was a poor beginning and the other course was that Master Tara Singh should defy the ban and preside over the Conference and even this was not done

for the reasons best known to Akali leadership. I cannot make out the failure of S. Bhag Singh Advocate, who had great influence in the Akali leadership. Master Tara Singh should have been bold enough to preside over the Conference and the movement would have started. That was initial failure of the Akali leadership. Master Tara Singh's statement was read out in the conference by S. Bhag Singh Advocate of Gurdaspur. The Akali leadership took oaths before Shri Guru Granth Sahib that no sacrifice would be considered too great to fight the Communal Award. Gyani Hira Singh Dard, the old Akali poet and editor of Daily Akali refused to take oath and gave speech that in politics oaths should not be taken before Shri Guru Granth Sahib. He was, however, shouted down by the young audience, but he did not yield. The resolution was mainly drafted by S. Sant Singh Lyllpuri M.L.A. (Central) and S. Amar Singh of Sher-i-Punjab delivered the best speech of the day and appealed for the Panthic Unity. The Council of Action of 17 members was formed with Sardar Sampuran Singh Lyallpuri as Secretary, but it was dominated by Master Tara Singh group. It was a bad combination as the real leadership lay in the hands of Master Tara Singh and they were not clear about the future programme. Had even Sir Joginder Singh presided over the Conference, it would have lent it a political status to some extent to cope with the political situation as far as the British Government was concerned. *The Conference, though very lively and attended by Sikhs of all shades of opinion, failed to have any effect either on the Government or Muslim political world.* The Government fully knew that the Akali leadership as it stood in those days could not launch any strong agitation against the Communal Award. The Council of Action mainly consisted of parliamentary way of thinking, and adopted the Congress methods of propaganda. The only effective method to shake the British Government

was *No Rent Campaign* in the colonies of Lyallpur, Sargodha and Montgomery or turning towards the Army for agitation. The Sikh leadership was divided and no effective movement could be made out. The Council of Action failed to make the Sikh masses move. Had they placed their fate in the hands of Sir Joginder Singh they would have fared better, because he was the only towering personality who mattered to the diplomatic ears of the British Government. The flat failure of the Akali leadership in that struggle led the Khalsa Panth into further political difficulties and the future of the Panthic politics seemed very dark. The important Sikh leaders, who were heroes of the Akali movement had gone to the Congress and the Akali leadership could not elicit their support at this critical moment. Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal, S. Sardul Singh Kaveeshar, S. Mangal Singh, M.L.A. (Central), Gyani Hira Singh Dard, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri M.L.A. (Central), S. Teja Singh Churkana, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi and Gyani Gurmukh Singh Mussafir were out of the Akali fold and could not reconcile with the young Akali leadership in charge of the Gurdwara affairs and the S.G.P.C. majority party. Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and his coworkers of Amritsar were lukewarm for the struggle. They could not take the risk of losing their majority in the local Gurdwara committees and so no effective movement came to the front to fight the Communal Award. Moreover Nagoke group was not very clear about their future programme. They could not afford to displease the Congress. The young and raw leadership of the Akali Dal could not make any mark in the agitation against the Communal Award and the wave of despondency spread over the Panthic organisations against the failure of their agitation against the Communal Award. This compelled the moderate Sikhs to woo Muslim politicians in the name of political

slogan of Jat, Rural and Punjabis. The poor choice of S. Avtar Singh Bar-at-law of Gujranwala against Baba Kharak Singh and Sir Joginder Singh had weakened the position of the Akali leadership in Punjab politics and their weak policy and weak fight against Communal Award and their indecisive role against the Congress threw them to political wilderness. The formation of Central Akali Dal in September 1933 further weakened the Sikh Cause.

By this time the Provincial Autonomy was inaugurated and the Akali leadership had to go to the polls with unclean political hands. The Unionist Party in Punjab came with full force backed by the British Government and entire administration moved in different directions for them. The Akali leadership again wavered and decided to fight elections on Congress-cum-Akali ticket. Sikh masses by this time had fully understood the ineffective and appeasing policy of the Indian National Congress. Unfortunately the Punjab was being presided over by Sir Emerson, as Governor, an Imperial type empire-builder and pro-Muslim I. C. S. Governor, who had spent many years in the civil service of the Punjab. He utilized the opportunity to organise moderate Sikhs under the leadership of Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and he was able to persuade Sardar Majithia through the Viceroy of India to enter the election arena under the garb of saving Panth from the future political influence of the Communal Award. The moderate Sikhs formed a new party called the Khalsa National Party and under the leadership of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia they were able to capture 18 seats out of 33 Sikh seats. The Akali-Congress Front won about eight to nine seats. The resentment of the Sikhs against the Congress was well ventilated and the defeat of Akali Party at the polls in important prestigious seats like those of Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Joginder Singh Man

from Gujranwala, Sardar Naunihal Singh Man and S. Ujjal Singh from Lahore gave a great set-back to the political prestige of the Akali Party. The Unionist Party under the leadership of Ch. Sir Chottu Ram, Sir Sikander Hayat and Nawab Zafar Khan backed by the British Government influence swept the polls by Muslim majority and they were returned to power in the new positions of provincial autonomy. Sir Sunder Singh and Sir Manohar Lal joined as non-Muslims in the Unionist Cabinet with Sir Sikander Hayat as Chief Minister and leader of the Party. The real power vested with Ch. Chhotu Ram who was the back-bone and field-worker and leader of the rural Jat masses. The indecisive Ministry of Sir Sunder Singh Majithia gave further shock to the Akali Party which was further thrown into political difficulties. Sir Sunder Singh and Sardar Ujjal Singh became the spear-head of the Khalsa National Party in the legislature and Sardar Amar Singh Sher-i-Punjab of Lahore backed by Gyani Sher Singh, the leader of the Opposition in the S. G. P. C., provided them mass-basis and this time two important local Gurdwara committees went out of the Akali Party's hands i. e. Darbar Sahib Committee of Amritsar with Sardar Jaswant Singh Jhabal as its President and Nankana Sahib Committee with S. B. Mehtab Singh Bar-at-Law as its President. Unfortunately the age was telling upon Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and he could not consolidate the party. The coming into power of Unionist Party brought a new era in Punjab with very large political and economic powers with joint responsibility in the Cabinet. The sweetness and personal courtesy of Sir Sikander Hayat and the inclusion of Sir Manohar Lal in the Cabinet made the matters very smooth for the Government to go on. The Congress Party formed the main Opposition with very talented and vocal Congress leaders such as Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Mohammad Alim, Ch. Krishan Gopal Dutt of Siaklot,

Ch. Kartar Singh of Hoshiarpur, Pandit Siri Ram Sharma of Rohtak, Pt. Muni Lal Kalia Advocate of Ludhiana, Ch. Mohammed Hassan Advocate of Ludhiana, Master Hari Singh of Hoshiarpur, Munshi Hari Lal of Multan, S. Sampuran Singh Bar-at-law of Lyallpur and Dewan Chaman Lal, a very forceful and eloquent speaker in English who had the training of Pt. Moti Lal Nehru in the Central Assembly at Delhi.

The regime of Unionist Party brought new future for Muslims of Punjab and the first session of the new Punjab Assembly at Simla witnessed the typical features of Unionist and Muslim members from Multan Division and Rawalpindi who were very conspicuous by their special dress of black *achkins* and white *salwars*. The Unionist Party began to consolidate the Muslim power in the administration by giving thirty per cent of the posts of Hindus to Sir Chhotu Ram under the garb of Jats and Agriculturists. The urban and trading class of Hindus was the loser and all the key-posts at high level were practically captured by Muslims. The key I.C.S. posts in the administrative set-up were distributed between the Muslims and the British and the new era began in the Punjab with new hopes and new aspirations. Sir Sikander Hayat was a very sweet diplomat and he became popular even with the non-Muslims of the State. The rural people were looking up and new avenues both in service and political influence were thrown open to them. Within six months of the regime of the Unionist Party they came with full force with their economic programme to uplift the downtrodden, unsophisticated and poor cultivators economically exploited by the money-lending classes for decades. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram was the torch-bearer and *Golden Bills* were introduced in the first session of the New Assembly at Simla. These Bills were Land Mortgage Bill and Dam-Doput Bill (Double

money realization). If you advanced Rs.100/—as loan, you could only receive double the amount of the basic advanced loan and the question of time was eliminated. The Debt Conciliation Boards were established in the districts to give relief to the debtors to the fullest extent. The Debt Conciliation Boards worked very well and provided substantial relief to the poor suppressed rural cultivators to old debts. Mr. Clevret I.C.S., a great writer on rural debt in Punjab remarked that *a rural Jat was born in debt and died in debt*. These economic measures created a great revolution and Ch. Chhotu Ram cut down the shackles of poor peasants through his sword of economic-legislation. The new bills shook the political foundations of the Congress Party which was mainly the body of the urban and the trading community which opposed them tooth and nail and described them as *Black Bills*. The press was in the hands of Urbanite Nationalist Hindus, who gave a very tough fight in the legislatures. Sir Sikander Hayat stated while winding up and replying the debate on the Golden Bills on the floor of the Punjab Assembly at Simla that Pandit Muni Lal Kalia Advocate Ludhiana, Munshi Hari Lal of Multan and Desh Bandhu Gupta of Delhi were *three musketeers*. These economic measures and debt relief measures carried the popularity of the Unionist Party to every hearth and home of the villages in the province. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram, the spear-head of the economic programme of the party, threw his heart and soul in this movement. The Muslim wing of the Unionist Party was mainly concerned with the consolidation of the Muslim power and influence in the Administration of the State. The party leaders cleverly and effectively assumed non-communal role and made Punjabis and particularly rural masses of Punjab as the basis of their slogans. In public gatherings and party meetings they declared that they

were *Punjabis* first and everything afterwards. They banned the communal questions in the Assembly and thus the Minorities Case went undefended. When Sir Sunder Singh Majithia was asked pointedly by his supporters in the meetings at Amritsar about the position of the Sikhs, he pleaded his inability in the circumstances. So the Muslim wing of the party made a good start and the influence of the Muslim power began to be felt in the day-to-day administration of the Province. *Sir Manohar Lal* was taken in the Cabinet as representative of the Hindus and was satisfied as the scholarship-holder of the Unionist Party. All non-Muslims looked to Sardar Majithia and S. Ujjal Singh for help and for their administrative grievances, but they could not check the tide of the Muslim political aggression under the garb of *Punjabis Slogan* and with the publicity programme of the Tribune Lahore, the only English daily of Northern India and specially of the Punjab, the Unionist Party was carrying the day in the future administration of the province. Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram took full charge of the rural publicity and was fully meeting the Congress propaganda in the rural areas. The Congress in the rural areas got a rude political shock on account of Golden Bills and the influence of the Congress began to decrease in the rural areas. Even the new Congressmen like S. Mangal Singh M.L.A. (Central) began to think on the new lines. Lahore, being the seat of the Government, was also a commercial centre and most of the Urdu dailies were published from Lahore. The two nationalist papers, the Daily Partap and the Daily Milap appeared from Lahore. they were the chief spokesmen of the Nationalist Punjab and the non-Muslim minorities.

Mahasha Krishan

It will not be out of place to mention here Mahasha

Krishan, a good writer in Urdu, who was editing the Daily Partap. The Daily Partap was read with great attention and supported the cause of the opposition in the Press. Mahasha Krishan was a great journalist and the Punjab has failed to produce such an Urdu journalist in the current century. Mahasha Krishan was a forceful writer on Punjab politics. All important portfolios were with the Muslim Ministers. There were six members of the Unionist Cabinet with Sir Sikander Hayat as its leader. Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Ch. Chhotu Ram, Sir Manohar Lal, Mian Abdul Hayat and Khizar Hayat Tiwana were the other five members.

The Unionist Ministry had talented speakers who could hold their own against the vocal and capable opposition leaders of the Punjab Congress. The important portfolio of education fell into the hands of Mian Abdul Hayat, who was a strong communalist and in his tenure most of the Government schools were placed under the charge of Muslim headmasters. This helped laying the foundation of Pakistan economically and socially. The Lahore Division was the dominant political division where the Partap was read with respect and attention in the Government circles and Sir Sikander Hayat had instructed his Press Political Secretary to give him the cuttings of the editorials of the Daily Partap at his breakfast table. It was authoritatively said by the circles close to Sir Sikander Hayat that he used to spend about two hours daily in the morning in going through the cuttings of Daily Partap. Politicians could go without their meals, but not without going through the editorials of the Daily Partap. Mahasha Krishan did not bow to any political authority in the province. His knowledge in politics and history was unlimited though he was not member of any political party. He was a strong Arya Samajist. Though he was a supporter of the Indian National Congress in all-India matters, he

was personally opposed to Dr. Satyapal, the Punjab Congress Chief, and unfortunately was supporter of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava in Punjab Congress politics. His eldest son, Sh. Varinder, was the young lieutenant of Dr. Gopi Chand. Mahasha Krishan was a fearless writer in politics and would not spare anybody who did not toe his line of thinking. He was great anti-Muslim in his thinking and was fully conscious of the growing Muslim influence. The editorials of the Daily Partap and part played by Mahasha Krishan in the struggle of freedom against the British imperialism deserve all appreciation from the Punjabis and Nationalist world. It was the Daily Partap, which commercially succeeded in bringing the eminent men in Punjab in the journalistic trade. Sir Sikander Hayat was politicaliy afraid of Mahasha Krishan's writings. He would not call at any minister, but would bring out a first class editorial in the morning. His writings transported the reader to the higher political regions and his campaign against the important stand of Mahatma Gandhi regarding the Communal Award will always be remembered as a milestone in the political history of the Punjab. His constant writings exposed the political stand of the Congress. Had he not indulged in very deep personal prejudice of Ch. Chhotu Ram and Dr. Satyapal, he would have played a greater part in the history of the Punjab. His opposition to Ch. Sir Chhotu Ram can be accounted for his anti-Jat feelings and views, but his ruthless campaign against Dr. Satyapal was something below the standard of healthy journalism. No power in the Punjab could deter Mahasha ji from this set political views. He had socio-political connections with Arya Samaj in Punjab and though he was not favourably inclined to the Akali leadership, he was adviser of Master Tara Singh on the anti-Sikander Hayat front. He was a journalist of high calibre and a journalist first and last.

His political opponents always admired him for his high class articles. His campaign against the Indian National Congress neither accepting nor rejecting the Communal Award will be remembered by the students of political history with respect and admiration. He worked so much fearlessly and positively on this issue that many of his admirers took him to be anti-Congress. He also contributed a lot through his paper at the time of partition and did his best to wake the leadership of Indian National Congress from its policy of appeasement of Muslims. Among others he had very cordial relations with Master Tara Singh. His handsome and smart son, Varinder, was one of the close advisers of revolutionary party of S. Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev, the great martyrs of India. The political influence of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava saved him from the gallows of the British Raj. He worked very wisely and cautiously and was the financial back-bone of the revolutionary student group and was able to organise the Students Union in the Lahore colleges, which rose to the status of small Congress. Dewan Chaman Lal and Dr. Mohammed Alim, who were great speakers in Urdu, drew full advantage of the students' enthusiasm and the Lahore colleges became the special venue of propoganda for the Indian struggle for freedom. Shri Varinder was the Political Secrerary of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava and with the assistance of Shri A.C. Bali he was able to keep Dr. Gopi Chand in front ranks of political life of the Punjab Congress. With all their efforts and financial resources they could not beat Dr. Satyapal, a great field worker and the Punjab Congress Chief for a number of years. Mahasha Krishan-Bhargava axis in the Punjab Congress politics could not wrest from Dr. Satyapal the presidentship of the Punjab Congress. *Dr. Gopi Chand was the leader of leaders* and though he had the backing of Sardar Patel in the

Congress High Command, yet the great field fighter Dr. Satyapal defied all the efforts of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava to oust him from the presidentship of the Punjab Congress. The struggle continued for several years and Dr. Satyapal, a fearless fighter, a great speaker in Urdu and a political figure, with all his financial difficulties, kept the flag of Indian National Congress flying in Punjab. Dr. Satyapal was a real mass leader.

Master Tara Singh and the Second World War

We have already given a bird's-eye view of political background of Punjab politics with special reference to Second World War politics. We have to discuss the role played by Master Tara Singh as leader of the Khalsa Panth and elected President of the S.G.P.C. i.e. the Panthic Parliament. The S.G.P.C. had the leadership of the progressive Sikhs and politically advanced minds. The Sikhs looked to the S.G.P.C. for a clear lead in complicated circumstances. The Indian National Congress had raised a banner of revolt against War efforts and wanted a clear-cut assurance from the British Government of *Puran Swaraj* after the conclusion of the war. Master Tara Singh was put to a great difficult position. He was afraid of urban press, which was supporting the Congress demand to boycott the war efforts and described it as an imperialist war. His supporters were putting pressure on Master ji to rise to the occasion and support the war efforts.

Master Tara Singh was afraid lest Muslims under the leadership of a very sweet, clever and pushing soldier like Sir Sikander Hayat should improve their political position during Sir Sikander Hayat Ministry which was in fact the beginning of the creating of Pakistan. Sir Sikander Hayat, in the name and under cover of

'*Punjab for Punjabis*', was consolidating the Muslim power in the State administration. Very competent and able, Muslim I.C.S. officers were picked up and placed at the key-posts in the Secretariat. All these circumstances greatly influenced the future policy of Master Tara Singh.

At last Master Tara Singh took a very bold step and wrote his famous letter to Mahatma Gandhi explaining to him that he could not advise the Sikhs to give up army ranks as they were followers of the great, Guru Gobind Singh, who had transformed the Sikh Nation into a martial race. Moreover he pleaded his inability to mollify the Sikhs as the Congress had let them down in the Communal Award. The Communal Award broke the political backbone of the Sikhs while it gave to the Muslims statutory majority in the Punjab. This historic letter created a great political stir in the Press. The British diplomats hailed it and it also brought nearer to the Britishers, Sir Joginder Singh, who was the adviser of Master Tara Singh. This also proved that Master ji was a flexible politician and stood for the power of the Panth and could adjust himself according to the circumstances and for the well-fare of the Panth.

In the meantime Master Tara Singh was being assisted and advised by Master Sujan Singh Sirhali, Major Sujan Singh, Malik Mukhbain Singh, Bhagat Jaswant Singh, S. B. Beant Singh and S. B. Bishan Singh Singhpuria. By this time the British politicians at the all-India level began advising all the moderate and pro-War Sikh leaders to rally round Master Tara Singh, who was in position to deliver the goods at that critical moment. At this time Major Short and Col. Kill Roy, the chief officers of the British Government, made a sufficient headway and were able to convince Giani Kartar Singh, a powerful Akali leader, to support the pro-War efforts and align himself fully with Master Tara Singh.

Indian National Army, Master Tara Singh and Partition

The circumstances and the rebellion of Indian army at Japanese front made the position of the British Government very shaky in the future Indian Administration. The British Government mainly depended on Indian Army for its security and the Government in Britain through Secretary of State for India in the British Parliament and the Governor General and Viceroy of India always gave Indian army the top priority and Indian Army was the life-line of the British Administration in India. The British Government ruled India mainly through the Indian Army and the distinguished part played by the Indian Army in the Great War of 1914-1919 made its role indispensable. The role of Indian Army in Mesopotamia in First World War and discipline displayed by it made the position of Indian soldiers very strong and brought them respect and honour. The King's Commission was for the first time opened to Indian soldiers. The famous and historic attacks of Indian Sikh cavalry over the German forces near Paris added a glorious feather to the bravery of Indian Army. The attack of Gallipoli, and the part played by 14th and 15th Sikh Regiments elicited the glorious comments and praise of the British press and debates in the British Parliament in London. The rebellion of Indian Army at the critical moment of the War against

Japan and the formation of Indian National Army by General Mohan Singh of Sialkot and Col. Niranjan Singh Gill of Majitha shook the war office in London and the British politicians in London were very much terrified and began to think that even if they came out safely In the Second World War they could not keep their hold on Indian soil and the circumstances, both political and financial, would be compelling them to quit India with some prestige. Their administrative back-bone was hit at the very roots of their security in India. In the meanwhile the local Bengali patriotism gave unflinching support to Subhash Chander Bose and the credit of the forming of Indian National Army was wrongly transferred to Subhash Chander Bose. The students of political history will have all praise and appreciation for the sacrifice of Subhash Chander Bose and the very creditable, brave and astonishing part he played for liberating India under very trying circumstances, thus defeating the intelligence traps of the British Government. Words are too insignificant to record the proper estimation of his historical role. Had he not been misled by the Bengali sentiment of patriotism he would not have seen the division of Indian National Army. The Punjab and Sikh Regiments were main base and strength of Indian National Army. The Sikh soldiers of the Galipoli fame were fully conscious of British ungratefulness in return for the distinguished part played by them and were waiting for a strategic opportunity to avenge that ungratefulness of the British who after the First World War created pro-Muslim domination in Punjab, thus ignoring sacrifices of the Sikh soldiers in the First Great War. The final armistice following collapse of the German and Turkish forces in the First World War were all thrown to winds under the new policy of bringing the Muslims of India in political domination in India against the national movement of Indian National

Congress.

The British politicians could not prolong their hold on India through manoeuvres and failed to find out concrete means to settle scores with the Congress, before it achieved mass political force and was grounded firmly. The Indian National Congress was first ignored, but later on when it became a potent force it became difficult to face it. It is not within the scope of this book to go into the details of Indian National Army but the hasty handling of Indian National Army and belittlement by Subhash Chander Bose of General Mohan Singh and Col. Niranjan Singh Gill weakened the Indian National Army and its ultimate repulse at Imphal front led to its defeat. The air-crash of Sh. Netaji proved as the last nail in the already deteriorating morale of Indian National Army which was left without a Commander. The mystery could not be lifted over the air-crash of Netaji and Indian National leaders after Independence took no interest in the death of Bose, the great Hero of Indian National Struggle. The close of Second World War brought in new problems and trial of Indian National Army was the foremost one. The three Generals, Col. Dhillon, Gurbakhsh Singh, Mr. Shah Nawaz and Mr. Sehgal were selected for trial in the Red Fort at Delhi. The Indian National Congress, in order to exploit the popular situation and slogan which the Indian National Army had assumed during Second World War, decided to defend the case of Indian National Army. The control of the Congress over the National Press gave a great swing to the publicity and the entire country was engaged with the defence question of Indian National Army and it became the talk of every political household and political table in the country. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, for the first time in the political life, wore the dress of Bar-at-law and became the spear-head of the

defence of the trial. This gave great momentum to the political strength of the Congress. *The British Army advisers by this time in their top secret political conference had decided to wind up their affairs in India, as they clearly realised that they could not hold their own after this collision with Indian National Army movement.* The history is as yet to record and witness the patience and fortitude of the British nation as a whole to deal with this problem. The strict secretness and the utmost precaution of the high-ups in the military and civil administration to deal with the problem eased the political pressure. The British Army Officers acted prudently and wisely and did not show any cause of anxiety. In fact it was the strongest and most *effective blow* to the British imperialism, which compelled it to wind up its affairs in India. The trial was withdrawn, because the Britishers had decided to quit India peacefully and honourably and throwing India to chaos and confusion as Gandhi ji once said : *"Please leave us to chaos, confusion and leave us to God."*

The part played by the Indian National Congress in defending the personnel of Indian National Army proved to be of great political importance and the wheel of Congress propaganda in the press and on the platform under the leadership of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, moved, giving great help in sweeping the polls in the General Elections of 1945 in the entire country. The main plan in the propaganda and election stir was the saving of the thousands of soldiers from the revengeful hands of the British Imperialism. These events and the subsequent results of the General Elections of 1945 cleared the way of British quitting India and the announcement in parliament at London of 20th May 1946 that British Government in India would hand over the power to the political parties in India under all circumstances and that they had decided to transfer power to the Indian

Nation. The Bill of Independence of India was moved in the British Parliament and the Indian Independence appeared to be a reality in no time. The division of India into Indian Union and Pakistan became real and the leaders of the Khalsa Panth raised slogan of Punjab to be partitioned in the interest of the Sikhs. The slogan of partition of Punjab was raised by Master Tara Singh alone, and I am compelled to record that there was some far-fetched internal voice which brought Master Tara Singh to this mood of asking for the partition of Punjab instead of throwing the fate of the Khalsa Panth to the Muslim League. Master Tara Singh called a very important meeting of all Sikh leaders at the Ministerial house of Sardar Swaran Singh, who held the Ministership in place of Sardar Baldev Singh at Lahore. The important leaders and even his close friends laughed at Master Tara Singh and told him plainly that it was a hollow dream to expect partition of Punjab under the circumstances. Master Tara Singh, frankly and with the sentimental feelings and with a heavy heart, told the meeting in confidence that the Khalsa could be saved only through partition of the Punjab and that if the great Guru Gobind Singh bestowed necessary power, we would get the remaining Punjab after partition. He also raised a political slogan under the advice of Gyani Kartar Singh that *four annas of united India would be better than twelve annas of Pakistan*. This popular slogan was the basic support for the partition of Punjab and the entire Hindu and national press supported the cause of partition. Master Tara Singh told the meeting plainly : "Only those will survive in the great *Ghalughara* who acquire good horses and weapons. Khalsa ji, do not take me lightly. I am speaking from the core of my heart. I fear that the combined strength of the British Government and the Muslim League has created a situation beyond our control. The Khalsa Panth's existence is in

great danger. The only possible course left with the Panth is unity among its ranks and preparation for last defence and resorting to armed defence is the only solution to save yourselves'. He appealed to West Punjab leaders and the rank and file of the Khalsa to be equal to the occasion. Important leader of West Punjab, S. Sampuran Singh Lyallpuri M. L. A., laughed at Master Tara Singh and opposed the partition formula describing it as a mad dream. S. Kartar Singh Dewana and S. B. Buta Singh of Shekhupura took it as mere slogan of propaganda and were convinced that Mr. Jinnah would not agree to the partition of Punjab and that the British Government would not concede the partition of Punjab over the head of Mr. Jinnah. The partition formula gained momentum and support in the Punjab press and the Bengali Congress leaders also raised slogan for demand of partition of Bengal. This gave a great political and mental trouble to Mr. Jinnah and he started putting political and diplomatic pressure on the British Government to check the wave and move of partition of Punjab and Bengal. This move, he declared, aimed to weaken the fundamental structure of Pakistan. Unfortunately S. Baldev Singh who was the chief spokesman of the Khalsa Panth with the British Government had no stake in the West Punjab and moreover this partition slogan coming from the leader of the Panth gave them signal for future political safety and the British Government sounded the Punjab Governor, Mr. E. V. Jenkins, about the feasibility and the possibility of Punjab partition. The clever and energetic Muslim officers in the Punjab Secretariat became alert and the partition of Punjab assumed the shape of real problem to be dealt with. The Debate in Parliament at London was very interesting and meaningful and the important speakers in Parliament showed horror and pleaded advice to brave and martial Sikh Nation not to press for

/partition of the Punjab, arguing that the partition would cut the brave and martial Sikh Nation from the middle and the Sikh Nation would be cut into pieces which would be detrimental to the economic and political future of the Sikhs and many pro-Sikh speeches were made on the floor of British Parliament to oppose the Partition of the Punjab. The Viceroy tried to wean away the moderate Sikhs like Col. Buta Singh of Amritsar and Col. Naunihal Singh. As Col. Buta Singh belonged to Amritsar, he remained luke-warm and did not bother to stem the tide of partition which had gained great momentum by this time. All Punjabis began to think on the lines of partition. Mahasha Krishan of the Daily Partap played a very important role in supporting the partition formula.

The partition formula gained momentum in very short time and the Boundary Commission was set up at Lahore with Mr. Redcliffe as Chairman. The members of the Commission were Mr. Munir, Mr. Din Mohammed, M. C. Mahajan and S. Teja Singh Judge of the Punjab High Court. The appointment of Boundary Commission shook the West Punjabis and the colonists of Layallpur and Montgomery, whose hearths and homes were in danger. The wise people began to shift to other parts of the country visualizing the uncertainty of West Punjab future. Mr Redcliffe did not participate in the Commission's proceedings and remained at Delhi under a heavy guard and the day-to-day proceedings were sent to him by post. That was political disgrace hurled on the non-Muslim minority and they swallowed it under the advice of Shri Mehar Chand Mahajan, who was very optimistic about getting Lahore from the Boundary Commission. Mr. Jenkins, the Governor of the Punjab, was very sympathetic towards the Sikh soldiers and Sikh colonists. The part played by the Sikh soldiers in the Second World War left an indelible impression on Mr. Jenkins and

through his diplomatic pressure he succeeded in adding to the terms of reference to the Punjab Boundary Commission the population basis and *other factors*. The other factors gave some mental relief to the minorities of Punjab, but the unfortunate appointment of Mr. Redcliffe was a bad choice. He was in the political pocket of Mr. Jinnah. The brave Master Tara Singh in his preparation to clear East Punjab from the Muslims in time could not boycott the Boundary Commission when all efforts should have been made to change Mr. Redcliffe. The most unfortunate development was that the central leaders of the Congress High Command were not interested in the future of Punjab and Pandit Jawahar Lal in one of his press conferences at Delhi lightly remarked that *district on this side and district on that side did not mean much in the partition of big Indian sub-continent*. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and V. B. Patel were eager to become Confederate rulers of India at the cost of becoming protagonists of partition of the country.

The Demand for Sikh State

In 1940 the Muslim League demanded Pakistan. Quick came the Sikhs on their heels with the Akali Dal Working Committee passing a resolution on 7th June 1943 for Azad Punjab (Independent Sikh State). The Sikh Community at large was behind this demand; the Sikh population of Rawalpindi and Jhelum was alone opposed to this demand as these areas had no prospects of inclusion in the said Sikh State. The Sikh state was intended to be carved out in the middle of the would-be Pakistan and Bharat. The proposed Sikh State visualised inclusion of the Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Kalsia, the Malerkotla State and Simla, Ambala, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Lahore, Lyalpur, Gujranwala, Shekhupura, Montgomery, Hissar, Rohtak and Karnal districts.

The so-called nationalist Sikhs started opposing the demand for the Sikh State. Master Tara Singh resigned presidentship of the Akali Dal on 4th March 1944. His resignation was a protest against the anti-Panthic activities of Baba Kharak Singh and Jhabal Brothers of Central Akali Dal who were all out for opposing the formation of the Sikh State. Master ji resorted to *agyatvas*. I described the resignation of Master Tara Singh as a black day for the Sikhs. (The Tribune, March 7, 1944).

Gyani Kartar Singh declared that Punjab was the

Homeland of the Sikhs, who would in no case tolerate the dominance of the Muslims in this province, (The Tribune, May 14, 1944).

On the birth-day of Master Tara Singh which fell on 27th June 1944, he returned from agyatvas to the active politics on the request of prominent Akali leaders.

On 5th August 1944, Mr. Jinnah declared that the Sikhs were a separate Nation and their sentiments needed to be respected.

Sardar Mangal Singh M.L.A. (Central) declared that the Sikh State would become a reality in the wake of formation of Pakistan. However, he asserted that the newly emerged Sikh State would remain linked with *Bharatvarsh*.

On August 20, 1944, an All India Sikh Convention was held in Teja Singh Samundri Hall. Gyani Kartar Singh moved resolution for the Sikh state which was unanimously passed.

Master Tara Singh observed on 5th September 1944, that the Sikhs paid 26 per cent revenue in the united Pnnjab and owned 33 per cent property of the province and that as such the Sikh State was their legitimate right.

Earlier Sardar Sobha Singh had said on September 3, 1944 that the Sikhs were the rightful recipients of Punjab, as the Briiish had acquired it from the Sikhs.

The famous and wicked *Rajaji Formula* was opposed by Akali Dal tooth and nail as the said formula envisaged Pakistan upto the bank of the Sutlej while the Muslim League wanted border of Pakistan at Ambala.

On 8th October 1944, Master Tara Singh said in the Akhand Bharat Conference held at Delhi that the Sikhs were the sword-arm of India and that as such they were the real owners of the Punjab and that *the whole Punjab was the Sikh State*.

On 14th October 1944, while hoisting the *Nishan Sahib* at the venue of the Akali Conference at Lahore, Master

Tara Singh named the Communists, the Britishers, Mahatma Candhi and Mr. Jinnah as the four enemies of the Sikh Panth.

On March 10, 1945 S. G. P. C. also came forward with the demand for a sovereign Sikh State.

On June 25, 1945 Master Tara Singh participated in the Simla Conference which was attended by the Congress, Muslim League and the British high-ups. Master ji also met Bhola Bhai Dasai on June 27. S. Baldev Singh met the Viceroy of India. On June 29 the Simla Conference was postponed. The Conference failed on July 14.

On July 15, 1945, Master Tara Singh declared that the Sikhs would oppose the move for Pakistan with full force. He further declared that Mr. Jinnah should accept the demand for *Sikh State* if he wanted his Pakistan. On the same day he came forward with his argument that non-acceptance of Sikh State demand on the plea that the Sikhs had no majority in any region of Punjab had no basis as the Jews having only 10 per cent population in Palastine had got their Homeland. He argued that if population was the basis, the Sikh case was still stronger than that of the Jews.

In July 1945, Labour Party came in power in England. Lord Attley became Prime Minister, He declared that India would get freedom very soon.

✓ In March 1946 Akali-Congress-Unionist Coalition held reigns of the government in Punjab. Sardar Baldev Singh represented Akali Dal in the Punjab Ministry.

✓ On March 21, 1946 the Akali Dal held meeting in the Assembly Chamber, Lahore. Master Tara Singh and Sardar Baldev Singh were also present. The Sikh State ✓demand was reiterated in the meeting.

On 5th April 1946 Sardar Patel declared : "Sikhistan issue will be considered in the Constituent Assembly after the transfer of power in the hands of the Indians."

On 6th April 1946 Master Tara Singh declared : "The

Sikhs will not tolerate the inclusion of Punjab in Pakistan. We shall be contented with a Sikh State in free India".

In April 1946 the Sikhs placed two alternative demands before the Cabinet Mission. They wanted either independent *Khalistan* or Khalitan as a federal limb of India. But it was a diplomatic mistake. The Sikh leaders should have demanded only the *Sikh State*.

On 15th April 1946 Master Tara Singh, announced : "The Sikhs want *united (Sanjha) Bharat and joint government (with Muslim League and Congress).*"

Thus it was that the bogey of the Sikh State was derailed. It was an unfortunate development.

On 15th May 1946 the Ramgarhia Conference opposed the creation of the Sikh State.

On 12 May 1946, Sardar Baldev Singh made this novel statement : "Between Ravi and Meerut should stretch the *Jatistan*". (The Tribune, 13th May 1946).

On May 16, 1946 was published the *Cabinet Mission Report*. For the Sikhs it was a bolt from the blue as it left the Sikhs on the mercy of the Muslims.

On 18th May 1946 the Akali Dal Working Committee secretly decided launching of Morcha to forestall formation of Pakistan. Master ji threatened revolt. Gyani Gurmukh Singh Mussafir observed that the Sikhs had been ignored. *Mahatma Gandhi and Muslim League accepted Cabinet Mission Plan which envisaged the merger of entire Punjab in Pakistan.*

On 10th June 1946 eight hundred representatives of the Panth assembled at Amritsar. General Mohan Singh also participated in the deliberations. This Convention totally rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. Master Tara Singh announced : "Either we shall finish the Britishers in India or we shall be finished".

At this juncture several Sikh leaders started demanding Ravi as Pakistan border.

On 16th August, 1946 the Muslim League started direct action in Bengal. Six thousand persons were murdered. Jinnah came forth with the slogan : "Pakistan or Civil War !" On 26th January 1947 riots started in Punjab.

On March 2, 1947 the Coalition Ministry headed by Khizar Hayat resigned. The Governor invited Muslim League to form the Government. On the same day the Muslim League fixed their flag on the Assembly Hall, but as described elsewhere in the book, Master Tara Singh tore the flag, thus forestalling Muslim League government in Punjab. On March 4, 1947, the Sikh and Hindu students took out a protest procession. The Police opened fire, killing thirteen persons and injuring 103. This intensified rioting.

Now the time for the demand for Sikh State was almost over. Akali Dal Working Committee passed resolution for the division of the Punjab on April 17, 1947. Master Tara Singh demanded division of Punjab with Chenab as the border as the only solution of terminating swelling riots.

In the meanwhile on March 24, 1947, Lord Mountbaton had taken over charge as Viceroy. On June 3, 1947, he announced Mountbaton Plan for dividing the Punjab. On June 9, the Muslim League accepted this plan. Congress accepted it on June 15. The Sikhs objected to the several short-comings of the plan but hesitatingly accepted it. They preferred to remain with India. Then started Muslim League and Akali Dal parleys but Jinnah was adamant not to yield anything to the Sikhs. Penderal Moon, in his book Divide and Quit (1961), rightly observed that Jinnah knew about Punjab as little as Chamberlain knew of Czechoslovakia. The Sikh-Muslim talks failed. I fully agreed with Master ji that at long last the Muslims would betray the Sikhs.

In August 1947, Redcliffe drew the dividing line and cut the Punjab into two parts.

The Advent of Pakistan

The advent of Pakistan was first visualised by Shri Raj Gopal Acharya, the closest adviser of Mahatma Gandhi and he told the Congress Working Committee at New Delhi that they could not enjoy the freedom of India and the dream of Independent India could not be realized until and unless the Congress High Command was prepared to swallow the bitter pill of the creation of Pakistan and the Division of India into two parts. The British politicians were not prepared to quit India peacefully until India was divided into two parts. The policy of the British Government had been to divide the country into parts. The position must be historically looked into and the hard reality of division of states must be kept in view.

The Congress Working Committee remained in session for many days as it was a crucial turning point in the political history of India. Gandhi ji was horrified and shocked at this proposal and told Raja ji that he looked upon the division of India as cutting the Indian cow into two parts and he said that he stood committed to Indian masses not to accept the division of India after the departure of the British and transfer of power to Indian representatives. In spite of Mahatma Gandhi's blunt refusal to Raja ji he opened negotiations with the Muslim League leaders and the diplomatic representatives of the British Govern-

ment and the coming of Pakistan began to appear as a reality and the Muslim League leaders intensified their efforts with the British Government for the creating of Pakistan. Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru realized the hard truth and began to think in terms of division of India and the both topmost leaders of the Congress High Command continued to mobilise the public opinion and the political support among the Congress High Command in favour of accepting the division of Indian sub-continent into Pakistan and Indian Union. The two leaders, Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru, the spokesmen of the Indian National Congress, met Lord Mountbaton and gave him signal to accept the division of India and offered their consent to swallow the bitter pill of Pakistan. Lord Mountbaton felt jubilant and thanked God that his mission of creating Pakistan had been achieved with the goodwill and consent of the Congress High Command.

The British politicians became very active and made hasty preparations to divide India and quit India with the mutual consent of Indian National Congress and Muslim League leaders. Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru did not disclose to Gandhi ji that they had given consent to Lord Mountbaton for the creation of Pakistan. The British representatives intensified their efforts to divide India and Gandhi ji was later on shocked to learn that Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru had agreed to the creation of Pakistan. The Working Committee of Indian National Congress recorded this fact with heavy heart and Gandhi ji refused to accept this, but he told Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel that they would be held responsible for the consequences as it was clear political and moral betrayal of the pledges of the Indian National Congress to the Indian masses who had stood behind the Congress in the struggle for freedom against the British Imperialism.

From that date Gandhi ji discontinued taking any

interest in the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee and felt offended at the attitude of Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru and threw the whole responsibility for future events on them. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, the real architects for the division of India, became active for the partition of India and creation of Pakistan. This development in Delhi political circles cautioned the Panthic leaders and Master Tara Singh, the leader of the Khalsa Panth, with headquarters at Amritsar, gave a red signal to the Panth and the Punjabis that Pakistan was coming and the British politicians had decided to throw Punjab into hands of the Muslims. This development shocked the retired Indian Military personnel, the heroes of first Great World War and Second World War. The coming of Pakistan became a reality and every Punjabi and Bengali felt the shadow of Pakistan. Old ties of love and affection were turned in a few moments into disaffection, mistrust and hatred and passions ran beyond control and all inhabitants of these two provinces felt uneasy and helpless in the circumstances. The Punjab got its saviour in a daring selfless leader, Master Tara Singh, who well understood the technique and future programme of the Muslim League at the time of partition. The confidential circular issued by the Muslim League to the Muslim National Guards and the great killing perpetrated on the non-Muslims by the Suhrawardi Ministry in Bengal served as eye-opener throughout the country. This event cautioned Master Tara Singh who laid down the defence programme in the meeting of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal at Amritsar and warned the important Sikh leaders of the grave situation confronting the non-Muslim Minorities in Punjab and Bengal.

The Congress High Command committed a horrible blunder in accepting referendum in North West

Frontier Province over the issue of Pakistan. The brave soldiers of Independence, the Pathans, under the leadership of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, were left in the lurch and the most fatal step taken by the Khan Ministry in boycotting the referendum when they were in power and the Red Shirts had great control over the masses and the non-Muslim Minorities were fully behind them. They could score in referendum had they worked hard and a very small margin in the result of referendum exposed the hollowness and political folly of the Khan Ministry in boycotting the referendum and thus throwing the Frontier Province under the heels of Pakistan, ignoring the sacrifices of brave nationalist Pathans.

Thus the great Khizar Ministry resigned and the Punjab was thrown in chaos and confusion. The situation at once deteriorated and the non-Muslim Minorities in Punjab were put under great difficulties and handicaps. Their life and property were exposed to great danger. Sir Zafar Ullah brought a special message for Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, the Punjab Chief Minister, that the British Government had decided to quit India under peaceful programme and he was asked to clear the road for Muslim League to assume power in the Punjab after the quittal of British. The resignation of Khizar Ministry proved a great risk to the life and property of non-Muslims. Master Tara Singh realizing the gravity of the situation came in the field and I would say a real inner light provided an opportunity to resist the formation of Muslim League Ministry with all the might at the command of the Khalsa Panth and the Punjabis. Master Tara Singh gave bold signal to the non-Muslims: "Now or never". He explained the situation in the meeting of Akali High Command and other important Hindu leaders of the Punjab, who met at the residence of Sardar Swarn Singh at Lahore. Master ji told the high-ups of the Punjab : "If

we are not able to resist the formation of Muslim League Ministry we are bound to be thrown into an endless trouble and we will not be in a position to save our honour, life and property. The combined power and the conspiracy of British and the Muslim League must be resisted."

It was decided to hold the meeting of Panthic Assembly Party in the Committee Room of the Punjab Assembly Hall at the Charing Cross. The meeting was held at 10 a.m. in the Committee Room of the Assembly Hall and Master Tara Singh, after brief discussion highlighting the sentiments for saving Punjab from the clutches of the Muslim League, asked the members to follow him and led the members outside the Assembly Hall through its main gate, shouting boldly: "*Pakistan Murdabad!*" The members of the Assembly thoroughly panic-stricken and terrified shouted behind him. Mian Iftikhar-uddin and other Muslim leaders of Lahore were heading the procession of the Muslim mob ready for fixing the Muslim League flag over the Assembly building, thus proving their power of holding supremacy while the road for the creation of Pakistan had been cleared by the British Government.

✓ Fortunately Mian Iftikhar-ud-din who headed the Punjab Congress for many years showed great respect to Master ji and saved the situation at this critical time. Master Tara Singh drew the sword and boldly shouted that nobody could install the Muslim League flag as long as the Punjab was not divided. He declared that Punjab was joint property of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, as the Pakistan had not yet been declared. Master Tara Singh tore the Muslim League flag into pieces and in his brave and commanding voice declared that Assembly building was the joint property of the Punjabis and nobody could be permitted to install the Muslim League flag there by force.

Mian Iftikhar-ud-din checked the Muslim mob at a distance and controlled the mob with great difficulty and touched the knees of Master Tara Singh and assured him that they would not install the Muslim League flag over the Assembly Hall and Master ji's sentiments would be properly respected. The members of Panthic Assembly Party got encouraged over the great victory which Master ji achieved for the Panth and the Punjab and continued slogans : "*Master Tara Singh Zindabad — United Punjab Zindabad !*" The Muslim mob melted into back-ground and moved towards the city. The situation was saved and the great Guru Nanak gave first victory to Master Tara Singh in checking the tide of Muslim aggression and the wisdom of Mian Iftikhar-ud-din saved the situation. The Panthic members of the Assembly marched towards the Government House on the Mall in a procession with Master Tara Singh at its head, shouting slogans: "*Pakistan Murdabad !*" They handed over a memorandum to the Governor pleading therein that the life and property of the Hindus and Sikhs were not safe at the hands of *Muslim National Guards* and that the city should be placed under the control of the army, as the non-Muslims had lost all faith in the Lahore Police. The news of tearing the Pakistan flag into pieces by Master Tara Singh spread like wild fire in the city and the whole population became active and alert and the chances of Muslim League Ministry fell to the ground. The Governor told the Muslim League leaders at 3-30 p.m. in the Government House that it was not advisable to form the Ministry of the League at that hour and he had to consult His Excellency the Viceroy at Delhi about the critical situation. The intelligent Muslim League leaders like Mian Iftikhar-ud-din realized the truth that the incident at Assembly Hall in the morning and the tearing of the Muslim flag by Master ji was in fact responsible for this crisis and the formation of the Muslim

League Ministry had gone into the background.

This incident gave great encouragement to non-Muslims of Lahore, who decided to organise them for meeting the Muslim aggression. The R. S. S. volunteers were organised into Mohalla Defence Committees and bombs were thrown here and there to meet the technique of Muslim League stabbing. The D. A. V. College students took active part in the bomb-throwing campaign at the Muslim mobs and this had a salutary checking effect on the stabbing game of the Muslim League. In the evening a mammoth meeting was held in the premises of Fateh Chand College and the prominent Hindu leaders like Sir Gokal Dhand Narang, Goswami Ganesh Dutt, R. B. Ram Saran Das, R. B. Gopal Das M. L. A. and others declared Master Tara Singh as the saviour of the Hindus and the Sikhs and elected Master Tara Singh as the Dictator of Hindu-sikh defence against the aggression of the Muslims. This brave resistance of Master Tara Singh had immediate effect and the basic victory was achieved in the defence of Hindus and Sikhs when the Governor's rule was declared within a week. So the first achievement in the programme of defence was secured by Mastar ji and the Muslims were cautioned and they realized the power of resistance which they would have to meet in the leadership of Master Tara Singh. A strong Defence Committee was formed with Sir Gokal Narang, Bakshi Tek Chand, R. B. Badri Das, Sardar Ujjal Singh and S. Sewa Singh. Sardar Swarn Singh and Sardar Ujjai Singh took very active part in the defence of the Punjab and even the legal help was provided to the victims of Police aggression. Master Tara Singh kept his headquarters at Amritsar.

If Mastar Tara Singh had not torn the Muslim League flag to pieces the chances of Muslim League devouring the whole of Punjab with the Congress idly reiterating demand for *Akhand Bharat* would have become

a reality. The heroism of Master Tara Singh cannot be overemphasised in the light of this event. Only it was this incident which brought Hindus close to the Sikhs while a catastrophe threatened both Hindus and Sikhs. The Hindus discovered saviours too late. They have been discovering them as their saviours in the past too but invariably too late. The Sikh and Hindu Punjabis would have suffered continued bondage under Muslim sword till this day if Master ji's drawn sword had not nipped their vicious designs on that fateful day. The Hindus appreciated the Sikh determination to stand by them and here and there they declared that after the liberation from British yokes they would have no objection if the Sikhs wanted even secession from them. The Hindus said that they had nothing to fear joint Hindu-Sikh Raj or even the Sikh buffer-state between India and Pakistan. The Muslims, too, spread bait to the Sikhs, holding out promise that they were prepared to accommodate Sikhs in Pakistan as their limb in Pakistan Federation.

Earlier in 1946 while myself, Sardar Kartar Singh Dewana and Master Sujan Singh Sirhali met Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Patel as representatives of the Akali Dal they had assured us that in the event of suffocation felt by Sikhs in free India, a separate Sikh State would be carved out for them in the Indian Union.

The Sikhs cast their lot with the Hindus and the credit for the existence of the Punjab province on this side of the border goes solely to the Sikhs. The Muslim League wanted Pakistan upto the Jamuna.

The Independence of India was a reality on 15th August 1947 but the Azadi splashed us in blood before and after that day. We had unprecedented blood-bath in Punjab.

The Muslim map showing Pakistan abutting waters

of Jamuna was torn by Master Tara Singh with a drawn sword which pierced the Muslim League flag. In March 1947 he shortened Pakistan if he did not efface it and he did so with a drawn sword as is the Sikh tradition.

After Partition

(1947 to 1970)

While Karachi and New Delhi celebrated the dawn of independence, sensible people wept on the split of their country into two parts. The Congress sat on the Delhi throne and the Muslim League occupied the throne in Pakistan. The Hindus and Sikh caravans left Pakistan and Mohammedans moved to Pakistan. People decayed in government camps. The Punjab was littered by caravan routes and rivers of blood flowed. Arson, loot and blood became rampant. Women jumped in wells to forestall their rape. Here and there people sang the lines of the Punjabi poet, Feroze Din Sharaf :

ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਕੌਮ ਉੱਤੇ ਆਕੇ 'ਵਾ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਵੱਗਦੀ ਏ—
ਓਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸੱਚਿਆਂ ਆਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੋਸ਼ ਨਾ ਸੀਸ ਤੇ ਪੱਗ ਦੀ ਏ !
ਘਰ ਉਜੜਦੇ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਮੱਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ, ਬੱਤੀ ਮੋਮ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਜੱਗਦੀ ਏ !
'ਸ਼ਰਫ' ਖੂਨ ਗ਼ਰੀਬਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੁਚੜ ਜਾਂਦੇ, ਮਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਏ !

Whenever on any land freedom dawns,
The patriots confront trying conditions !
Several beehives disappear in a moment—
And then wax-candles burn in homes !
O Sharaf, the poor people become refugees—
While their blood paints the faces of the rich.
The Punjabis moving across the Indus, Jhelum,
Chenab and Ravi saw for the last time their temples on the
other side of Ravi. The birth-place of Guru Nanak was left

in Pakistan and the two places, *Kartarpur and Dera Baba Nanak, with the Ravi flowing in the middle of them, became towns of two different countries* The fragrance of the memory of the last days of Guru Nanak spent in these two towns was divided between Pakistan and India. Again the Dehra Sahib Lahore which commemorates Guru Arjan's martyrdom was no more in India. Lahore and Kasur, founded by the two sons of Ram Chander were now parts of Pakistan. While the Hindu and Sikhs refugees entered India, their plight continued unabated. They had lost more in Pakistan than what they hoped to get in India. While the Punjab was divided in two parts, the agricultural land which the Sikhs and Hindus lost in Pakistan was more than what the Mohammedans left in India.

The refugees stinked here and there but they did not lost heart. The reminiscences of their hearths and homes left on the other side of Ravi were a sore in their hearts. They reconciled themselves to the new conditions and gradually eked out living for them by sheer dint of hard work.

In the joint Punjab the Sikhs were a minority. In the new Punjab also they were a minority. Gone were the days when bravery counted and here they stood bewildered. The Sikh leadership groped in dark to catch at a ray of hope. As previously told, on 23rd January, 1948 the deputation of three persons namely, Gyani Kartar Singh, Bhupinder Singh Man and myself knocked at the door of Dr. Ambedkar and he pointed out that our remedy lay in demanding *Punjabi Suba*.

We declared to hold Akali Conference at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj, New Delhi on 20th February, 1948. The Government banned this conference, but we still held it. All speakers who addresssd the Conrerence were arrested including myself. Master Tara Singh was arrested on February 19, 1948 at Narela Railway Station,

while coming to New Delhi.

In quick succession came the declaration by Chandu Lal Trivedi, the Governor of Punjab, labelling the Sikhs as a criminal tribe. On October 10, 1947 a circular was issued to all the Deputy Commissioners, containing the following words :

“Sikhs as a community are a lawless people and are a menace to the law-abiding Hindus in the province. Deputy Commissioners should take special measures against them”.

The students of history are acquainted with the nefarious role of Dewan Chandu Lal who had a role in the martyrdom of Guru Arjan. Emperor Jahangir and Dewan Chandu Lal, working in collaboration, paved the way of Guru Arjan's martyrdom, following inhuman tortures inflicted on the Guru. But here was Chandu Lal born again. It was also in free India that the most talented Sikh I. C. S. officer, Sirdar Kapur Singh, was sacked on flimsy charges.

A time came when almost all the associates of Master Tara Singh left him in bewilderment, under the lure of offices from the Congress Government. Only Bhag Singh Gurdaspuri, S. Sarup Singh, Amar Singh Ambalvi, Pritam Singh Gojran and myself remained with Master Tara Singh in this difficult and trying period.

The census operations of 1951 depicted Punjabi Hindu character in the true colours when they openly disowned their mother-tongue, Punjabi, as their language. No second instance of such deliberate falsehood uttered by a majority community can be pointed out.

No stone was unturned by the Government to defeat the Akali candidates in 1952 General Elections. There was rigging on large scale.

With the formation of United Front Ministry in Pepsu in April 1952, the first non-Congress government in India appeared on the scene with Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala

as its Chief Minister. I was appointed as Adviser of this government on behalf of the Akali-Dal. This Government functioned well but its success rankled in the heart of the central Government. Many intrigues were launched against this government and ultimately Jawahar Lal Nehru succeeded in the collapse of this Government in March 1953. The fall of this government was a clear proof of the hollowness of the slogans of democracy and secularism often raised by Mr. Nehru.

S. Atma Singh's Valour

In 1953, the Akali leader, S. Atma Singh, exhibiting great courage, snatched the microphone from the hands of the Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru and did not allow him to utter even a single word at Fatehgarh Sahib. Sardar Atma Singh was assisted by a band of spirited young men including Sardar Tirlochan Singh, Sardar Gursewak Singh, Sardar Amarjit Singh and others. This news was flashed throughout the world. The Akalis could under no circumstances allow the Prime Minister to injure their susceptibilities by opposing the Punjabi Suba movement and that too in their religious centre. Earlier Pandit Nehru had declared that Fatehgarh Sahib was a fortress of the Sikhs and he had come to conquer it.

In the 1954 Gurdwara Elections, the Akali Dal swept the polls. The Nagoke group was badly defeated in these elections resulting in virtual obliteration of this group from the Sikh political scene. I also won in this election by thumping majority from Qadian constituency while my opponent forfeited the security deposit.

The first Punjabi Suba Morcha was launched in 1955 in which more than twelve thousand Sikhs courted arrests. Master Tara Singh had instructed me to remain underground and to work for press publicity. S. Narinder

Singh Bhuler, one of the dictators of the Morcha did excellent job. The Morcha was a success. The Central Government offered Regional Formula, thus making peace with the Akalis. This was obviously a step towards ultimate formation of Punjabi Suba. The government was compelled to do so.

✓ In 1957 Master Tara Singh committed a wholesale political blunder by entering into pact with the Congress for General Elections. Sardar Hukam Singh got Deputy-Speakership and Gyani Kartar Singh ministership as their rewards. As a sequel to these rewards, government entrusted them the duty of ousting Master Tara Singh from S. G. P. C. They purchased S. G. P. C. members and set up Sardar Prem Singh Lalpura as their candidate against Master ji who defeated Master ji by one vote on 16th November 1958.

In 1960 S. G. P. C. elections Sardar Partap Singh Kairon, Sardar Hukam Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh formed Sadh Sangat Board against the Akali Dal and fielded their candidates. However, they were badly defeated securing only three seats out of 140.

In 1950 Master Tara Singh launched second Punjabi Suba Morcha. This time as many as fifty seven thousand Akalis courted arrests. The role played by Gyani Kartar Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala, Sardar Hukam Singh and Action Committee of the Morcha, however, precipitated failure of the Morcha. Master Tara Singh now committed the second great blunder by passing on leadership of the Dal in the hands of Sant Fateh Singh, who rallied around him all illiterate Jathedars and became all powerful in the Akali Dal. Moreover, the politics of fast unto death was a folly. I had been the member of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal for thirty continuous years. I resigned from the membership of the Working Committee of the Akali Dal as a protest against the surrender of Master Tara Singh

before the ignorant leaders.

In the 1965 Indo-Pak War, the Madrasi and Bihari regiments of the Indian Army fled away from the Punjab front, leaving Sikh regiments alone to settle scores with the Pakistani forces. Then it was that the gallant sons of Guru Gobind Singh tied bombs to their breasts and lay before advancing Patton tanks, thus destroying the tanks by sacrificing their lives. *After the War, the military generals prevailed upon the Central Government to win the hearts of the Sikhs to ensure defence of the country. The credit for accepting the long standing Sikh demand for Punjabi Suba goes to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the grand upholder of secularism. She did what her father had resisted for eighteen years long. (A separate chapter on Punjabi Suba Movement has been included in this book.)*

In 1966 the Sikhs got Punjabi Suba at the cost of blood. Earlier in 1965, before the Indo-Pak War had broken out, Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister, had told Sant Fateh Singh that *Punjabi Suba was not an apple which he would present him in golden plate.*

Sant Fateh Singh several times resorted to fast unto death for inclusion of the left-over Punjabi-speaking areas in the Punjab and even staged *drama of martyrdom* by burning himself alive. He with others put on saffron robes but at appointed time they postponed drama of death in the hope that Hukam Singh would come to their rescue. Hukam Singh did come an hour later and that was the close of the drama. Hukam Singh declared that Indira Gandhi had conceded the merger of Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas in Punjab. However Indira Gandhi never confirmed having agreed to do so. Thus it was that a black spot was contributed by Sant Fateh Singh to the otherwise great grace of the Sikh community and its zeal for dying for noble cause.

After independence the Punjab has had its first

non-Congress (Akali-Jansangh) government in March 1967 under the chief-ministership of Sardar Gurnam Singh. He was a renowned jurist but had little contact with the masses. He used to stop meeting people after 6 p.m. and it was not like a popular Chief Minister. His Government was toppled in November 1967 by Sardar Lachhman Singh Gill who was a strong man of action, having great love for the Punjab and the Punjabi language. The highest credit for elevating the status of Punjabi as state language goes to Sardar Lachhman Singh Gill who will ever be remembered in the annals of the Punjab.

Master Tara Singh, the most colourful and outstanding Sikh leader of the 20th century passed away on 22nd November 1967, one year after the fulfilment of his dream of Punjabi Suba. Despite a few blunders committed by him he ever remained loyal to the Sikh cause. He was a splendid embodiment of Sikh aspirations. He was a journalist and writer as well as a statesman par excellence. He wrote editorials for Daily Parhhat for many years. ✓ His autobiography gives an interesting account of his eventful life. His novels, *Baba Tegha Singh* and *Prem Lagan*, remain great inspirers of the Sikh zeal.

Again in 1969 Akali-Jansangh Alliance captured power in the Punjab and Sardar Gurnam Singh once again became Chief Minister. On 15th August 1969 Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman resorted to fast unto death. But this fast was a real fast and no farce. Sardar Pheruman washed with his blood the ugly stain which had marred the Sikh glory following Sant Fateh Singh's so-called fast unto death. Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman died as a real hero, sacrificing his life for rekindling the chivalrous Sikh tradition of martyrdom. Again the world was convinced that the Sikhs up for a cause were still prepared to be sawn alive, boiled alive,

beheaded and broken on forked wheels. ✓ In 1970 Parkash Singh Badal replaced Gurnam Singh as Akali Chief Minister of the Punjab.

The Punjab had Gopi Chand Bhargav, Bhim Sen Sachar, Partap Singh Kairon, Ram Kishan, Gurmukh Singh Mussafir, Gurnam Singh, Lachhman Singh Gill and Parkash Singh Badal as its Chief Ministers from 15th August 1947 to 1970. I may observe here that Sardar Partap Singh Kairon and Sardar Lachhman Singh Gill were the strongest Chief Ministers of the Punjab while Comrade Ram Kishan was the weakest.

From the foregoing account it follows that the Sikhs still can wield sword and can die for noble cause. However the feats of statemenship are not their prerogative. They can plough, but they cannot argue in court. They are soldiers and can labour on fields. They have sympathy and love for the so-called low classes. However they have yet to learn how to rule. Their legacy goes back to the rare personality of Guru Gobind Singh, the grand prophet who was warrior, scholar, law-giver and poet in one. Let them imbibe from their fountain-source, Guru Gobind Singh, the feats of statesmanship and scholarship too and let them be second to none in world councils. They have spread over every corner of the world but they have not carried to every part of the world the total ideology of their founder. Now and then they fought for chairs too, but let them know that chairs are too low when viewed in the light of their grand tradition. ✓ Let them not forget Bhai Mani Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh and Bhai Taru Singh and let them march on vigorously and triumphantly. ✓ Kingship is not their ambition. When they seek Kingship, they do so for serving the people and not for exploiting them. ✓ We shall rule to serve while others have been ruling to exploit.

I may bring on record here that these fifty years

have produced many great writers and artists in the Punjab. On the one hand we have had such great poets as Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, Bhai Vir Singh, Professor Puran Singh, Dhani Ram Chatrik, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Professor Mohan Singh, Avtar Singh Azad and Pritam Singh Safeer. Among prose-writers we have had Sardar Gurbakhash Singh Preet-Lari, Principal Teja Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon, Sardar Kapur Singh, Mulkh Raj Anand, Krishan Chander, Sardar Khushwant Singh and Saadat Hassan Manto. Among artists we may mention names of Amrita Shergill, Sardar Sobha Singh, S.G. Thakur Singh and Sardar Kirpal Singh. We also had some great journalists during this half century, such as Sardar Amar Singh Sher-i-Punjab, Dewan Singh Maftoon, Mahasha Krishan, Prem Bhatia, Kuldip Nayyar, Sadhu Singh Hamdard and Gyani Shadi Singh. We have had fiery speakers like Principal Ganga Singh, Gyani Lal Singh, Kehar Singh Vairagi, Labh Singh Fakhar and Amar Singh Dosanjh. This period also witnessed a great *Dhadi* and writer Sardar Sohan Singh Seetal who could bewitch mammoth crowds. These fifty years also produced some outstanding leaders of Sikh youth, like S. Sarup Singh, Gurmit Singh, Bhan Singh, Jaswant Singh Phul and Satbir Singh. We have amidst us a distinguished banker Sardar Inderjit Singh.

I have portrayed as best as I could the contemporary history of the Sikhs. My object was to record facts that did not acclaim wide publicity for one reason or the other. These facts may furnish matrix for expanded historical treatises in the days to come. My long standing wish has been to write a continued history of the Punjab based on my personal observations and through this book I have relieved myself of this onerous responsibility.

Punjabi Suba Movement

As stated beforehand, Dr. Ambedkar set the Sikh leaders reorienting their demand on the linguistic basis and accordingly the Akali Dal's new demand was *Punjabi-Speaking State*.

✓✓ On 4th April 1949, a representative Sikh Convention of intellectuals, leaders, professors, businessmen, doctors and lawyers was held at Amritsar. It was there that the formal demand for Punjabi-Speaking State was enunciated in clear terms for the first time and a resolution to that effect was unanimously passed. The Mahasha press reacted bitterly and opposed the demand. Mr. Arthur Moore wrote in *Thought Weekly* that Master Tara Singh was not demanding a Sikh State whereas the Mahasha press was bent upon the creation of the same. The Sikh Congressmen followed suit and intensified opposition of the Punjabi Suba demand.

On 15th December 1950 Sardar Partap Singh Kairon called an Anti-Punjabi Suba Convention at Amritsar. Bitter speeches were delivered by Surjit Singh Majithia, Udham Singh Nagoke, Sardul Singh Kaveeshar, Sarmukh Singh Chamak and Gyani Zail Singh. On the very next day the Akali Dal held a pro-Punjabi Suba Convention in Teja Singh Samundari Hall. The demand for Punjabi Suba was reiterated. As already pointed out the Punjabi Hindus disowned their mother tongue

in the 1951 Census.

In September 1951 the Akali Dal held a mammoth Conference in support of Punjabi Suba demand. On 4th February 1952 Jawahar Lal Nehru vehemently opposed Punjabi Suba demand at Patiala.

On 15th October 1952 the control of S. G. P. C. was wrested by Akali Dal from Nagoke Group when the Akali Candidate Pritam Singh Kharanj defeated Nahar Singh by seven votes. The capture of Gurdwara platform by the Akali Dal intensified the Punjabi Suba movement.

In the beginning of 1953 the great Andhra leader Romulu, sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra Pradesh. His death ushered in formation of the Andhra Pradesh of his dreams. Incidentally this spurred Punjabi Suba movement. The President of the Pepsu Akali Dal, Sardar Sampuran Singh Raman, started fast unto death for the formation of Punjabi Suba. He was not allowed to die but his health deteriorated badly.

In February 1953 an All Parties Sikh Convention was held at Amritsar under the chairmanship of Principal Teja Singh. This convention accused the Central Government of discrimination against the Sikhs. On 2nd September 1953 the orders of the dismissal of Sardar Kapoor Singh I. C. S. from service came, which proved the Sikh allegation beyond doubt.

On 30th September 1953, the Akali Dal met in a conference at Anandpur Sahib. About 60,000 Sikhs participated in the Conference. The Conference demanded early formation of Punjabi Suba. The veteran leader, Acharya Kriplani, also supported the Sikh demands.

On 25th October 1953, a Punjabi Suba Convention was held under the presidentship of General Mohan Singh. In addition to the demand for Punjabi Suba, the convention asked for the merger of Pepsu and Punjab as well.

On 22nd December 1953 the Central Government

instituted Boundary Commission for recommending reorganisation of the States. All the members of the Commission were Hindus. On 24th February 1954 the Commission asked for suggestions. The Akali Dal Working Committee prepared the case for Punjabi Suba very carefully and diligently and presented the same to the Commission.

✓ On 5th March 1955 the Hindu Conference at its Patiala session supported the Punjabi Suba demand. Seth Ram Nath, Thakur Naval Kishore and Chaudhry Kartar Singh delivered speeches in favour of the formation of Punjabi Suba. Dr. Lankasundram also supported the demand in a press statement.

On 27th March 1955 some communal-minded Hindus demanded the formation of Maha Punjab in a convention at Amritsar.

On 6th April 1955 the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, banned the Punjabi Suba slogans.

✓ On 24th April 1955 Akali Dal Working Committee decided to start agitation against this ban.

Master Tara Singh defied the ban and courted arrest on 10th May 1955. The entire responsibility of the Morcha fell on the shoulders of the Working Committee. Gyani Kartar Singh, Gyani Labh Singh Fakhar, Ajit Singh Sarhadi and Bhai Parmanand were arrested at different places. I went underground as instructed by the Akali Dal. Daily *jathas* of 21-51 Sikhs courted arrests. The Morcha continued uninterrupted. The second dictator of the Morcha, Principal Iqbal Singh, was arrested on 10th June 1955. The third dictator, Bhupinder Singh Man, courted arrest on 21st June 1955.

✓ On 4th July 1955 at 4.00 a.m. Ashwini Kumar, D.I.G., raided the Akali Dal and S. G. P. C. offices. The police also seized Guru ka Langar. Tear gas shells were thrown in the precincts of the Hari Mandir Sahib and bullets were fired. The police closed the main gate of the Darbar Sahib

and entered Darbar Sahib with shoes on. The police arrested seven hundred Sikhs from the Golden Temple area but did not arrest Sardar Hukam Singh and Bawa Harkishan Singh. The Sikhs were astir with indignation over the length and breadth of the country. Baba Kharak Singh, too, condemned the police raid on Darbar Sahib. The Congress Minister, Gurbachan Singh Bajwa, shamefully defended the police action. The Government sealed the printing presses of *Parbhat, Akali, Ajit* and *Akati Patrika*. The Sikh jathas flocked to Darbar Sahib. The police vacated the Darbar Sahib premises on 7th July, 1955. Next day 105 Sikhs paraded in the whole city of Amritsar shouting Punjabi Suba slogans but none was arrested.

The Haryanvi leader, Siri Ram Sharma, severely condemned the sacrilegious police action.

On 12th July 1955 the Punjab Government lifted ban on the Punjabi Suba slogans and Akali Dal achieved a great victory. The sixty-four days' Morcha triumphantly ended.

On 20th September 1955 Master Tara Singh declared that the Sikhs would not sit with rest unless the Punjab Government apologised for the police excesses of 4th July.

✓ On 10th November 1955 the Chief Minister, Punjab, Bhim Sain Sachar apologised before a mammoth gathering in the Darbar Sahib.

Earlier, in October 1955, the Boundary Commission declined the Punjabi Suba demand and favoured *Greater Punjab* demand. On 16th October 1955 Master Tara Singh called a Sikh Convention which was attended by about 1500 delegates. The demand for expeditious formation of Punjabi Suba was reiterated. On 24th October 1955 the deputation of Master Tara Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala, Gyani Kartar Singh, Hukam Singh and Bhai Jodh Singh waited on the Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru. The talks failed. Bhim Sain Sachar resigned on 14th January

and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon became Chief Minister of Punjab, on 21st January 1956.

In February 1956 A. I. C. C. decided to hold its annual session at Amritsar. Akali Dal also decided to hold 10th Akali Conference at Amritsar at the same time. On 11th February 1956, the historical Sikh procession was witnessed in Amritsar. It was a sea of humanity. One million Sikhs participated. Jawahar Lal Nehru was stunned by the hold of Akali Dal on the Sikh masses. Subsequently, in March 1956, Government came with the Regional Formula, visualising merger of the Punjab and Pepsu and simultaneously dividing the State into Punjabi and Hindi regions. Punjabi was accepted as the language of the Punjabi Region.

On 11th March 1956 the General Body meeting of the Akali Dal was held at Amritsar. Gian Singh Rarewala presented the Regional Formula and Gyani Kartar Singh supported it. Gyani Kartar Singh succeeded in overpowering the opponents of the Regional Formula. Hukam Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh were impatient to get offices from the Congress Government. On 20th March 1956, Hukam Singh got Deputy-speakership. On 8th June 1956 Rarewala joined Congress.

On 2nd October 1956, two hundred jathedars, General Secretaries and other leaders assembled at Amritsar on the instance of Gyani Kartar Singh. Ajit Singh Sarhadi presented the resolution of the merger of Akali Dal in the Congress. Harcharan Singh Hudiara seconded the resolution.

On 24th November 1956 the General Body meeting of the Akali Dal decided the merger of the Akali Dal in Congress. Sujan Singh Sirhali, Amar Singh Ambalvi and myself opposed the merger. The Akali Dal was left with religious work only.

In 1957 General Elections, the Congress allotted 23

seats to the Akalis. After the elections Gyani Kartar Singh got ministership

On 24th March 1957 Master Tara Singh came forward with the statement that the Akali Dal had never shunned politics.

On 16th June 1957 Jathedar Pritam Singh Gojran called *Punjabi Rakhya Dal* convention at Jullundur. The demand for *Punjabi University* was also enunciated in the convention.

During this period the Hindi Agitation raised its head at many places. Some communal Hindus showered abusive language on the Sikhs. This agitation vitiated the air of the Punjab.

On 16-17th November 1957 the 11th Akali Conference was held at Bhatinda. For the first time Sant Fateh Singh came into lime-light,

On 23rd December 1957 the Hindi Agitation ended without laurels. This agitation had been instigated by the Mahasha press.

On 29th January 1958 Gian Singh Rarewala formed *Malwa Akali Dal* at Patiala. The motive of this move was to undermine the Akali Dal.

On 14th June 1958 Master Tara Singh declared that the Regional Formula was not being implemented and as such the Akali Dal's demand was now for *Punjabi Suba*.

On 5th January 1959 the Akali Dal Working Committee fully dissociated itself from the Congress.

Earlier, on 31st December 1958, Government had amended the Gurdwara Act allowing for the entry of some Pepsu members in the S. G. P. C. Master Tara Singh opposed this move. The Akali Dal decided to hold a big rally at Delhi on 15th March 1959. On 12th March 1959 Master Tara Singh was arrested. Sarder Atma Singh, Hargurnad Singh. Udham Singh Bharsinghpuri, Master

Partap Singh and Sardar Sarup Singh staged a walk-out from the Assembly.

On 15th March 1959 the Sikhs held a big rally at Delhi. About three lac Sikhs participated. The procession proved Master Tara Singh as the undisputed leader of the Sikhs. On 21st March 1959 he was released.

On 23rd December 1959 the Bombay State was split into Gujarat and Maharashtra. Now Punjab remained the only State in the country which was not reorganised on linguistic basis. The Akali Dal intensified the struggle for Punjabi Suba.

On 24th January 1960 Akali Dal decided to launch a Morcha for the formation of the Punjabi Suba. Also the Akali Dal issued directive to the Akali Assembly members to leave Congress Assembly Party but only Sardar Atma Singh, Sarup Singh, Master Partap Singh and Udham Singh Bharsinghpuri obeyed the directive. On 30th April 1960 Master Tara Singh handed over presidency of S. G. P. C. to Sardar Kirpal Singh Chakshera.

✓ On 22nd May 1960 a Punjabi Suba convention was held at Amritsar. Pandit Sunder Das presided. Dr. Saifuddin Kichlu, Shri K. G. Jodh, Zahir Quraishi and Partap Singh Daulta also participated. The convention demanded formation of Punjabi Suba without further loss of time. It was decided that Master Tara Singh would start for Delhi at the head of a jatha on 29th May 1960 and that a big procession would be taken out at Delhi on 12th June 1960. On 24th May 1960 Master Tara Singh was arrested at his residence. On the same night Chaudhary Kartar Singh, Atma Singh, Dhanna Singh Gulshan, Ajit Singh Bala, Hargurnad Singh, Master Partap Singh, Harbans Singh Majithia, Pritam Singh Gojran and Kehar Singh Vairagi were also arrested. Five thousand Akali workers were arrested throughout the State. The offices of the *Parbhat* and *Akali*

were sealed and the whole staff was arrested. The *Akali Patrika* was also banned.

Sant Fateh Singh, Jiwan Singh Umranangal, Harcharan Singh Hudiana, Pritam Singh Sharinh, Mohan Singh Tur, Professor Satbir Singh and Professor Bharpur Singh entered Golden Temple premises to forestall arrests.

On 29th May 1960 the first jatha under the command of Principal Iqbal Singh started for Delhi and was arrested. The jathas used to start daily to court arrests.

On 12th June 1960, the Akali procession started from Chandni Chowk at 2.00 p. m. defying all restrictions. The police resorted to brutal lathi-charge and tear gas shells. Sardar Rachhpal Singh and Jathedar Santokh Singh stopped sending jathas at mid-night. The police excesses were duly reported even by the foreign press. The Morcha at Amritsar continued.

In April 1961 Gyani Kartar Singh confided to me smilingly that almost entire Action Committee of the Morcha and the Working Committee of the Dal which were running the Morcha within the walls of the Darbar Sahib were on the pay of Partap Singh Kairon.

On 9th October 1960, four Sikhs fell martyrs while police shot bullets at them. On 11th October 1960 the police opened fire at the Akali protest march at Patiala. Two Sikhs fell martyrs.

Sant Fateh Singh announced his decision to resort to fast unto death from 18th December 1960 onwards. Jiwan Singh Umranangal, Pritam Singh Sharinh etc. also announced decision to die with Sant Fateh Singh. The fast began. Sant Fateh Singh proclaimed: "Only martyrdom will fructify this life. I hereby announce my will that my dead body may not be consigned to flames and should instead be drifted in the flowing waters."

On 31st December 1960, Nehru declared that the

entire Punjab was Punjabi Suba.

On 2nd January 1961 a Punjabi Suba Convention was held at Amritsar in which Dr. Kichlu, Mani Ram Bagri and Surinder Nath Khosla also advocated the formation of Punjabi Suba.

On 4th January 1961 Master Tara Singh was released from jail. Sant Fateh Singh prevailed upon him to meet Jawahar Lal Nehru at Bhavnagar Congress Session. Accordingly Master Tara Singh reached there on 7th January. Sant Fateh Singh wired Nehru in the meanwhile: "Master ji coming to you at Bhavnagar. You kindly repeat the words of your earlier statement that the whole Punjab is Punjabi Suba".

Nehru repeated his earlier statement.

On 8th January 1961 Master Tara Singh told Sant Fateh Singh on phone: "If you are satisfied with what has been said, you may give up fast". The telephonic message reached at 9.30 p.m. Full arrangements were made to break the fast on 9th January at 9.00 a. m. But the fast ended half an hour earlier. This was perhaps done to ward off the pending calamity. It was feared that the *Sikh Sangat* would not let Sant ji to break the fast. When the Sangat came next morning at the appointed time for breaking fast, they were infuriated and they manhandled Harcharan Singh Hudiara for having ended the fast before scheduled time.

On 11th January 1961 Sant Fateh Singh's supporters did not allow Master Tara Singh to speak at Manji Sahib Diwan. It was a calculated move of the Sant Group to conceal the mock fasting of Sant ji.

On 15th January 1961 Master Tara Singh asked for accounts of the Morcha Committee. That would have exposed the doings of the entire *Morcha Committee* which accordingly reacted by wholesale opposition of Master Tara Singh.

Leaving aside Master Tara Singh (and two or three of his associates) the entire Akali Dal Working Committee enjoyed patronage of Partap Singh Kairon and the Morcha Committee members, in their entirety, were informers of Partap Singh Kairon. On one evening of June 1962 Sardar Partap Singh Kairon revealed to me that almost entire Akali Dal Working Committee and the Morcha Committee members received regular substantial monetary doles from him.

The Sant-Nehru meeting took place on 8th February 1961. It was here that the Akali Dal committed a grave blunder. The Dal deputed a layman as the spokesman of the Sikhs who neither had argument nor political wisdom. The next meeting was held on 1st March 1961. But there was no progress.

On 5th March 1961, Partap Singh Kairon declared that Sant Fateh Singh's calm approach was much better than Master Tara Singh's provocative speeches.

On 12th May 1961, the third Nehru-Sant meeting took place. There was no outcome.

On 28th May 1961, the Akali Dal General Body meeting dominated by Sant Fateh Singh group asked Master Tara Singh to resort to fast unto death. This meeting was a big conspiracy of Sant Group to force Master Tara Singh to fish in troubled waters. They compelled Master ji to confine himself to Darbar Sahib to forestall arrest.

On 8th June 1961 Atma Singh, Kehar Singh Vairagi and Harbans Singh Majithia were arrested.

On 29th June 1961 Sardar Baldev Singh, former Defence Minister of India, passed away. Sant Fateh Singh was compelled by Master ji to go for bereavement. He was immediately back in the Darbar Sahib.

On 15th August 1961, Master Tara Singh started his fast. Jawahar Lal Nehru invited Sant Fateh Singh on 22nd August 1961. From 22nd to 25th August, Nehru's

parleys with Sant ji continued. The talks failed. On 26th August 1961 K. M. Munshi came to see Master ji at Amritsar. Raj Gopal Acharya supported Punjabi Suba demand on 30th August 1961. The Communist Party also supported Master Tara Singh's stand on 2nd September, 1961. On 30th September 1961 Malik Hardit Singh came with a message that Government of India was ready to appoint a high-powered Commission to examine the Sikh demand for Punjabi Suba. The Akali Dal Working Committee directed Master Tara Singh to give up fast. This was again a conspiracy to lower Master ji's prestige.

On 1th October 1961, Master Tara Singh terminated his fast.

The Central Government appointed three-man Das Commission to examine the Sikh demand. On 23rd January 1962 Gopal Singh Dardi appeared before the Das Commission and deposed that no discrimination was perpetrated on the Sikhs. He later got rewards.

In 1962 General Elections Partap Singh Kairon won fraudulently with a narrow margin of 34 votes.

Sardar Lachhman Singh Gill and Jathedar Umranangal now started an active campaign against Master Tara Singh who suspended them from Akali Dal on 5th July 1962. On their instigation Sant Fateh Singh group called convention at Mullanpur and formed *Sant Fateh Singh Akali Dal*.

Jawahar Lal Nehru's Secretary, B. N. Malik, in his book, *My Days with Nehru*, wrote that Sant Fateh Singh's manouvres to oust Master Tara Singh from Sikh politics found solid support from Partap Singh Kairon,

On 2nd October 1962 Sant Akali Dal captured control of S. G. P. C. with Karion's full support. Harcharan Singh Hudiana resigned from Sant Akali Dal on 31st August 1963 and alleged that Sant Fateh Singh and his supporters had clandestine alliance with the

Congress.

Jawahar Lal Nehru died on 27th May 1964. Partap Singh Kairon resigned from the Punjab chief-ministership on 14th June 1964 in the wake of his indictment by Das Commission. It was then that the Anti-Punjabi Suba Front weakened.

On 4th July 1964 the two Akali Dals led by Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh held a joint conference at Ludhiana. This conference demanded the right of self-determination for the Sikhs.

On 10th August 1965 Sant Dal demanded prompt formation of the Punjabi Suba. The same demand was voiced by Master Akali Dal on 22nd August 1965. After July 1962, Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh met for the first time on 25th August 1965. The next day Sant Fateh Singh announced his decision to go on fast unto death from 10th September onwards and to immolate himself on 25th September in the case of non-acceptance of Punjabi Suba demand.

In the meanwhile the Indo-Pakistan War broke out and that provided Sant Fateh Singh an opportunity to suspend his fast unto death.

On February 28, 1966 Sant Fateh Singh announced that he would immolate himself after the deadline of one month. Master Tara Singh declared Holla Mohalla as the dead-line for direct action for Punjabi Suba.

On 9th March 1966 All India Congress Working Committee announced the formation of Punjabi Suba. As described elsewhere in this book, this announcement came in the wake of unprecedented bravery of the Sikhs in the Indo-Pak War and was the result of the non-communal policy of Indira Gandhi.

On 1st November 1966, the Punjabi Suba was a reality. Some Punjabi-speaking areas still remained

left out from the Punjabi-speaking State but notwithstanding that this was a very significant milestone where the Punjabis had thus far advanced.

On 1st November 1966, the Punjab shrank. It lost some limbs to Himachal Pradesh and Haryana but in truncated Punjab alone the aspirations of the Sikhs to carve out their own State in the wider framework of the country at large held promise of blossoming.

A Clarification

In the end of this book I may clarify here that by the term 'illiterate leaders' I only mean 'ignorant leaders' and not those who had not an opportunity to go to colleges and universities for higher education.

I have highest regards for leaders like Teja Singh Akarpuri, Gurmukh Singh Mussafir, Hira Singh Dard, Labh Singh Fakhar, Sant Singh Tegh, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra. The laurels of these men do not rest on university certificates, they read from the book of life and that suffices.

Colophon

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469. At the time when this work sees the light of the day, the Sikh religious and political traditions have already evolved over a space of five hundred and ten years. We had Gurus, martyrs, fighters, scholars and rulers but we also had traitors. We tasted slavery as well as self-rule. In the pages of this book I have narrated in good faith behaviour of our leaders during fifty years following inception of Shiromani Akali Dal. I hope that my brief observations may be of some advantage to the new generation, no more prepared to remain at the mercy of laity. Let us not repeat earlier follies. I am in seventyfirst year of my life when I pen these lines. Today is 4th January, 1979 which is 312th birth-anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh.

Harcharan Singh Bajwa



Nanakshahi

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