

"A NATIONAL HERO"

Bhagat Singh and his comrades earned the following grudging tribute from the Government of India in its Annual Report for 1930-31, submitted to the British Parliament :

... "By the middle of the month, however, a serious complication had arisen. The sentences on Bhagat Singh and two other men who had been condemned to death for crimes of a terrorist nature were soon due to be carried out at Lahore, and Bhagat Singh himself, as a result of the writings concerning him in the press and the speeches made on his behalf throughout the country, had by this time been exalted to the level of a national hero. The interest taken in his fate was so intense that it was widely believed that, if Mr. Gandhi failed to persuade the Government at least to commute the sentence, the temper of the Congress would be so roused that it would be impossible to secure its ratification of the Delhi Settlement. On the 23rd, Bhagat Singh and his two companions, for reasons explained by the Viceroy in a speech in Delhi a few days later, were duly executed, and the intensity of the emotions which had been worked up over this case, even amongst those who were outside the Congress fold, was illustrated by the fact that, on the 25th, while crucial discussions on the Financial Bill were in progress, a large number of members of the Legislative Assembly walked out of the House as a protest against what had been done. . . ."

The Report also mentioned the anguish and almost hostile atmosphere in the country in which the Congress session was held in Karachi; but worse, the growing communal tensions and disturbances in several parts of India. -- Editor

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IBC

Ed. HOOJA

A MARTYR'S NOTEBOOK



A MARTYR'S NOTEBOOK

Edited & Presented by

Bhupendra Hooja

Bhagat Singh in Prison

From April 8, 1929, when after the bomb incident in the Central Assembly, he and Batukeshwar Datta surrendered to the police without any resistance and were taken to the Delhi Jail to face trial in the Assembly Bomb Case, until the hour of his supreme sacrifice on March 23, 1931, Shaheed Bhagat Singh spent the last two years of his life in police custody and in prison.

While in prison and fighting their legal battles in the courts, Bhagat Singh and his colleagues lost no opportunity to arouse patriotic and revolutionary fervour among their compatriots, especially the youth. They also led and participated in a prolonged historic hunger strike of political prisoners of all shades of nationalist opinion for better and humane conditions in the jails, a strike that claimed its first victim in the sacrifice of Jatin Das on September 13, 1929.

On September 12, 1929, Bhagat Singh was given a 404-page bound exercise-book, in which, for the next eighteen months, he was to record notes and extracts from several books he could read while serving his term in prison.

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A MARTYR'S NOTEBOOK

*Notes and extracts from books read by
Shaheed Bhagat Singh during his Prison Days (1929-31)*



*Edited & Presented by
Bhupendra Hooja*

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A MARTYR'S NOTEBOOK

Some samples of Bhagat Singh's views and statements
culled from various sources

"... Revolution is not the culture of bombs and pistols...
By Revolution we mean that the existing order of oppression and
injustice must be changed..."

* * *

"... By Revolution we mean the establishment of a society
which will not be in danger of disintegration... and where the
supremacy of the proletariat is recognised..."

* * *

"... A radical change is needed... to organise society on
the basis of socialism..."

* * *

"Revolution is the birthright of mankind. Man cannot be
deprived of the right to freedom..."

* * *

"Study so that you can understand the real forces of
change... Study so that you may be able to answer the arguments
or the questions of your opponents..."

* * *

"... The rise of a country goes hand in hand with the
progress of its literature... If they (writers) do not reflect their
contemporary situations or local problems... their efforts (works)
may not attain permanence..."

-- Ed.

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Inmates of *Ashiana*, 11, Uniara Gardens, Jaipur, for patiently bearing with the silences of a stranger in the house.

— Editor

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About The Book

Having spent the greater part of my working days during the last four years and more with this 'Prison-days' Notebook' of Bhagat Singh—editing it, adding reference notes and seeing it through all stages of printing—I feel so relieved that the work is now over. It has indeed been a unique experience of 'living' with Bhagat Singh and his colleagues, so to say, at least in mind and spirit, if not in physical proximity. In the process, I have also had some 'insights' into the working of his mind, the books he read, and his deep concerns and commitments as he completed yet another and the last phase of his journey along the revolutionary path. I owe it to his memory to share this compilation of extracts and notes, as reflecting his thoughts, with the readers at large, especially the youth.

I

First, how this adventure or 'experience of sharing' began. In the spring of 1989, in those day of doubts and fears and growing tensions among various sections of the people, especially in the Punjab and north India, a small forum of local citizens, the *Hindostani Manch*, was formed in Jaipur with the avowed object of fostering communal peace and harmony, and restoring mutual amity and trust between the estranged communities, and to spread the two-fold message of *Hindostaniyat* (Indian-ness) and *Insaniyat* (Humanity). The *Manch* was born on March 23, the day of Bhagat Singh's martyrdom. In one of the early meetings, elder brother, G. B. Kumar Hooja (former civil servant and subsequently Vice-Chancellor, deemed University of Gurukul Kangri, Haridwar) brought to our notice that he had with him a 'Diary' of Bhagat Singh, which he had come across during an inspection visit of the Gurukul Indraprasth, near Delhi, a few years ago. The premises of that Gurukul had been used by a generation of revolutionaries as their meeting and hiding place as they planned their 'actions'. GBKH (now calling himself Balabhadra Bharati) has explained in his separate note in this book, how he got the 'diary' as a file packet of hand-copied/duplicated notes in the Gurukul's 'Hall of Fame' in an underground cellar. The background explained by the Gurukul In-charge to GBKH, and the sanctity of the Martyrs' Memorial Museum where the 'Diary' was kept could testify to its authenticity. Since it had not been published so far, the *Manch* decided to bring it out as a book.

II

I was associated with the project as an editor, along with (late) Sardar S. S. Obheroi, General Secretary of the *Hindustani Manch* and doists Prof. R P Bhatnagar and Dr. R. C. Bharatiya. However, when the costs were worked out, it was discovered that the *Manch*, being still in its infancy, could not hope to raise the amount needed. The project had, therefore, to be shelved.

At that point of time and in the state of indecision in which we were, another set of notes—this time a typed copy was handed over to doist Dr. Bharatiya by a local scholar, Dr. Prakash Chaturvedi who had come across the same in a Moscow library/archives, and had brought the photo-stat copy home. On comparison, we found that the 'Moscow copy' was word for word the same as the 'Gurukul text' in our hands. This became a further spur and a challenge to our plans. (The typed version incidentally saved us the extra time, energy and cost of preparing a neat and legible copy for the press.)

Faced as we were with the challenge of giving the 'Diary' a book form, it occurred to me that perhaps the readers of *Indian Book Chronicle* (a journal I have been editing since 1985-86) would be interested in getting to know about this unpublished document or the diary (as the Notebook was known at that time). An introductory and curtain-raiser piece was thus placed in the March 1991 issue of the *Indian Book Chronicle* (IBC). Later, from May 1991 onwards, we began to carry instalments from the Notebook as a regular monthly feature. The effort was duly appreciated in several quarters and some queries were received

Since the requisite funds for the proposed book were still not in sight, but our keenness was unabated, I tried and succeeded to cajole out printer (Shri Hazari Singh of M/s. Indo-Burma Printers, Jaipur) to publish the Notebook/'Diary' in a book form from the proofs composed and set for the IBC journal. And so the process began. (That is how the make-up of the book and its printed text has got its present, and for some, a crowded and dense form).

Unfortunately, there was a further set-back to the project when in August 1992, our printer got involved in the printing and publishing of voters' lists for one or two constituencies, and could not carry on with the printing of either the IBC or the book. The work was indefinitely held up, because at that stage, we could not go to another printer. I am glad, however, that the aborted project could be revived in the middle of 1993, and is now

complete. [Of course, there was now no question of serialising its contents as a parallel or preliminary run-through in the columns of IBC. We regret that IBC readers have been denied an easy and affordable access to the contents of the Notebook.]

III

I and my several colleagues in the *Hindustani Manch* can now share with others a sense of satisfaction that the trust which came to our lot has since been kept, and these 'notes' or extracts from several books which Bhagat Singh could read during his days of incarceration and grim suspense, no longer remain 'lost' or 'forgotten' like some of his other valuable manuscripts. As his colleague Shri Shiv Verma has confirmed, at least 4 manuscripts by Bhagat Singh had been smuggled/brought out of the jail. These were in tact until 1942, but were then 'lost'. However these notes and extracts compiled and published here should give us some clues to the possible contents of the lost MSS.

The term 'diary' has been used rather loosely about this compilation. As a matter of fact, these 'notes' are not 'autobiographical'; nor are they pages from an intimate 'diary'. How could that be? How could the revolutionaries commit to writing their innermost thoughts and emotions, when they knew that the police or the jail wardens and other agents or stooges of the government were all out to get on to them somehow? Yet, with all their limitations and sketchy details, they do reveal a discerning and sympathetic soul and quite a lot about the personality and psyche of young Bhagat Singh and his contemporaries or colleagues. If one can read between the lines, there are under-currents of hidden emotions.

IV

We have the testimony of his several colleagues and his *gurus* like Chhabil Das at the National College Lahore, or Raja Ram Shastri, librarian of Dwarkadas Library how young Bhagat Singh had developed a serious interest, almost a passion, for reading, or 'devouring' books, as has been noted. Thus, besides an activist, and an organiser of young revolutionaries in the folds of Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, he had become a serious student of human society, the Indian polity, social and political revolutions in different parts of the world and the age-old institutions of family and the state. Is it surprising, therefore, that the first few pages of his Prison Note-book are replete with extracts from and references to Frederick Engels' *The Origin of the Family*, philosophers like Bertrand Russell and, for a change, poet-philosopher Omar Khayyam who, given the chance, would also have loved to change the scheme of things entire?

In this context, I may recall a rather enlightening and scintillating evening we had—some members of the *Hindustani Manch* and the editorial team for the project of Bhagat Singh's Book—with the philosopher Professor D. P. Chattopadhyaya, then Governor of Rajasthan, when we called on him at the Raj Bhavan. As we presented to him copies of the *Indian Book Chronicle* with extracts from Bhagat Singh's prison notebook, the question came up: How could the revolutionary youth of that generation find time from their 'revolutionary activism' and have the inclination to read such a variety of books? And to what purpose? For nearly an hour or more, the scholar-philosopher who seemed to be quite well-informed about the revolutionary movements in Bengal Bihar, U P. and Punjab gave us a detailed and eloquent exposition of the lives, ideals and interests of that dedicated and enlightened breed of brave revolutionaries. So many names were mentioned, of the young heroes of Indian resurgence, their social and family backgrounds, the influences and inspirations which guided and shaped their aspirations. It was a generation apart! They were not just 'trigger-happy' young adventurers or bravados or terrorists or social anarchists, as they were often maligned. They were the best of Indian youth, the torch-bearers, pathfinders and seekers of new freedoms. They had a mission in life, a social purpose, a noble pursuit, like the social reformers of that age!

Their commitment lay in their search for new social and political horizons for India, in aiming at an all-round political and socio-economic revolution. When will we have a breed like that again? Such were the thoughts or questions in our minds that evening when we left the Raj Bhawan. That evening also, once more, sealed our commitment to the project.

V

The publication of Bhagat Singh's Notes in the *Indian Book Chronicle* also brought in some encouraging and sustaining response from the readers. Among these, I must mention the keen interest and support of Dr. Chaman Lal of the Punjabi University, Patiala, who wrote to confirm that he had also come across a similar 'Notebook' in the Nehru Museum Library, New Delhi. Chaman Lal, as perhaps some of us know, is the co-author with Dr. Jag Mohan Singh (a nephew of Bhagat Singh) of a Hindi book—*Bhagat Singh Aur Unke Sathiyon Ke Dastavez*—(Documents or Writings of Bhagat Singh and His Comrades). His letter and support also confirmed the 'authenticity' of the document we were publishing, if there were any doubts about that any more.

We also received additional support from Dr. Kamlesh Mohan (Punjab University) author of *Militant Nationalism in the Punjab*. She had written a monograph on *Bhagat Singh—The Man and His Ideology* (published by the Director of Public Relations, Punjab, a few years ago). Since this slim booklet is about Bhagat Singh's thoughts and concerns, rather than about his life and work, we thought that the monograph should be included as an annexure to *A Martyr's Notebook*.

Another annexure is by Shiv Verma, the old comrade and perhaps now the only surviving companion of Bhagat Singh. A few years ago, Shiv Verma had also compiled and edited the *Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh* (National Book Centre, Delhi). In his Preface and the Introductory chapter, Shiv Verma has highlighted some of the leadership and scholarship qualities of Bhagat Singh. He has also sketched out a brief outline of the development of the 'Revolutionary Movement in India and Abroad' from the days of the Chapekar Brothers up to Bhagat Singh's time. We consider it a proud privilege to have included this tribute by Bhagat Singh's colleague under Annexure II with the heading *From Chapekars to Bhagat Singh*.

VI

Shiv Verma has also briefly mentioned the names or titles of a few books written by Bhagat Singh, rather manuscripts which survived him for almost a decade with a sympathiser in the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, and elsewhere, but these were lost or got destroyed during the uncertain days of revolt and repression in the 1942 Movement. What a pity! No amount of literature on or about Bhagat Singh and his comrades can fill the vacuum of these precious manuscripts. Yet we have some references and specimens of these writings here and there, in the records of the court cases, in scraps of communications exchanged and in the various memoirs and reminiscences of Bhagat Singh's companions and contemporaries. None of these can substitute for the lost originals.

As several contemporaries and close associates of Bhagat Singh have confirmed in their respective writings, Bhagat Singh was, by and large, a self-taught and self-trained "revolutionary" and if one may add, a "thinker" and an "ideologue". Most of the clarity and direction in his thinking came during the last 4 or 5 years of his young life. We see fleeting glimpses of his activities and writings and his thought processes in several of these memoirs or tributes. For example, Raja Ram Shastri—*Amar Shaheedon ke Sansmaran* (1981) has described Bhagat Singh's reading

interests and habits and how they secretly published Vir Savarkar's *First War of Independence*. Hindi writer Yashpal has given us some sketches and profiles in his *Simhavalokan* (3 volumes) and *Phansi Ke Phande tak* (2 volumes)—Bhagat Singh as a student of the National College, when he was not well up in his command of the English language; Bhagat Singh as a Revolutionary journalist and a commentator at that, as he became more and more mature and clear in his analyses and enunciations. Yashpal has also mentioned the titles of several books which these young revolutionaries were reading. In an account of police raid on the Bomb Factory at Agra, he has listed more than a score of such books— including nationalist and revolutionary literature and some others too, which would attract adolescent youth.

VII

BHAGAT SINGH IN PRISON

Perhaps we should briefly recapitulate the two occasions Bhagat Singh was in police custody and in prison. The first time was in May 1927, when he was arrested in Lahore. As he subsequently wrote in his article, *Why I am an Atheist (Main Nastik Kyon Hoon)* while passing through a garden, he was suddenly surrounded by the police and taken into custody, and for questioning. There was a warrant for his arrest because of an article he had written under the pseudonym of 'Vidrohi', entitled *Kakori ke Veeron ki Pehchaan* (Introduction of the Kakori Braves) about the band of revolutionary youth, including Ram Prasad Bismil, who had taken part in the looting of government treasury at Kakori railway station. Kept in the railway police lock-up for almost a month, he was questioned for his association with the Kakori Case accused and subjected to the usual third degree police treatment, as well as tempted with 'rewards', if he confessed or turn approver.

He was also charged with a bomb explosion at the Lahore Dussehra Fair the previous year, when about a dozen innocent persons lost their lives and three scores were injured. However, nothing concrete could be found against him; and he was let off against a heavy security of Rs. 60,000/- for good behaviour. Regarding the Dussehra bomb case, it was later discovered to be the work of a C. I. D. agent (to discredit the revolutionaries and create communal tension). As Bhagat Singh was to reflect, "... It was absolutely false... Persons like me do not hurl bombs at innocent people..." About the attempts of the police officers to elicit his confession or their suggestion that he should take recourse to 'prayers' in his hour of difficulty, after long deliberation, Bhagat Singh came to the conclusion that he

could neither put his faith in God, nor take to praying just to save his life.

About the Kakori Case also, as Bhagat Singh was, to recall later that the episode was instrumental in converting him from "a romantic revolutionary" ... to "a socialist revolutionary." He began a serious study of the revolutionary movements and communist/Marxist literature, and to educate his comrades and other contemporaries. "Study" as he was to say, "so that you can understand the real forces of change. Study, so that you may be able to answer the arguments or questions of your opposites." Kakori thus became a turning point in his awareness.

VIII

Almost two years later, Bhagat Singh was again in police custody, when after throwing the bombs on the floor of the Central Assembly Hall—a "big bang to waken up the deaf"—he and colleague Batukeshwar Dutt, though armed with pistols, surrendered themselves to the momentarily terrified (even petrified) security police. They could have made their escape, if that was their purpose (as the three comrades involved in the Saunders' Case had done at Lahore in the winter of 1928.) But, on this occasion, their aim was different; they wanted to win some scores on the "propaganda" front, so as to rouse the consciousness of the people at large, especially the youth. They threw the bombs, raised slogans of 'Down with Imperialism' and '*Inquilab Zindabad*', distributed handbills explaining both their action and their cause; and surrendered without any resistance.

While in police custody, from April 8 to 22, both the accused refused to give any statement, and were sent to the Delhi Jail.

FIRST TRIAL—ASSEMBLY BOMBAY CASE

As planned, during that trial Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt availed every opportunity to give publicity to their cause. That is what they did through their statements before the Court. Accepting the responsibility for throwing the bombs, they stressed that they "bore no ill-will towards any one", that they loved mankind as much as anyone else, but their "aim was to express protest in a practical way against that institution" ... which ... "represents the oppressive power of an irresponsible and arbitrary rule." Referring to "the hypothetical concept of non-violence", they explained that in their view, "the use of force is unjust only when it is aggressive in form, which we consider to be violence; but when force is used to achieve some inherent (or socially approved) objective, it becomes morally just. ..."

The trial opened in the Delhi Jail on 7th May, with restricted entry to close relatives of the accused and a few selected persons. On Bhagat Singh insisting that they would give their statement before the Sessions Court, the case was committed to the Sessions, where the proceedings started on June 4, again in the Delhi jail. Here, after the preliminary arguments (as partially noted before) Bhagat Singh expounded his/the revolutionaries concept of revolution—"Revolution is not the culture of bombs and pistols. By Revolution, we mean that the existing order based on oppression and injustice must be changed." Mentioning how the workers, peasants, weavers and artisans were all being exploited and condemned to live in slums, while the capitalists thrive, he warned. . . . "This enormous inequality and discrimination imposed by force is bound to lead to mutual confrontation. Such a situation cannot continue for long. It is obvious that the existing social system, which is flourishing because of the helplessness of some, is sitting on the mouth of a volcano . . ." Therefore, a "radical change is needed . . . to reorganise society on the basis of socialism . . . Unless this is done, all talk of avoiding war and establishing peace in the world is nothing but hypocrisy. By revolution, we mean the establishment of a society which will not be in danger of disintegration, and where the supremacy of the proletariat is recognised . . . Only then will it be possible to free humanity from the shackles of capitalism and protect it from destruction by imperialist war. . . ." Further, . . . "Revolution is the birthright of mankind. Man cannot be deprived of the right to freedom . . ." They were ready to sacrifice their youth, their lives for the cause of such a revolution. No wonder their courageous act and bold enunciation of the revolutionary path electrified the whole sub-continent.

IX

The Sessions trial ended on the 10th June and on the 12th June, they were both awarded life imprisonment. From Delhi Bhagat Singh was sent to Mianwali jail in west Punjab and Batukeshwar Dutt to the Lahore Central Jail. Facilities being given to them in the Delhi Jail, on par with the British offenders, were now withdrawn. This led to their historic hunger strike which started on 14th June and continued until the first week of October 1929. Other political prisoners also joined them from time to time; and outside, there were fasts and protests in sympathy and support. In a letter to the Home Member of the Government of India, Bhagat Singh outlined eight demands on behalf of political prisoners for consideration by the government. Ultimately these had to be conceded, after great suffering by the hunger

strikers and the martyrdom of their colleague, Yatindra Nath Das on September 13, 1929. Their suffering and the sacrifice of Yatindra Nath Das won a new status of dignity and jail facilities for the political prisoners, besides, once again, galvanising the country in support of the revolutionaries and other political workers.

We may skip the details. 'An appeal' was filed against the judgement of the Sessions Court before the High Court at Lahore. Here again, Bhagat Singh used the occasion once more to vindicate their revolutionary stand and to point out some patent flaws in the Sessions Court's proceedings. For example, no consideration had been shown to their motives; they had no intention to cause any physical harm to any-one but had wanted to give a warning in a voice that was loud enough. The High Court, ignoring their plea, confirmed the judgement on 30th January, 1930. Perhaps the minds of the authorities, including the judges, had by now been hardened in view of the patent threats which these young accused and their colleagues had suddenly posed for the British rulers in India by the relentless and determined way in which they seemed to be pursuing their objective of mobilising and moulding public opinion against the alien rulers.

Meanwhile, as the hunger strike launched by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt in their respective jails had progressed, Bhagat Singh had also been brought to the Lahore Central Jail, where he was now to stand trial as the principal accused in the Saunders' Murder Case. Other co-accused had also been hauled up. That trial started on 10th July, 1929, in a Magistrate Court, where Bhagat Singh was brought on a stretcher. He had become quite weak and had lost a lot of weight due to his hunger strike. The jail authorities adopted all manners of stratagems, including forced feeding, and in some cases actual use of force, to break the will of the strikers, but to no avail.

There was some improvement in the diet given to them, and also the practice of feeding milk was continued; but for Yatindra Nath, these ameliorative measures had come too late. Even a last minute personal visit by Bhagat Singh from Central Jail to the Borstal jail to successfully persuade Yatindra Nath to give up his 'fast unto death' could not save the revolutionary youth. Yatindra Nath died on September 13, 1929, while negotiations on the hunger strikers' demands were going on, with all the negative and dilatory tactics being adopted by the authorities. As the Government appointed Jails Reforms Sub-committee submitted its report, in addition to the improvement in diet, already partially conceded, the statues of revolutionary accused as 'politi-

cal prisoners was accepted' and they became entitled to better and more civil and humane treatment. For the hunger strikers and the revolutionary prisoners, it was a major victory, in addition to the bonus of wide-spread publicity to their cause, because of their determined though desperate action. Their well-coordinated hunger strike was called off on October 5, 1929, after 114 days, perhaps the longest such strike in the history of Indian freedom struggle.

X

SAUNDER'S MURDER CASE TRIAL

We have reasons to believe that it was as a result of this hunger-strike and its fall-out that writing material was made available to the revolutionary prisoners. That is perhaps how Bhagat Singh was given the 'note book' which bears his initials and date mark of 12/9/1929 on its first and the last page. From then onwards, Bhagat Singh could use his 'note book' to record extracts and notes from the books he could read.

Needless to add that most of his time and energy, as that of his colleagues and co-accused were taken up by the new trial in the Saunders' Murder case. A Committee of three—Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Bejoy Kumar Sinha—came into being to see and ensure how the forum of the trial could be used to the utmost advantage for their revolutionary cause. There were daily battles of wits and clashes of will in the court room. Revolutionaries would raise slogans and often interrupt the proceedings; often the magistrate would lose his cool and order the accused to be handcuffed or otherwise restrained. The accused refused to co-operate if they were brought to the court in handcuffs, in one or two scuffles in the court, Pathan policemen came down heavy upon them, with Bhagat Singh as their special target. Thus the sorry, rather horrid, cat and mouse game went on for some time, a sordid melodrama. But nothing could break the will of the revolutionaries, nor weaken their united stand.

In May 1930, the exasperated government, not quite happy with the prolonged trial, brought forth a special ordinance to constitute a Special Tribunal to proceed with the trial, without the presence of the accused in the Court. In a well-reasoned statement, while recapitulating what had happened and why under-trials had to resort to hunger strike (in June 1929, and for a short duration again in February 1930, when the government action on their demands had been delayed) Bhagat Singh had declared, . . . "You may be able to suppress a few persons, but remember, you cannot suppress this nation . . ."

" . . . We have been trying to point out from the beginning that your law is a beautiful deception. It is not capable of administering justice . . . (you must) clearly state that the political prisoners cannot be given any opportunity to defend themselves." That was the gist of Bhagat Singh's communication to the Governor General of India.

Out of 24 revolutionaries in the accused list, 16 were put on trial (later B.K. Dutt's name was deleted). When the Special Tribunal met, the accused resisted the order of the Chief Judge to be produced in handcuffs, which led to their resistance. The Judge not only abused them (and Indians at large) but had also Bhagat Singh beaten with lathis. The episode got wide-spread publicity; and the case had to be adjourned until a fresh tribunal was constituted on 12th June, 1930.

Thus the trial and its 'inequity' continued to receive wide coverage, the fearless stand of the revolutionaries giving fresh impetus to a movement which might otherwise have died its slow death. The judgement, running into 281 pages, came on 7th October, 1930. It was announced to them in the jail; since the accused had boycotted the Court. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were ordered to be hanged to death; seven other accused were to be imprisoned for life in the Andaman Jail, two were given prison sentences with hard labour for 7 and 5 years respectively; while three others were ordered to be released. In spite of the Government trying to impose section 114 and a veil of secrecy over the judgement, there were wide-spread protests, processions, demonstrations and *hartals* (strikes) not only in Lahore, but in other major towns and cities in the country. Initiatives and movements were launched to save the lives of the condemned trio. A defence committee was set up to appeal to the Privy Council. What lent legal strength to their case was the patent flaws in the proceeding in which neither the accused, nor their defence lawyers had appeared before the Special Tribunal, nor had the prosecution witnesses been cross-examined. It had been an ex-parte proceeding all along and an ex-parte judgement.

XI

Bhagat Singh and his comrades remained undeterred, unafraid and brave to the end. He did not approve of appeals or mercy petitions, as he made sufficiently clear to all concerned, including his defence counsel and his father. Thus he and his two brave companions mounted the gallows on 23rd March 1931, with revolutionary songs and slogans on their lips, the authorities once again showing

their panic and lack of 'human' feelings by hanging them in the darkness of dusk, rather than in the dawn of a new day. Their bodies were taken away surreptitiously under the cover of darkness to the distant banks of Sutlej, to be hastily cremated. But as usual, the news had leaked out; and the youth of Lahore swarmed the streets of Lahore in their anger and anguish, and raced up to the cremation grounds in their thousands. The brave ones who had become living legends in their life-time became the three Martyrs.

There were loud protests against the government action, and the 'inaction' on the part of the national leadership, including Gandhi, for not having bestirred themselves in time and in full vigour to save the martyrs; the Gandhi-Irwin Pact or 'compromise'—as Bhagat Singh would have called it, as he had done on some earlier occasions—had been ominously silent about the fate of the three martyrs. But the popular feelings were so deeply aroused that there were loud and prolonged black-flag protest demonstrations to greet Mahatma Gandhi when he reached Karachi for the Congress session a few days after the national tragedy.

It may be seen that the supreme sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and his two comrades had a purpose behind it. They had spoken to the nation, especially the youth, and more than once. A few days before his sacrifice, he had sent a rousing message to the Indian youth. They had given the call for a total political, economic and social transformation of the Indian polity, and to transform India into a 'socialist republic'. *Inquilab*—Revolution—was their motto, their goal for which no price, no sacrifice was too big for them. Not only was their goal or vision clear, their ideology and the pursuit of their aims had a clarity as well as dedication and meeting of minds which is rare; and has been a shining example of devotion and unflinching courage ever since.

XII

STUDIES & WRITINGS

Two small points of fact before we close. One, to show Bhagat Singh's devotion to study. In a letter from the prison to his childhood friend, Jaidev Gupta, on 30 July 1930, Bhagat Singh had asked for about a dozen books to be borrowed from the Dwarkadas Library in his name, and also from the Lahore Public Library. Almost all of these related to what may be called the socialist/Marxist streams of thought. Thus, as many others have testified, his mind was set on a serious study of society, the State,

the various revolutions and such like themes. "Equip your ideology with supporting arguments . . . Logic and free thinking are the twin qualities that a revolutionary must necessarily possess. . .", as he was to write in his tract '*Main Nastik Kyon Hoon*' (Why I, am an Atheist).

We have had no chance to delineate the role of Bhagat Singh as a nationalist/revolutionary journalist. He has been credited with having contributed a large number of articles in the *Kirti* and other contemporary newspapers of his time, besides his apprenticeship with the *Pratap* and *Vir Arjun*. Once again, there was not much time at his disposal, not much free time that is, because for a greater part of this period (1926–29) he was a revolutionary activist or 'on the run'—playing hide and seek with the authorities—or deeply engrossed in various organisational or political activities at the same time. Perhaps some-one should do some thorough research on Bhagat Singh as a journalist to do full honour to his work in this field.

XIII

However, there is a little known fact which a recent biographer, Hansraj Rahbar, has brought into focus in his recent (1991) book *Bhagat Singh and His Thought*, and that is that writing for a competition organised by the Punjab Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1924, Bhagat Singh had won a prize for his article on language and script controversy. It was preserved and later published in the *Hindi Sandesh* of February 28, 1933. The article revealed his positive and clear views on the controversy. Showing a maturity and clarity of mind, exceptional for his age, he suggested that between Urdu and Hindi, at least there should be a common script; and we should move from there, step by step. In the context of other languages (and scripts) in India, he posed a pertinent and even now a relevant question: "Why should we isolate ourselves from the rest of India (by propagating Urdu in Punjab)?" He considered the Nagari script more perfect and equally advantageous for the Punjabi/Gurmukhi language. He was eloquent, almost emotional, about the beauty and sweetness of the Punjabi language; but he had some reservations about the Gurmukhi script. However, again he wanted that the adoption of the Hindi/Nagari script should be a slow and deliberate process. He had also words of caution and prudence for the protagonists of Hindi. He wanted the language and literature to grow and develop in close proximity with the life and culture of the people. The opening remarks of his essay were full of deep significance: "Knowledge of the literature of a country and society is a pre-

requisite for knowing that country or society . . . The rise of a country goes hand in and with the progress of its literature . . . All those who love their country, whether reformers or politicians pay due attention to their country's literature . . . If they (writers) cannot create literature to reflect their contemporary problems or local situations, they waste their efforts, and their work does not attain permanence . . ." Perhaps there is a message in these words for our contemporary generation of reformers, politicians, even lovers of literature and educationists. This may also explain Bhagat Singh's own interest in literature, especially the revolutionary type.

XIV

At one or two place, in his book on Bhagat Singh's Thoughts, Hansraj Rahbar has made passing refernces to the 404 pages note-book (which Bhagat Singh had in the jail). At one place, he has mentioned that there was an Urdu couplet on the first page of the note book which reflected his mental stal :

*Qurra-e- Khak hai gardish mein tapish se merti
Main woh Majnun hoon jo zindaan mein azaad rahaa.*

(The earth is rotating due to the heat of my firebrand urge for freedom. I am that lover, Majnun, who remained free even in the confines of a prison.)

It maybe menioned, however, that the copy of Bhagat Singh's note book which has come to our hands, did no have this couplet recorded on the first page. Maybe there wss some slip or lapse by the copyist or those who looked after the MSS. But there are one or two other Urdu couplets recorded in the text which have been produced at the appropriate place.

According to Rahbar, during his prison-days, Bhagat Singh was able to write a few books. Their titles, according to Rahbar, were : *Main Nastik Kyonhoon—Why I am an Athiest; An Introduction to Dreamland* (a poetical work of the revolutionay poet, Ramsaran Das)—the Introduction discussing the philosophy and literary merit of the poet was recorded by Bhagat Singh on Jaunary 15, 1931; *Qaum ke Kaam Sandesh; Krantikaari Karyakarm ka Praroop* (Programme for the revolutionaries—in the form of a letter dated 2nd February 1931) *Bharatiya Kranti ka Aadarsh aur Kraantikaari Party*. We have elsewhere given the titles of such writings, along with their sources of information. The titles may differ, but

there is general agreement that Bhagat Singh was able to write these few books during his prison days.

XV

In his *Prison Notebook*, we find a clear reflection of Bhagat Singh's interest in revolutionary literature, not only in its political or ideological format, but also in the form of poetry and fiction. Whenever he would come across a poem or a verse or a passage that seemed to be in tune with his own emotional makeup or mental experience or some extract that gave him clarity and support in his deep reflections and commitments, he would note it down. That is how we know what he (and others must have felt being locked up in a prison, cut off from the outside world of action and human endeavours; how he (and others) managed to keep up their morale and accept with a brave face and stout heart the inevitable fate of the ultimate sacrifice.

But perhaps what gives a greater meaning and purpose to these Notes is the manner in which Bhagat Singh tried to organise his reading (and note-taking) into something like a systematic and planned study of politics, the nature of society and state, nationalism and the urge for freedom, and a search for the meaning of of revolution and the goal of socialism. There are enough 'notes' on these varied but inter-linked topics and themes, which bear testimony to his search for an ideology and his commitment to the path of revolutionary action. These extracts also make somewhat clear what Bhagat Singh had in mind when he coined and gave to the nation his new, bold and a lasting solgan : *Inquilab Zinadabad—Long Live Revolution*. He and his colleagues wanted to wake up a slumbering and somnolescent giant of a nation into the new game of revolutionary mass action. Revolution for them was not just a change or transfer of power. It meant a complete overhaul, a total transformation of the state and society, of all the political, economic, social, cultural, educational and administrative institutions. But since he had a short time at his disposal, a brief lifespan, all he could do was to sound the kettle-drums of revolution, give it a new theme song and show the new direction.

Who can deny that there was a 'significant' and revolutionary change in the goals and directions of the freedom movement in India, after these brave birds of passage had spread their wings, soared high and then gone their way ! But, can we (sixty years later) say with confidence or some satisfaction that the

revolutionary goals of total transformation of state and society in the Indian sub-continent have since been reached? There-in lies the challenge of our time.

Here also is some justification of bringing out this collection of Bhagat Singh's notes in the present volume. We hope that admirers of the revolutionary movement, the scholars and historians of our national struggle will approach and examine this compilation in a proper historic context (of those times) and in the context of our present-day predicaments in the India polity.

—Bhupendra Hooja

A Dedication To

Bhagat Singh & His Colleagues
and
Their Revolutionary Ideals . . .

*Here is a brief life-sketch of Shaheed Bhagat Singh (1908-1931) and an account of the hectic days of the revolutionary struggle and sacrifice by his comrades. Those were the days when the youth of India was on the march, and **Inquilab** was their clarion call. The account also gives us an overview of the Indian struggle for freedom through some of its phases, and the role of the revolutionaries within and outside the movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.*

Balabhadra Bharati who has prepared this Life-Sketch grew up as an adolescent youth, his mind charged with patriotic fervour against a backdrop of nationalist agitation and revolutionary action. Besides recapitulating the main events of those times, and recapturing, as if it were, the spirit and dedication of the era, he goes on to narrate how, years later, (after his long service as a development administrator and as Vice-Chancellor of Gurukul Kangri, Haridwar) he came across the Notebook which had been maintained by Shaheed Bhagat Singh in the jail while he awaited his fate--the final verdict of an alien government he had pledged to fight through revolutionary action by squads of the Nāujāwan Bharat Sabha and the Hindostan Socialist Republican Army. Visiting the underground chamber of the Gurukula Indraprastha, near Delhi--a Hall of Fame to honour the martyrs and freedom fighters, where several mementos of the brave sons of the revolutionary era were kept, he stood silent and overwhelmed in a moment of remembrance and homage.

Bhagat Singh's Jail Diary or Notebook in which he kept notes or extracts from books he was reading is the subject matter of the book, A Martyr's Notebook, which is being offered to the youth of India today with due humility and reverence. It may also bring back nostalgic memories of a glorious chapter of our freedom fight in the minds of an older generation which is slowly quitting the scene. It may remind us all of a promise to keep.

—Bhupendra Hooja
(Editor)

Shaheed Bhagat Singh

Here are some entries selected at random from Bhagat Singh's jail notebook. These were made as he read through a number of books, while in his death-cell waiting for the hangman's noose and his own supreme sacrifice at the altar of national revolution. They give us some inkling of the working of his mind.

“Democracy is theoretically a system of political and legal equality. But in concrete and practical operation it is false; for there can be no equality, not even in politics and before the law, so long as there is glaring inequality in economic power. So long as the ruling class owns the workers' jobs and the press and the schools of the country and all organs for the moulding and expression of public opinion, so long as it monopolise(s) all trained public functionaries and disposes of unlimited funds to influence elections, so long as the laws are made by the ruling class and the courts are presided over by members of the class, so long as lawyers are private practitioners who sell their skill to the highest bidder, and litigation is technical and costly, so long will the nominal equality before the law be a hollow mockery.”

“In a capitalist regime, the whole machinery of democracy operates to keep the ruling class minority in power through the sufferage of the working class majority, and when the bourgeois government feels itself endangered by democratic institutions, such institutions are often crushed without compunction.” [Page 46 (43) of the Notebook—“From Marx to Lenin”]

“Democracy does not secure equal rights and a share in all political rights for everybody, to whatever class or party he may belong. It only allows free political and legal play for the existing economic inequalities . . . Democracy under capitalism is thus not general, abstract democracy but specific bourgeois democracy . . . or as Lenin terms it—democracy for the bourgeoisie.” [From a piece by the German politician, Karl Johann Kautsky (1854-1938)]

* * *

"The law convicts the man or woman who steals the goose from the common, but lets the greater felon loose, who steals the common from the goose.

* * *

This is what Bhagat Singh wrote as he read Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* :

"So long as there exist, by virtue of law and custom, a social damnation artificially creating hells in the midst of civilisation and complicating the destiny which is divine with a fatality which is human; so long as three problems of the age—the degradation of man through poverty, the ruin of woman through hunger, the crippling of children through ignorance—are not solved; so long as in certain regions, social asphyxia is possible—in other words, and from a still wider point of view—so long as ignorance and wretchedness exist on the earth, books like this cannot be useless."

He noted as follows from the statement of Karl Marx, made before the Court of Jury of Cologne at his trial (1848) for advocating non-payment of taxes and even armed resistance, when the King of Prussia dissolved the National Assembly and put Cologne under siege :

"Society, however, does not rest upon law. This is a legal fiction. Rather the law must rest on society. It must be the expression of the interest and needs of society which result from the social and invariably material method of production as against the arbitrariness of the individual. As for Code Napoleon which I have in my hand, that has not engendered modern civil society. The society which arose in the 18th century and developed in the 19th finds in the Code only a legal expression. As soon as that no longer corresponds to social conditions, it is merely so much waste paper . . . The law needs necessarily to be changed with the changing conditions of life. The maintaining of the old law against the new needs and demands of the social development is, at bottom, nothing but a hypocritical assertion (in accord with the spirit of the age) of special interest against the common interest."

While reading *Marxism Versus Socialism* by Vladimir G. Sakhovitch, Bhagat Singh noted as follows :

— He criticises all the Theories of Marx one by one, and refutes all, in particular :

1. Theory of Value,
2. Economic Interpretation of History,
3. Concentration of Wealth in Fewer Hands, i. e., the capitalists, and elimination of middle class altogether and swarming of the Proletariate class,
4. Theory of Increasing Misery, leading to the
5. Inevitable crises of the Modern State and Social Order.

— He concludes that Marxism solely rests on these fundamental theories and refutes them one by one, concluding that all the vague apprehensions about the hurrying avalanche of the Revolution has proved futile till now. The Middle class is not diminishing but growing. The Rich class is growing in number, and the mode of production and consumption is also changing along with the circumstances; hence only by the reforms in the condition of the workers can we avoid any sort of friction. It is not the growing poverty that is the cause of the social unrest, but it is due to the concentration of the poor classes in Industrial Centres that the class consciousness is growing. Hence all this hue and cry.

* * *

He copied in his note-book the famous French National Anthem which was sung with enthusiasm by the troops on their march from Marseilles to Paris (1792) :

Ye sons of toil, awake to glory,
Hark, hark, what myriads bid you rise;
Your children, wives and grand sires hoary,
Behold their tears and hear their cries !
Shall hateful tyrants mischief breeding,
With hireling hosts, a ruffian band—
Affright and desolate the land
While peace and liberty lie bleeding ?

[Chorus]

To arms, to arms ! Ye brave !
The avenging sword unsheathe
March on, march on, all hearts resolved
On Victory or death.
With luxury and pride unsounded,
To vile insatiate despots dare.
Their thirst for gold and power unbounded

To meet and vend the light and air;
Like beasts of burden would they load us.
Like gods would bid their slaves adore,
But man is man and who is more ?
Then shall they longer last and goad us ?

[*The same Chorus again*]

Oh liberty ! Can man resign thee,
Once having felt thy generous flame ?
Can dungeon's bolts and bars confine thee,
Or whips thy noble spirit tame ?
Too long world has wept bewailing,
That falsehood, daggers tyrants wield;
But freedom is our sword and shield.
And all their arts are unavailing !

[*Same Chorus again*]

* * *

He also copied the '*Internationale*', the revolutionary song first sung in France in 1871, which was later adopted as national anthem by several communist countries :

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation !
Arise ye wretched on earth !
To justice thunders condemnation,
A better world's in birth.
No more tradition's chains shall bind us,
Arise, ye slaves ! No more in thrall !
The earth shall rise on new foundations,
We have been naught, we shall be all.

[*Refrain*]

It is the final conflict,
Let each stand in his place,
The Internationale Party
Shall be the human race.

Behold them seated in their glory,
The kings of mine and rail and soil !
What would you read in all their story
But how they plundered toil ?
Fruits of people's work are buried
In the strong coffers of a few;
In voting for their restitution,
The men will ask only their due.

(*Same Refrain*)

Toilers from shops and fields united,
The party we of all who work;
The earth belongs to us, the people,
No room here for the shirk.
How many on our flesh have fattened ?
But if the noisome birds of prey,
Shall vanish from our sky some morning
The blessed sunlight still will stay.

[*Same Refrain again*]

* * *

Here is yet another extract from the note-book :

"The aim of life is no more to control the mind, but to develop it harmoniously, not to achieve salvation hereafter, but to make the best use of it here below, and not to realize Truth, Beauty and Good only in contemplation, but also in the actual experience of daily life; social progress depends not upon the ennoblement of a few but on the enrichment of many; and spiritual democracy or universal brotherhood can be achieved only when there is equality of opportunity in the social, political and industrial life."

II

I have taken the liberty to reproduce these notes just to show that Bhagat Singh was not merely a trigger-happy, bomb-throwing, heartless, mindless terrorist. Far from it ! He was an assiduous student of the history of the revolutionary movements of the world, a keen observer of the current socio-economic scenario, and a scientific analyst of the Indian political struggle. This endowed him with a clear vision and programmed his revolutionary strategy. In the process, he became a symbol of bravery, courage, patriotism and supreme sacrifice.

Considering that Bhagat Singh was barely 23 years old at the time of his execution and that the last two years of his life were spent in jail, the scope and grasp of his reading and writing are indeed amazing. Earlier, he had made ample use of the Dwarka Das Library, Lahore, and later he also converted the jail into a university. He documented the trials and tribulations of those who had preceded him in the cause of the Revolution and sought inspiration from the sense of altruism and self-sacrifice which had animated them to seek liberation from the chains of tradition and tyranny.

Bhagat Singh stood for worldwide equality in the true sense. He believed in universal brotherhood and was a true cosmopolitan. He called on the youth to work and sacrifice for this cause. He noted that 'the young men of the day are the countrymen of tomorrow holding in their hands the high destinies of the land. They are the seeds that sprout in spring and bear fruit.' He scoffed at the worldly-wise armchair leaders who simply mouthed elegant phrases and shouted slogans. It was for the youth to pay the price of Liberty and Equality. He sought inspiration from the American Declaration: "We believe that when a government becomes destructive of the natural right of man, it is man's duty to destroy the government."

Jawaharlal Nehru commanded Bhagat Singh's respect. He quotes Nehru approvingly, "Every youth must rebel. Not only in the political sphere, but in social, economic and religious spheres also. I have not much use for any man who comes and tells me that such and such thing is said in the Koran. Everything unreasonable must be discarded even if they find authority for it in the Vedas and Koran.....To those who still fondly cherish old ideas and are striving to bring back the conditions which prevailed in Arabia 1300 years ago or in the Vedic ages in India, I say that it is inconceivable that you can bring back the hoary past. The world of reality will not retrace its steps, the world of imagination may remain stationary."

He crossed swords with Gandhi and Lajpat Rai, who was his mentor, as the occasion arose. When the attempt of the revolutionaries to blow up the train of the Viceroy on December 23, 1929, miscarried, Gandhi got the Congress to pass a resolution censuring the revolutionaries and congratulating the Viceroy on his miraculous escape. He also published an article entitled 'The Cult of the Bomb'. This elicited a spirited rejoinder from Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Bhagat Singh. It was pointed out that Gandhi's resolution was passed by a bare majority of 31 in a house of 1913 members. This was hardly a victory for Gandhi, said the authors. It showed that a substantial strength of delegates sympathised with the revolutionaries. As regards Gandhi's reliance on non-violence, the authors cited the examples of Russia and Turkey, and asserted that revolutionary action by the workers and peasants shall bring about Revolution in India too. They vehemently argued against Gandhi's contention that non-violence would ultimately convert the enemy. They held that the Reforms conceded in 1909 and 1918 were wrested by revolutionary action which preceded these reforms in various parts of India, and not by petitions and adherence to non-violence.

However, Bhagat Singh unequivocally distinguished between revolutionary action and terrorism. In a letter addressed to the young political workers, Bhagat Singh said that 'the revolutionary army shall be found amongst the farms and factories of India—peasants and workers. Once these sleeping giants wake up, success shall be assured.' He said that 'Revolution means a complete overhaul of the present social structure and establishment of socialism.' For this, it was necessary to continuously educate the masses and train the workers. 'Revolution does not mean transfer of power from white rulers to brown oligarchy. What difference would it make to the Kisan, if the Viceroy of India was Tej Bahadur Sapru and not Lord Irwin, or if the head of state was Sir Purshottam Das Thakur Das and not Lord Reading?' he asked pertinently. In another article, Bhagat Singh pointed out that 'in the absence of an awakened mass base, the danger persists that the brown rulers shall become equally tyrannical. India should learn from Ireland's fate and avoid such a contingency. Revolution means workers' rule and nothing less,' Bhagat Singh asserted.

On terrorism, he said categorically that it may be a vehicle to spread the gospel of freedom, but beyond a cracker show, it has no other value. Revolutionaries should not indulge in such activities and make futile sacrifices. They should, in fact, live and work constructively to bring about the cherished Revolution. The primary requirement is to reach the masses through trade unions and other voluntary agencies, including women's organizations and youth clubs.

On communalism, he held very strong views and did not hesitate to express his hurt and annoyance when he found that his mentor, Lajpat Rai tended to tilt towards Hindu communalism. When in his defence, Lalaji questioned the 'independence' of views of the socialist youth, he came in for impertinent criticism at the hands of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, led by Bhagat Singh. Lalaji was dubbed as the toothless, old "Punjab Kesari" as ineffectual as a circus lion, who would be happy to hand over the government to Maharaj Vardhman or the Maharaja of Patiala.

III

Punjab has been the nursery of saints and heroes. Beginning with the ancient *rishis* who sang Vedic hymns in praise of God and thankfulness to the Almighty, to the holy Granth Sahib, codified by the great martyr saint Arjun Dev (1604). Punjab can boast of a long line of innumerable saint-scholars who have adorned the pages of soul-lifting Indian literature, as well as a conti-

nued succession of saint-soldiers who bravely defended the honour of the motherland to the last drop of their blood as the occasion arose from time to time.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (1839), the British occupied the Punjab (1849); whisked away his young son, Dalip Singh, to be presented at the court of Queen Victoria. Although temporarily befuddled, the Punjabis soon realized their predicament; and there arose many an illustrious freedom fighter, whose names are recorded in letters of gold in the history of our freedom struggle. This galaxy includes Ram Singh Kuka, Lala Lajpat Rai, Hardayal, Ajit Singh, Baba Khadag Singh, Swami Shradhananad, Bhai Parmanand, Kartar Singh Saraba, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Bhagwati Charan and Vir Hari Krishan.

Bhagat Singh came from a family of blue-blooded patriots. His father Kishan Singh and uncles Ajit Singh and Swarn Singh were great nationalists. In fact, Swarn Singh died in jail in 1908, soon after the birth of Bhagat Singh. Ajit Singh was deported to Mandalay with Lala Lajpat Rai in the same year, when they mounted the 'No Tax movement' in the canal colonies of the Punjab. This movement gave birth to the famous revolutionary song: *Pagri sambhal jatta, pagri sambhal oye; Vairiyan nein lutt leya ajj tera mal oye, Khushali da daataa ho gaya haal behaal oye, pagri . . .* (Take care of your turban, oh! the tiller of the soil! enemies have looted your wealth; The giver of prosperity is today in a sad state of adversity. Take care . . .)

IV

Thus Bhagat Singh was brought up in an atmosphere of intense national fervour.

When Gandhiji gave his call for Non-Co-operation in 1921, his father sent him to the newly-founded National College for higher studies. This college was being run by Lala Lajpat Rai, with Bhai Parmanand as its principal and Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar as a faculty member. Here Bhagat Singh studied political science and history. The courses included the study of the histories of the American, French and Russian Revolutions and the Irish Freedom Movement, besides the study of India's first War of Independence (1857) and the long and valiant struggle of the Indian people for freedom.

Bhagat Singh was particularly impressed by the success story of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) and the tactics of the Sein Fein Movement of Ireland. These studies not only developed

his cognitive and critical faculties, but also inspired him to valorous action.

V

The story of Indian struggle for freedom is a very inspiring and blood-curdling tale. The failure of the first War of Independence found India lying prostrate and licking her wounds. But the sacrifices made by King Bhahadur Shah Zafar, Tantia Tope, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Kanwar Singh, his brother Amar Singh, Nana Sahib, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Maulvi Ahmed Shah, Birjis Qadir, Bakht Khan, Azimullah and others continued to inspire generations of patriots, young and old.

Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, declared (1880) that foreign rule, howsoever benevolent or paternal it may be, cannot be a substitute for home rule. Then came the leonine call of Lokmanya Tilak (1896) that "Swarajya is my birth-right and I shall have it." In the intervening period between these two declarations, the Indian National Congress had been formed (1885) and also the Muslim League (1886).

In 1905, came the partition of Bengal contrived by the imperial visionary, Viceroy Lord Curzon. At the same time, he separated the brave Pathans of the North-West Frontier from the Punjab and carved out a separate province called the North-West Frontier Province. The Bengalis and the Punjabis did not take this audacity lying down. They responded violently to the machinations of Lord Curzon. While the Punjab launched the No-Tax campaign of the 'Pagree Sambhal Jatta' fame, referred to earlier, the partition of Bengal gave rise to a great revolutionary anti-British stir led by, among others, Surya Sen, Sri Aurobindo and their committed bands of revolutionaries.

Side by side, at this time, another batch of young revolutionaries decided to beard the British lion in his den and decided to operate in the citadel of the Empire, in London. Shyamiji Krishna Verma, a follower of Swami Dayananda, Savarkar brothers, and Madanlal Dhingra, Har Dayal and Madam Cama sought to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first War of Independence in a befitting manner. While Madam Cama raised the first flag of Independent India (1907), bearing the hallowed slogan, *Vande Mataram*, at the International Conference of Socialist Workers at Stuttgart, Madanlal Dhingra went to the gallows in London (1908) for the murder of Colonel Wylie. Harassed by the persistent blows of Bengal revolutionaries, the British Government ultimately felt obliged to annul the partition

of Bengal (1911), while at the same time, transferring the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, perhaps considering Delhi to be a less contaminated place.

VI

However, here too, in placid Delhi, there was no respite. In 1912, some young revolutionaries led by Ras Behari Bose threw a bomb on the then Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge, as he rode in a royal procession on the back of an elephant through the famous Chandni Chowk of Delhi. For this, four young men, namely Master Amirchand, Bhai Balmukand, Awadh Behari and Basant Kumar Biswas were hanged in the Delhi Central Jail (1915). [This hallowed place is now the seat of the Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi.]

The World War I (1914-1918) gave yet another opportunity to Indian revolutionaries to mount fresh assaults on British Imperialism. Raja Mahendra Pratap, accompanied by Barkatullah and Harish Chandra, emigrated to Kabul, and set up the first Provisional Government of Free India (1915). He sought the aid of neighbouring states in his struggle against the British in an endeavour to launch an encircling military movement against the British Government in India. While Kabul was sympathetic, Russia remained cool, until the advent of the Bolshevik regime (1917) and, therefore, Raja's dreams remained unfulfilled.

Lala Lajpat Rai also migrated to the west (1914), and there he acted as the first Honorary Ambassador of (Free) India, until his return under the general amnesty following the end of World War I, when he was installed by a grateful nation as the President of the Indian National Congress at Nagpur (1920).

Apart from these, the other revolutionaries abroad, led by M. N. Roy, Abani Mukerji, Qayum, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya, Shafiq, Shaukat Usmani, Khairi brothers, Pratiwadi Acharya et al saw an opportunity to strike at British imperialism during World War I, and sought the aid of the Kaiser of Germany and Bolshevik Russia and Lenin, after the fall of the Czar.

At about this time, there occurred the incident of Kamagata Maru, when the ship carrying Punjabi emigrants to Canada was not allowed to disembark at Vancouver on ethnic grounds. This discrimination hurt the pride of the Punjabis, who felt deeply distressed and highly incensed. The propaganda of the Ghadar leaders was directed not only at the Indian soldiers in the British

Army, but also at Indian migrants abroad. The Kamagata Maru travellers returned to India thoroughly disenchanted and disaffected, and promised to strike as the vanguard of armed insurrection in India. But British intelligence outwitted them, and hundreds of them were disarmed and booked before the D-day. Those who managed to escape the tentacles of the British police could play only a peripheral role.

However, the support of the mercenary Indian soldiers and the rulers of Indian subject States who served the British Empire with traditional loyalty during its hour of trial obliged the British Government to announce in August, 1917, that the goal of the British rule in India was the progressive realization of responsible government and the increasing association of Indians in all branches of the administration of Government of India. Nevertheless, when the war ended, Indians were presented with the infamous Rowlatt Act. This provoked Gandhiji and the Congress to launch the *Satyagrah* movement against British Rule (1919).

At the same time, the Muslims of India also felt betrayed, when the Allied Powers ordained the dismemberment of the Caliphate at the Treaty of Sevres. This led to the great *Hijrat* (emigration) movement and thousands of Indians, mostly Punjabis, both Hindus and Muslims, sought emigration to neighbouring Afganistan and Bolshevik Russia, with a view to launching an armed invasion against British Government of India with the help of friendly allies. Here too, British diplomacy had the upper hand and the movement petered out.

Back home, however, Gandhiji's *Satyagrah* call culminated in the ghastly tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar in April, 1919. It shook the whole country and made the Nobel Laureate, Poet Tagore renounce his knighthood.

In August, 1920, Tilak died, leaving the field to Gandhi. In 1921, Gandhi gave his call for the first great mass movement of Civil Disobedience and Non-Cooperation. The main items on the agenda of the activists were boycott of British courts, schools and colleges, and foreign goods. Thousands of volunteers courted arrest and arranged bonfires of foreign cloth on a scale unknown in public agitation so far. It also happened that, when the movement was at its height, the tragedy of Chauri Chaura occurred (1922), where some policemen were burnt to death by a furious mob. Gandhi was a votary of truth and non-violence, and seeing the danger of uncontrolled violence, he called a halt to the movement. This sudden change of gears baffled his many generals,

including Lajpat Rai, who were then serving their sentences behind bars, but Gandhi was resolute. The unexpected halt of the movement gave the British rulers an opportunity to arrest Gandhi who was awarded six years' rigorous imprisonment.

No doubt, these heroic events shaped the psyche of Bhagat Singh as he grew into manhood.

VII

In 1924, Bhagat Singh organized the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, with a view to mobilizing youth power against the British Government. The membership fee was Re. one per annum. Soon 125 members had been enrolled. Addressing his young comrades at the first meeting, Bhagat Singh said, "Comrades, time has come for us to uproot the foundations of the foreign government. We have to put an end to the naked dance of hunger and unemployment in our land. You are the name-bearers of Rama and Krishna; you are the beloved (*piaras*) of Guru Gobind Singh. Adorn your heads with saffron turbans, as your brave Rajput ancestors did, and unshackle the chains of slavery of your motherland. As heroes like Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji, and Hari Singh Nalva had shed their blood in the past at the altar of the motherland, so does our motherland demand the sacrifice of the youth of today. Come forward, ye brave souls, to answer the agonizing call of your mother!" Hundreds of throats responded to his challenge with enthusiastic shouts of acclamation.

Bhagat Singh was overjoyed. He thundered, "Not by words alone. Let us sign this vow with our red blood." He made a cut in his finger and signed the vow with his 'pure Indian' blood. Sukhdev and Bhagwati Charan followed, as they sang in chorus, "*Rang de basanti cholaa, maan meriye; Desh tey jaan lutaanwaan, maan meriye; Rang de....*" (Oh dear mother, dye my shirt in saffron colour. May I offer my life at your feet, oh my mother! Dye my shirt...)

The Naujawan Bharat Sabha made a thumping start, and soon its branches were formed in different cities and towns of Punjab. The main items on their agenda were to make people aware of the misdeeds of the British and to pay homage to the martyrs of British tyranny. Bhagat Singh became a noted activist in the British records.

In 1925, the British Government started the well-known Meerut Conspiracy Case, and involved in it several leading communist activists—Indian and British, including M. N. Roy,

Muzaffar Ahmed and Spratt. The Communist leaders who were widely-travelled and had high intellectual propensities made use of this opportunity to propagate their cause.

In 1927, there was the famous dacoity near Kakori railway station. Martyrs Ram Prahad Bismal, Rajendra Lahiri, Roshan Singh, Ashfaqullah, became house-hold heroes overnight.

"*Sarfuroshi ki tamannaa ab hamaare dil mein hai; dekhnaa hai zore kitnaa baazue kaatil main hai.*" (We are determined to offer our heads at the altar; the powers of the assassins shall now be put to test). . . Thus sang the Kakori martyrs while mounting the gallows.

Naujawan Bharat Sabha was very active in carrying forward their message. In July 1928, at a meeting of some revolutionaries assembled in Jhansi, it was decided to summon a conference of representatives of all like-minded groups at Delhi, in September. This conference was held in the forest near Indra-prastha, Delhi. It elected Chandra Shekhar Azad as its leader and accepted the proposal of Bhagat Singh to establish the Hindostan Socialist Republican Association and its action wing, Hindostan Socialist Republican Army.

The words 'socialist' and 'republican' may be noted, for they were to become the sheet anchors of the constitution of free India in time to come. The Army was to function under the Association, which had two categories of members: firstly, those who would devote themselves day and night to national tasks, and secondly, those who would help the Association by donations and supply of resources needed for active operations.

Naturally, Bhagat Singh elected to join the first category. "*Jab vaadiye gurbat mein kadam rakhaa thhaa; Dur tak ayi thi yaade-haram samjhaane ko*"....(When we entered the vale of poverty, the memories of hearth and home came a long, long way advising us to return). . .

VIII

Bhagat Singh chose his path deliberately and knowingly. He entered the vale of poverty, insecurity and danger propelled by high and noble ideals, and was determined to sacrifice his all. He spurned the proposal of marriage made by his parents after the death of his elder drother, Jagat Singh, and went into hiding for a while.

During this period, he served with the *Daily Arjun* of Delhi and the *Daily Pratap* of Kanpur, which was being run by the great patriot, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was later to earn martyrdom in the communal clashes of 1931, engineered by the government following the execution of Bhagat Singh. Here he came in touch with B. K. Dutt who later joined him in the Bomb Action in the Legislative Assembly.

The Simon Commission came to India in 1928 to assess Indian 'competence' for greater association in local administration and make recommendations for further legislative reforms. As it was an 'all-White' commission and did not have a single Indian member, it appeared like adding insult to injury. The All-India National Congress considered it to be a national affront, and decided to boycott the Commission. Wherever it went, the Commission was confronted by large-scale demonstrations shouting—"Simon, Go Back !"

On October 30th, 1928, the Commission arrived in Lahore (now in Pakistan). Lala Lajpat Rai, the veteran Congress leader, led the demonstration at Lahore railway station. When the crowd became unmanageable, the police ordered a lathi charge. Lala Lajpat Rai was severely hit, and subsequently succumbed to his injuries on November 17. However, after Sir John Simon and his colleagues had been whisked away, the procession converted itself into a public meeting at Shah Alami Gate, and it was on this historic occasion that Lalaji uttered his memorable prophesy—"Every lathi blow hurled on us today shall be a nail in the coffin of the British Empire". And so it proved to be.

Bhagat Singh and his comrades were deeply incensed at this outrage, and decided to avenge the murder of the popular leader.

On December 17, Additional Superintendent of Police, Saunders, was shot at by three young revolutionaries as he came out of his office near the D. A. V. (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic) College Lahore. The assassins managed to make good their escape in spite of the police net. The event shook and inspired the youth of the nation as no other event had done in recent times.

As a result of both the national and communist propoganda, the Trade Union movement had also come to be organised in India. It was reasonably well-organized in Bombay. The labourers there were seething with discontent over their low wages and poor living conditions. The Government of India sought to acquire more powers to control the movement, and introduced a Public Safety Bill in the Legislative Assembly. At the first

reading, the Bill was rejected due to the veto exercised by the Speaker of the Assembly, V. J. Patel, the elder brother of the redoubtable Iron Man, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. But as the Government sought to reintroduce it a second time, when it felt assured of its passage, the Hindostan Socialist Republican Army (H. S. R. A.) decided to make its presence felt by lodging a strong protest in no uncertain manner - by throwing a bomb in the Legislative Assembly on the specified day. It was, of course, understood that the bomb shall be thrown at such a place where it would cause no physical harm whatsoever to the members, and particularly, the members occupying the Opposition Benches.

Who should be sent to undertake the action ? Bhagat Singh was determined on self-sacrifice and offered himself for the task, but as he was wanted in the Saunders' Murder Case, the Party would not accept his offer. He persisted and the Party had to agree. B. K. Dutt was deputed to accompany him. On April 8th 1929, the two young men hurled the bomb in the Assembly from the visitors' gallery and shouted the slogan, "*Inquilab Zinda-bad !*". Soon this slogan was to reverberate throughout India and has continued to be on the lips of all 'avante garde' groups since then, as much as '*Vande Mataram*' had been the national slogan thus far.

In the melee that followed, Bhagat Singh and Dutt could well make their escape. But Bhagat Singh and Dutt had come prepared for self-sacrifice. Their mission was to arouse the nation and warn the alien rulers. The two youngmen had pistols in their hands. They fired two shots in the air to reinforce their protest and then threw away their pistols towards the police party, which by now had gained enough composure to advance and arrest them. The comrades of Bhagat Singh and Dutt had made every arrangement to whisk them off after the action, but they proudly and smilingly spurned their programme and offered their wrists to be chained by the police. As their comrades saw them being escorted to the police station, they were thoroughly dismayed and quietly moved away.

IX

At the ensuing trial, Bhagat Singh and Dutt accepted the charges and were awarded life imprisonment on this account, on June 12, 1929. It may be noted here that the veteran nationalist leader, Asaf Ali ably defended the accused at this trial.

Bhagat Singh stood further charged for the murder of Saunders and also for throwing a bomb during the Ramlila celebration being held at Lahore in 1926.

Bhagat Singh, as a master strategist, made full use of the trial to propagate his cult and to arouse national feelings. The proceedings of the trial were prolonged and occupied headlines in the national press from day to day,

In order to improve the status of political prisoners and obtain increased facilities for them, the young accused entered a long-drawn fast unto death. This culminated in the death of Jatindernath Das on the 63rd day of his fast (September 13, 1929). Das was hailed as the 'MacSwiney' of India. As his body was taken to Calcutta by train, thousands of his admirers, young and old, including ladies, gathered at every railway station where the train was to halt to pay homage to the martyr.

However, the fast resulted in quite a few concessions being given to the political prisoners.

On October 7th, 1930, Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and Rajguru were awarded the extreme penalty in the Saunders' Murder Case, while 18 others received varying sentences.

On March 23rd, 1931, at 6. p.m., the three revolutionary heroes of the Indian Revolution mounted the gallows, at the Central Jail, Lahore, lustily shouting "*Inquilab Zindabad!*".

X

The news spread like wildfire throughout the city, and the young and old converged on the Jail Road to hail the martyrs. The hostels were closed and as the students marched through the streets of Lahore, its mansions and multi-storied houses seemed to quiver and shake, as if an earthquake had hit the city.

At the jail gate, they were informed that the bodies had been taken to River Sutlej near Ferozepur, 50 miles off, for incineration. Dr. Gopichand and other national leaders rushed to the sacred spot, followed by hundreds of youngmen on cycles or whatever conveyance they could manage. They were able to retrieve the half-burnt bones and ashes of the martyrs, which were brought to Lahore; and later, the next evening, were consigned to the holy flames at the banks of the Ravi with due honours and amidst the chanting of sacred mantras. The Punjabi mothers mourned, "*Ghori charan di umer jinaan di; Ajj suli tey charde nein*" (At an age when they should have mounted wedding mares, the youngmen have mounted the gallows. Alas !

The entire nation was shocked by the barbaric misdeed of the British authorities in advancing the time and date of the execution to the evening of the 23rd March, in contravention of standing regulations. As a matter of fact, the nation

had expected Mahatma Gandhi to raise the question of the reprieve of these three young men with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, during his talks with the latter, after the suspension of the civil resistance movement. When Gandhi failed to do so, the nation was dismayed; and at his first public appearance after the event, at the Karachi Congress (1931), Gandhi was greeted with black flags by an angry and inconsolable crowd.

However, one concession which Bhagat Singh's sacrifice may be said to have wrested from the Congress was that the Karachi Congress passed resolutions dealing with socio-economic problems facing the disadvantaged sections of society.

* * *

Bhagat Singh and his comrades earned the following grudging tribute from the Government of India in its Annual Report for 1930-31, submitted to the British Parliament :

"By the middle of the month, however, a serious complication had arisen. The sentences on Bhagat Singh and two other men who had been condemned to death for crimes of a terrorist nature were soon due to be carried out at Lahore, and Bhagat Singh himself, as a result of the writings concerning him in the press and the speeches made on his behalf throughout the country, had by this time been exalted to the level of a national hero. The interest taken in his fate was so intense that it was widely believed that, if Mr. Gandhi failed to persuade the Government at least to commute the sentence, the temper of the Congress would be so roused that it would be impossible to secure its ratification of the Delhi Settlement. On the 23rd, Bhagat Singh and his two companions, for reasons explained by the Viceroy in a speech in Delhi a few days later, were duly executed, and the intensity of the emotions which had been worked up over this case, even amongst those who were outside the Congress fold was illustrated by the fact that, on the 25th, while crucial discussion on the Financial Bill were in progress, a large number of members of the Legislative Assembly walked out of the House as a protest against what had been done. But the excitement which had been engendered by this incident subsided with surprising rapidity. At Karachi, on the date when the executions were carried out, the delegates for the plenary session of the Congress were already assembling, and during the next few days the atmosphere was very tense. But the various resolutions were methodically discussed and passed by the Working and Subjects Committees, and when, on the 30th, the one dealing with the Delhi Agreement came before the open Congress, it was passed without a single dissentient vote. Possibly the events which will be described in the next paragraph had some influence on this decision.

“As we had reason to explain while discussing the last phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the relations between Hindus and Muslims throughout Northern India had markedly deteriorated during the first two months of 1931, and already, in February, there had been serious communal rioting in Benares. This state of affairs was due chiefly to the increasing exasperation created among Muslims by the paralysis of trade and the general atmosphere of unrest and confusion that resulted from Congress activities. In addition, the disappointment felt by certain Muslim delegates at the results of the Round Table Conference doubtless indirectly had some effect on the situation, and the increased importance which the Congress seemed to be acquiring as a result of the negotiations with the Government caused the community serious apprehensions in view of the tyrannical and sometimes violent methods the supporters of the Civil Disobedience Movement had been adopting in order to enforce their wishes. The rioting in Benares, as we have seen, had been directly due to the murder of a Muslim trader who had defied the Congress picketers. During March, the tension between the two communities, in the United Provinces at any rate, greatly increased. Between the 14th and 16th, there was serious rioting in the Mirzapur District, and on the 17th, trouble broke out in Agra and continued till the 20th. On the 25th, when Congress workers endeavoured to induce Muslim shopkeepers in Cawnpore to close their premises in honour of the memory of Bhagat Singh, the Muslims resisted, and fighting there-upon extended throughout the city with extraordinary rapidity. For at least two days, the situation was altogether out of control, and the loss of life and destruction of property was appalling. This communal riot, which need never have occurred but for the provocative conduct of adherents of the Congress, was the worst which India has experienced for many years, and the news of it created consternation among the delegates assembling at Karachi. The trouble moreover spread from the city to the neighbouring villages, where there were sporadic communal disturbances for several days.”

* * *

It may be noted here that it was during these riots that Ganesh Shankar Vidyarathi met his martyrdom at Kanpur, while pleading for peace and harmony.

XI

How did I manage to get hold of this book ?

Amongst others, Bhagat Singh had made an ever-lasting impact on my adolescent mind.

In 1928 I was the editor of the English wall-magazine of my school, Sri Ranbir Singh High School, Jammu. When Saunders was murdered, I duly reported this news in our wall-magazine. It was also in Jammu that we read about the bomb incident in the Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. These two incidents made an indelible mark on my young mind. I was just 14 years old.

Then came the historic Congress Session of 1929 at Lahore where Jawaharlal declared complete independence as the goal of India. By this time, I had shifted to D.A.V. College, Hoshiarpur; and I contrived to attend this session as an unknown young lad drawn by the prevailing national fervour. I eagerly waited for Jawaharlal to declare complete independence as the goal of India at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the period of the Congress ultimatum to the British Imperialism was to expire. The resolution to this effect having been passed, I wended my way to the Frontier Gandhi's camp, where we danced the Pathan dances till the early hours of that glorious morning. Jawaharlal joined us there for quite a while.

Those were indeed intoxicating days. Gandhiji, having been authorized to launch a struggle to attain the declared goal, called for the 26th January, 1930 to be celebrated as the Independence Day. The nation was asked to commence the day with a solemn fast and to read out the Pledge of Independence at public meetings. Thereafter, Gandhi declared his intention to break the Salt Laws at Dandi on the 6th April, being the anniversary of the Anti-Rowlatt Act movement started by him in 1919. He decided to march to Dandi from the Sabarmati Ashram on the 12th March in easy stages so as to reach Dandi on the 5th April.

By the time, I had finished my matriculation examination (1930) and reached Dera Ghazi Khan, where my mother, along with my younger brother and sisters, was staying at my grandfather's house, the movement had picked up a great momentum. I found that my mother had almost assumed a leadership role in this movement at Dera Ghazi Khan. The main items on the agenda were bonfire (*Holi*) of foreign cloth and boycott of liquor shops, besides, of course, making and selling of contraband salt. At the commencement of the public meetings being organized in the evenings, I and my sisters were called upon to sing the *Vande Mataram* song with the aid of a harmonium.

Vidyawati and Ram Prakash, a contractor from Kamalia, were active collaborators of my mother, while Vidyavati's father, Lala Dhalu Ram Vakil, a senior citizen, gave his blessings to the movement.

In answer to Gandhi's call, some of us young boys, including Dinanath, son of Divan Lekh Raj, the local Tehsildar, formed an 'action squad.' For days we went to the nearby inundation canal, carrying pots and pans. We would collect the canal water, boil it, and feel happy in imagining that the sediment left at the bottom of the pans was contraband salt. We would bring it back to the town duly wrapped in paper packets to be auctioned at the public meetings. The auction money made us proud and it was donated to the fund of the cause.

My mother often led the volunteers to picket at the liquor shops and organized bonfires of foreign cloth. It was indeed a novel fight with a lot of fanfare, frolic and fun!

"*Nahin chalni sarkar Angrezi, hun nahin chalni,*" (The English writ shall no longer run, no longer run)—sang the volunteers in chorus as they marched to picket and demonstrate.

As is now well-recognized, this movement organised at thousands of places in the country set us free from fear, and also strengthened the forces of women's emancipation from the stifling walls of domesticity and traditional bondage.

When colleges reopened for the next session in September—October, I came to Lahore for my further studies at the D.A.V. College, Lahore; and my mother moved to the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, her old alma mater (courtesy Chacha Dev Raj), as DGK offered no facilities for further studies beyond the 8th class for girls, and my sister having passed her middle school in 1930, was now seeking admission to the 9th class.

As stated earlier, the death sentence was pronounced on Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on October 7, 1931 and we organized a mass strike (*hartal*) in protest. Two events stand out in my memory. Pandit Charu Dev, our Sanskrit teacher did not fall in line with the strikers and decided to take the class, which was attended by only one student, Vidya Dhar Mahajan. Panditji said that he had sympathies for the national cause and admiration for the heroes, yet his duty impelled him to take the class, and VDM said that he had been sent by his parents to study and he would, therefore, observe his *dharma*! We honoured their sentiments. Similarly, the English class was also held by Professor Sant Ram Sayal. It so happened that the Inspector of Police, Sergeant Niel, while chasing the agitators entered the DAV College premises and proceeded to belabour Professor Sayal and the students attending his class as he thought agitators had taken shelter there. The learned Professor was

advised to lodge an FIR, which he did and this led to a prolonged litigation. As the Professor failed to identify the Inspector, the latter was let off. The case, however, hit headlines.

On the occasion of the convocation of the Punjab University, (December 23, 1930), Hari Krishan, a young man hailing from NWFP, fired at the Chancellor-Governor who, however, narrowly escaped while Hari Krishan was apprehended on the spot. Further investigations led the authorities to arrest Chamanlal, who was alleged to have accompanied Hari Krishan from his native town to Lahore, and also Durga Das, and Ranbir, son of M. Khushhal Chand, Editor the *Daily Milap*, Lahore, as co-conspirators. While waiting for the action at Lahore, Chamanlal had been messing with us at the DAV College hostel, so the probing eyes of the government turned on some of us, and we were taken to the Lahore Fort for investigation. But nothing concrete could be found against us; we were let off with a warning and cited later as prosecution witnesses. In the Session's Court as we made our statements, we were declared hostile and were subjected to searching cross-examination. How long after we remained under police surveillance, I would not know; but this much may be recorded, that I was reprimanded by my Principal, Bakhshi Ram Rattan, for having turned his 'hostel into a serai', and was rusticated from the DAV College, Lahore, at the close of the term, as I was supposed to be a dangerous and contagious 'revolutionary', notwithstanding the fact that I had won a scholarship at the Intermediate Examination (1932) of the Punjab University.

* * *

Is it any wonder then that when (years later) the Jail Notebook of Shaheed Bhagat Singh was shown to me by Swami Shakti Vesh at Gurukula Indraprastha, I greedily seized it?

Gurukula Indraprastha had been established by Swami Shradhananda as the second campus of the Gurukula Kangri, Hardwar in 1916, when the land on which it now stands was purchased by him out of funds donated to him by Arya devotees. Situated at the eastern end of the Aravali hills, 20 kms south of Delhi, near Tughlaqabad Railway Station, on the Delhi Mathura line, its wooded spurs and the scholastic camouflage of the Gurukula offered an ideal place to young revolutionaries to assemble there and formulate their plans.

Like many other old institutions, Gurukula Indraprastha, too, has had a chequered history, and when Swami Shakti Vesh

A Martyr's Notebook

came to be its Governor (Mukhyadhishtata) in 1981, he sought formal affiliation once again with the Gurukula Kangri, Hardwar.

At this point in time, I happened to be the Vice-Chancellor of Gurukula Kangri and decided to lead the visiting team sent to inspect the Indraprastha Gurukula to assess its suitability before granting affiliation.

There, Swami Shakti Vesh took us to a subterranean chamber, which was their "Hall of Fame" and housed photographs of the revolutionaries of the Indian Freedom Struggle as well as a library containing relevant books, maps and documents. Amongst these documents was this Notebook written in Bhagat Singh's own hand. I stood thrilled and mesmerized for a while, kissed it and then requested Shakti Vesh to lend it to me so that I might use it for writing a few articles for old memories' sake.

* * *

I brought the Note-book to Gurukula Kangri and then to Jaipur. In the meanwhile, I read in the papers that Swami Shakti Vesh had been assassinated as a result of internecine feuds. There was now no one to claim the return of the note-book from me and, therefore, at the opportune moment, I suggested it to the Hindostani Manch, Jaipur to publish it as a sacred memento.

It may be noted here that Bhagat Singh is the *Beau Ideal* of the Hindostani Manch, which was formally inaugurated at Jaipur, on March 23rd, 1989 at Bhagat Singh Park. This day of the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and his two comrade being the Foundation Day of the Hindostani Manch, it is celebrated as a public function every year in an endeavour to carry forward the message of Bhagat Singh, which may be summarized in two words, *Hindostaniyat and Insaniyat*. The Manch has adopted these two words as its Motto, and *Dost* as the sobriquet to address each other.

However, noting that the Manch could not mobilize enough resources to take up the publication, Dost Bhupendra Hooja has come forward to do the same as an act of homage and reverence to the great soul whose name shall ever serve as a beacon to young India in its hour of trial and bafflement.

Bhagat Singh Zindabad ! Inquilab Zindabad !

Shaheed Divas, March 23, 1993.

Balabhadra Bharati
Jaipur

[I should like to thank Ms. Carol Pass for her help in preparing and typing this note—B.B.]

A MARTYR'S NOTEBOOK

★

*Notes and Extracts
from Books read by
Shaheed Bhagat Singh
during his Prison Days*

★

Notes : (i) As we open the Notebook, on the first (title) page, there are some jottings : . . . "For Bhagat Singh/four hundred & four pages (404) pages . . ." with some initials and the date 12/9/29. This is an entry duly intialled by the concerned jail authority to the effect that the copybook was given to Bhagat Singh on that date.

(See opposite page. —Eds.)

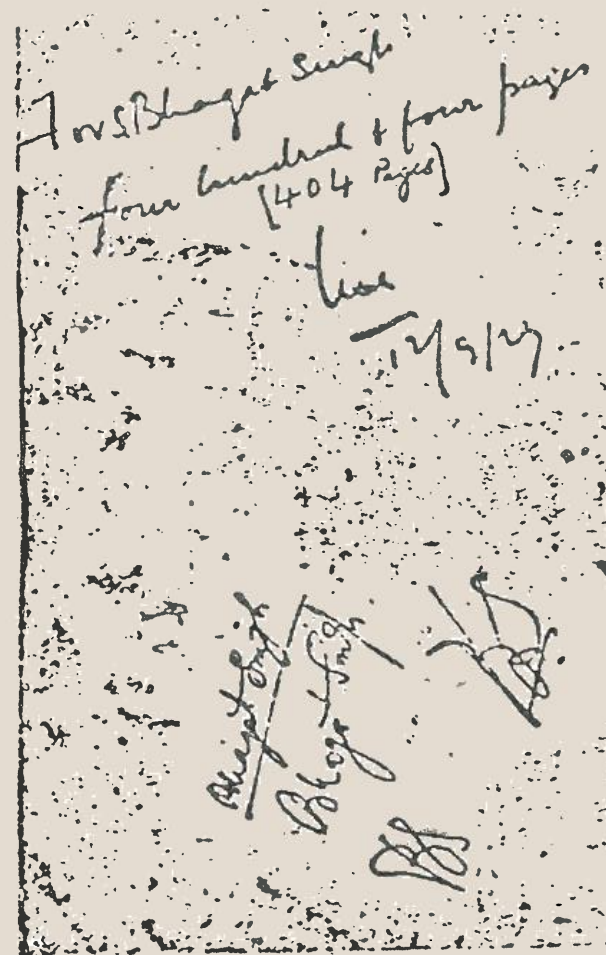
(Those familiar with the Jail Manual/procedure, know it well that when any prisoner would ask for some writing material etc., the Jail authorities note the fact in a similar fashion, both at the beginning and at the end of the copybook. The prisoner/undertrial would also initial entries to confirm the receipt of the writing material. This practice was followed in this case also . . . (At the end of the notebook, also, there were initials of Bhagat Singh dated 12/9/29).

(ii) Beside these entries, on the right-hand, top corner of the title page, there is the signature of Bhagat Singh. At the lower left-hand corner, there is an entry : . . . "Copy by Abhey Kumar Singh, nephew of Shaheed Bhagat Singh."

(iii) (The Notebook was of the usual size of a school/college exercise book, approximately 6.75 × 8.50 inches or 17.50 cm. × 21 cm.)

— Editors

Bhagat Singh



Copy by Abhey Kumar Singh
nephew of Shaheed Bhagat Singh

Land Measurements :—
German 20 hectares—50 acres i.e. 1 hectare = 2½ acres*

* The short and odd entry on page 2 of the Notebook is rather difficult to explain. How was it that Bhagat Singh chose to mention the two land measurement units on this page?

It is equally intriguing why the first "Notes" in the Notebook should begin with Quotations from some well-known books by Frederick Engels.

—(See opposite page)

—Editors

Page 6 (3)

Freedom from Property—The "freedom of property" . . . as far as the small capitalist and peasant proprietors are concerned, became "freedom from property."

Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognised form, the official cloak, of prostitution....

(*Siom (?) Scientific and Utopia*)*

Mental Bondage—"An eternal being created human society as it is today, and submission to 'superior' and 'authority' is imposed on the 'lower' classes by divine will." This suggestion, coming from pulpit, platform and press, has hypnotised the minds of men and proves to be one of the strongest pillars of exploitation."

(Translator's Preface to *Origin of the Family*)**

* * *

*[*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* by Frederick Engels.—Eds.]

**[*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Frederick Engels.—Eds.]

[*Note*: It would perhaps remain a mystery as to why Bhagat Singh chose to start his self-evolved course of study in the prison with the book "*Origin of the Family*". He may have had a feeling that as an activist and committed revolutionary, and as one who had earlier given up his formal studies to participate in the national movement, there was a big gap in his knowledge, which he must make good! Or, may be, he wished to sharpen his mental tools, his weapons of wit and gain some understanding of the socio-political reality around!]

—Eds.]

The Origin of the Family.... by Engels

Morgan was the first to make an attempt at introducing a logical order into the history of primeval society.

He divides it into three main epochs :
(1) Savagery, (2) Barbarism, (3) Civilization

1. SAVAGERY re-divided into three stages :
(1) Lower; (2) Middle; (3) Higher.

1. Lower Stage of Savagery: Infancy of human race.
"Living in trees. (2) Fruits, nuts and roots serving as food (3) The formation of articulated speech is the principal result of that period.*"

2. **Middle Stage :** 1. Fire discovered. 2. Fish being used as food. 3. Hunting stone implements invented. 4. Cannibalism comes into existence.**

3. **Higher Stage :** 1. Bow and arrow, No pottery. 2. Village Settlements. 3. Timber used for building. 4. Cloth weaved.

Bows and arrows were for the stage of savagery what the iron sword was for barbarism and the fire arm for civilisation, the weapon of supremacy.

2. BARBARISM :

1. **Lower Stage :** (1) Introduction of pottery. At first wooden pots were covered with layers of earth, but afterwards earthen pots were discovered.

(2) Human races divided into two distinct classes:
(i) Eastern who tamed animals and had grain;
(ii) Western who had only 'corn'.

*(Sidelined and Underlined in the Notebook - Ed.)

** (Marginal Note in the original : Venison = animal flesh taken by hunting.)

2. Middle Stage :

1 (a) *Western hemisphere* : i.e. in America they grew food plants, (cultivation and irrigation), and baked bricks for house-building.

(b) *Eastern* : They domesticated animals for milk and flesh. No cultivation in this stage yet.

3. Higher Stage :

1. Melting of iron ore.

2. Invention of letter script and its utilisation for writing records. This stage is richer in inventions. This is the period of Greek heroes.

3. Iron ploughs are drawn by animals to grow corn on a large scale.

4. Clearing of forests, and iron axe and iron spade used.

5. Great attainments : (i) Improved iron tools, (ii) the bellows, (iii) handmill, (iv) Potter's wheel, (v) Preparation of oil and wine, (vi) fashioning metals, (vii) wagon and chariot, (viii) ship-building, [Page 9 (6)] (ix) Artistic Architecture, (x) Towns and forts built, (xi) Homeric Epochs and entire mythology.

With these attainments, Greeks enter the third stage—the "civilisation" !

To sum up :

1. *Savagery* : Time of predominating appropriation of finished natural products; human ingenuity invents mainly tools useful in assisting this appropriation.

2. *Barbarism* : Time of acquiring knowledge of cattle raising, of agriculture and of new methods for increasing the productivity of nature by human agency.

3. *Civilisation* : Time of learning a wider utilisation of natural products, of manufacturing and of art.

"We have, then, three main forms of the family corresponding in general to the three main stages of human development:—

1. For savagery : "group marriage "
2. For barbarism : the pairing family
3. For civilisation : monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution. Between the pairing family and monogamy, in the higher stage of barbarism, the rule of men over female slaves and polygamy is inserted. (pp. 90)

Page 10 (7)

**Defects of Marriage*

Especially a long engagement is in nine cases out ten, a perfect training school of adultery. (pp. 91)

*Socialistic Revolution and Marriage Institution :**

We are now approaching a social revolution, in which the old economic foundations of monogamy will disappear just as surely as those of its complement prostitution. Monogamy arose through the concentration of considerable wealth in one hand,—a man's hand—and from the endeavour to bequeath this wealth to the children of this man to the exclusion of all others. This necessitated monogamy on the woman's, but not on the man's part. Hence this monogamy of women in no way hindered open or secret polygamy of women.

Now the impending social revolution will reduce this whole case of the heritance to a minimum by changing at least the overwhelming part of permanent and inheritable wealth—the means of production—into social property. Since monogamy was caused by economic conditions, will it disappear when these causes are abolished? (pp. 91)

* Noted in the margin in the original Notebook. —Eds.

Page 11 (8)

"Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears
Today of past Regrets and future Fears —
Tomorrow?—Why, Tomorrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

Here with a loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of verse—and Thou
Beside me signing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise now!
"Ummar Khayyam"

State : The State presupposes a public power of coercion separated from the aggregate body of its members
—(Engels) [pp. 116]

Origin of State :

... Degeneration of the old feuds between tribes—a regular mode of existing by systematic plundering on land and sea for the purpose of acquiring cattle, slaves and treasures....In short, wealth is praised and respected as the highest treasure, and the old gentile institutions are abused in order to justify the forcible robbery of wealth. Only one thing was missing : an institution that not only secured the newly acquired property of private individuals against the communistic tradition of the gens, that not only declared as sacred the formerly so despised private property and represented the protection of this sacred property as the highest purpose of human society, but that also stamped the gradually developing new forms of acquiring property of constantly increasing wealth with the universal sanction of the society. An institution that lent the character of perpetuity not only to the newly rising division into classes, but also to the right of the possessing classes to exploit and rule the nonpossessing classes.

And this institution was found. The State arose
(pp. 129-130)

Definition of a Good Government : "Good government can never be a substitute for self-government."

"Henry Campbell Bannerman"*

"We are convinced that there is only one form of Government, whatever it may be called, namely, where the ultimate control is in the hands of the people".

"Earl of Balfour"***

Religion : "My own view of religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear, and as source of untold misery to the human race. I cannot, however, deny that it has made some contributions to civilisation. It helped in early days to fix the calendar and it caused the Egyptian priest to chronicle eclipses with such care that in time they became able to predict them. These two services, I am prepared to acknowledge, but I do not know of any other.

— Bertrand Russell***

Page 13 (10)

Benevolent Despotism : Montague - Chelmsford@ called the British Government a 'benevolent despotism' and according to Ramsay Macdonald, §the Imperialist leader of the British Labour Party, "in all attempts to govern a country by a 'benevolent despotism', the governed are crushed down. They become subjects who obey, not citizens who act. Their literature, their art, their spiritual expression go."

*[Identity not known. —Eds.]

**[Perhaps Arthur James, 1st Earl of Balfour (1848-1930) British Statesman & Prime Minister (1902-1905) —Eds.]

***[Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl Russell (1872-1972) well-known British philosopher and pacifist spokesman. Awarded Nobel Prize for Literature (1950). —Eds.]

@[It may be a reference to the Montague-Chelmsford Report (1918) for constitutional reforms in India which led to 'Dyarchy under the Government of India Act, 1919. —Eds.]

[Edwin Samuel Montague (1879-1924) was then the Secretary of State in the India Office (1917 to 1922) while

(Contd.) →

Rt. Hon'ble Edwin S. Montague, *Govt. of India :* Secretary of State for India, said in the House of Commons in 1917: "The Government of India is too wooden, too iron, too metallic, too antediluvian, to be of any use for modern purposes. The Indian Government is indefensible."

*Dr. Ruthford's words: "British Rule as it is carried on in India is the lowest and most immoral system of government in the world—the exploitation of one nation by another."

Liberty and English People : "The English people love liberty for themselves. They hate all acts of injustice, except those which they themselves commit. They are such liberty-loving people that they interfere in the Congo and cry, "Shame" to the Belgians. But they forget their heels are on the neck of India.

An Irish Author

Page 14 (11)

Mob Retaliation

... "Let us therefore examine how men came by the idea of punishing in this manner.

"They learn it from the Governments they live under, and retaliate the punishment they have been accustomed to behold. The heads stuck upon spikes,

← Lord Chelmsford—Frederick John Napier Thesiger, 3rd Lord and 1st Viscount (1868-1933)—was the Viceroy of India (1916-1920) during a hectic period of political strife.

§[James Ramsay Macdonald (1866-1937) British politician and labour leader who helped form the British Labour Party (1900) and led its Parliamentary wing in the House of Commons (1911-1914), from 1923 and again in 1929. Was Prime Minister twice (from January to November 1924) and from 1929-1935. Author of several books on Socialism and allied themes, which came out between 1905 and 1921. —Eds.]

*[Identity not clear. —Eds.]

which remained for years upon Temple Bar, differed nothing in the horror of the scene from those carried about upon spikes at Paris; yet this was done by the English Government. It may perhaps be said that it signifies nothing to a man what is done to him after he is dead; but it signifies much to the living; it either tortures their feelings or hardens their hearts, and in either case, it instructs them how to punish when power falls into their hands.

“Lay then the axe to the root, and teach Governments humanity. It is their sanguinary punishments which corrupt mankind . . . The effect of these cruel spectacles exhibited to the populace is to destroy tenderness or excite revenge, and by the base and false idea of governing men by terror instead of reason, they become precedents.”

(Rights of Man, (pp. 32) T. Paine)*

Page 15 (12)

Monarch and Monarchy :

It was not against Louis XVI but against despotic principles of government, that the Nation revolted. The principles had not their origin in him, but in the original establishment, many centuries back, and they were become too deeply rooted to be removed, and the Augean stable of parasites and plunderers too abominably filthy to be cleaned by anything short of a complete revolution. When it becomes necessary to do a thing, the whole heart and soul should go into the measure, or not attempt it . . . The Monarch and the Monarchy were distinct and separate things; and it was against the person or principles of the former, that the revolt commenced and the Revolution has been carried.

(—pp. 19)**

*[Thomas Paine—English author and publicist (1737-1809) known for his significant contributions to the American War of Independence & the French Revolution —Eds]

**[Source not indicated. Could these also be extracts from Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* ? —Eds]

Natural and Civil Rights : Man did not enter into society to become worse than he was before, but to have those rights better secured. His natural rights are the foundation of all his civil rights.

Natural rights are those which appertain to man in right of his existence (intellectual—mental etc.)

Civil rights are those that appertain to man in right of his being a member of society.

(—pp. 44)*

Page 16 (13)

King's Salary :

It is inhuman to talk of a million sterling a year, paid out of the public taxes of any country, for the support of an individual, whilst thousands who are forced to contribute thereto, are pining with want and struggling with misery. Government does not consist in a contract between prisons and palaces, between poverty and pomp; it is not instituted to rob the needy of his mite and increase the worthlessness of the wretched.

(—p. 204)**

“Give me Liberty or Death”

“It is in vain, Sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the North . . . to our ears the clash of resounding arms Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?”

*[Source not given Perhaps, *The Right of Man* —Eds]

**[Underlined in the original. **Source not given —Eds]

Forbid it, almighty God! I know not what course others may take. As for me, give me "liberty or death".

—Patrick Henry*

Right of Labour: "Whoever produces anything by weary labour does not need revelation from heaven to teach him that he has a right to the thing produced."

Robert G. Ingersoll**

Page 17 (14)

"We consider it horrible that people should have their heads cut off, but we have not been taught to see the horror of life-long death which is inflicted upon a whole population by poverty and tyranny."

Mark Twain***

"... The Anarchists and the apostles of insurrection are also represented; and if some of the things seem to the reader the mere unchaining of furies, I would say, let him not blame the faithful anthologist, let him not blame even the writer—let him blame himself, who has acquiesced in the existence of conditions which have driven his fellowmen to extremes of madness and despair."

—Upton Sinclair—Preface 19
*Cry for Justice*****

*[Patrick Henry (1736-1790)—American politician, orator and legislator. —Eds.]

**[U. S. lawyer, public speaker and author(1832-1899)-Eds.]

***[Pen-name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) famous American novelist and humorist. —Eds.]

****[Well-known U. S. author, playwright and socialist reformer 1878-1968. —Eds.]

"... He (the old labourer out of *The Old Labourer*: employment) was struggling against age, against nature, against circumstances; the entire weight of society, law and order pressed upon him to force him to lose his self-respect and liberty... He knocked at the doors of the farms and found good in man only—not in law and order, but in individual man alone."

—Richard Jefferies (80)*

Page 18 (15)

"... And we, the men who braved *Poor Labourers*: this task were outcasts of the world.

A blind fate, a vast merciless mechanism, cut and shaped the fabric of our existence. We were men despised when we were most useful, rejected when we were not needed, and forgotten when our troubles weighed upon us heavily. We were the men sent out to fight the spirit of the wastes, rob it of all its primeval horrors and batter down the barriers of its world-old defences. Where we were working, a new town would spring up some day; it was already springing up, and then, if one of us walked there, 'a man with no fixed address,' he would be taken up and tried as a loiterer and vagrant."

(From *Children of the Dead End***
by Patrick Macgill. C. J., 48)

"Morality and religion are but words to *Morality*: him who fishes in gutters for the means of sustaining life, and crouches behind barrels in the street for shelter from the cutting blasts of a winter night"

Horace Greeley (128)***

"It is desirable for a ruler that no man *Hunger*: should suffer from cold and hunger under

*[English naturalist and novelist (1848-1887)—Eds.]

**[Identity not clear. —Eds.]

***[American journalist and statesman (1811-1872)—Eds.]

his rule. Man cannot maintain his standard of morals when he has no ordinary means of living."

*Konko Hoshi,
Buddhist Monk of Japan, 14th century, p. 135.)*

Page 19 (16)

Freedom

Men!—Whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers, brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?

If you do not feel the chain
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed,
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Is true Freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No! True Freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

"James Russell Lowell" (p. 189)*

*[American poet, (1819-91) essayist and editor—of *Atlantic Monthly*. Wrote several memorial odes after the Civil War; was also American minister in Spain (1877-80) and England (1880-85) —Eds.]

Page 20 (17)

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Invention: Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being.

*J. S. Mill,** 199*

Alms: "There is no one on earth more disgusting and repulsive than he who gives alms. Even as there is no one so miserable as he who accepts them."

Maxim Gorky @ p. 204*

Liberty

Those corpses of youngmen,
Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets—
Those hearts pierced by the grey lead,
Cold and motionless as they seem, live elsewhere
With unslaughtered vitality.

They live in other youngmen, O kings!
They live in other brothers again ready to defy you!
They were purified by death—
they were taught and exalted!

Page 21 (18)

Not a grave for the murder'd for freedom,
but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed.

*[Source not given. It is from "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray (1716-71) the well-known English poet. —Eds.]

**[Well-known essayist and philosopher (1808-73) Founder of the Utilitarian Society and author of several books on philosophy, political economy and reform. —Eds.]

*@[Famous Russian writer — Pen-name of Alexey Maximovich Peshkov (1888-1936) —Eds.]

Which the wind carry afar and re-sow, and the
rains and the snows nourish.
Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of
tyrant let loose
But it stalks invincibly over the earth, whispering,
counselling, cautioning.

(Walt Whitman* p. 268)

“If there is anything that cannot bear
Free Thought : free thought, let it crack.”

Windell Phillips** p. 271

“Away with the State! I will take part in
State : that revolution. Undermine the whole concep-
tion of a state, declare free choice and spiritual
kinship to be the only all important conditions of any
union, and you will have the commencement of a liberty
that is worth something.”

—Henrick Ibsen*** p. 273

“Surely oppression maketh a wise man
Oppression : mad.” (p. 278)@

Page 22 (19)

The man who flings his whole life into an
Martyrs : attempt, at the cost of his own life, to
protest against the wrongs of his fellow-

*[Walt Whitman (1819-92) had a humble start with little education and worked his way through to win recognition late in life. Now acknowledged as a great and popular poet. Book not mentioned —Eds.]

**[Wendell Phillips, American orator and reformer (1811-1884); also active in the anti-slavery movement. Eds.]

***[Henrick Ibsen—(1828-1906)—the great Norwegian dramatist acknowledged as the founder of modern prose drama. His works have been translated and performed in many languages, especially English. —Eds.]

@[Source not given. All extracts could be from one book. —Eds.]

men, is a saint compared to the active and passive up-
holders of cruelty and injustice, even if his protest
destroys other lives besides his own. Let him who is
without sin in society cast the first stone at such
an one.’ (p. 287*)

While there is a lower class, I am in it.
Lower Class : While there is a criminal element. I am in it.
While there is a soul in jail, I am not free.

—Engene B. Debs** (144)

One Against All (Charles Fourier : 1772-1837)***

The present social order is a ridiculous mech-
anism, in which portions of the whole are in conflict
and acting against the whole. We see each class in
society desire, from interest, the misfortune of the other
classes, placing in every way individual interest in
opposition to public good. The lawyer wishes litigation
and suits, particularly among the rich; the physician
desires sickness. (The latter would be ruined if every-
body died without disease, as (the . . . (?)) would the
former if all quarrels were settled by arbitration). The
soldier wants a war, which will carry off half of his
comrades and secure him promotion; the undertaker
wants burials; monopolist and forestallers want famine,
to double or treble the price of grain; the architect,
the carpenter, the mason want conflagration, that will
burn down a hundred houses to give activity to their
branches of business.

(p. 202.†)

*[Source not known —Eds.]

**[Eugene Victor Debs (1855-1926) American socialist leader. (Source not known) —Eds.]

***[Francois Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837) French socialist writer. †(Source of book not given) —Eds.]

Page 23 (20)

New Gospel : "Society can overlook murder, adultery or swindling; it never forgives the preaching of a new gospel."

*Frederic Harrison** (p. 327)

Tree of Liberty : The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

Thomas Jefferson (332)**

Chicago Martyrs :

Say, then, that the man erred grievously, if his error had been ten times as great, it ought to have been wiped from human recollection by his sacrifice . . .

Granted freely that their idea of the best manner of making a protest was utterly wrong and impossible, granted that they went not the best way to work. But what was it that drove them into attack against the social order as they found it? They and thousands of other men that stood with them were not bad men, nor depraved, nor blood thirsty, nor hard hearted, nor criminal, nor selfish, nor crazy. Then what was it that evoked a complaint so bitter and deep seated . . . ?

No one ever contemplated the simple fact that men do not band themselves together to make a protest without the belief that they have something to protest about, and that, in any organised state of so-

*[Frederic Harrison (1831-1923) Professor of jurisprudence and international law to the Inns of Court (1877-89). Author of many books on historical, political and literary subjects. —Eds.]

**[Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) a great liberal and American apostle of democracy, the third President of the United States of America. (Source not known) —Eds.]

ciety, a widespread protest is something for grave inquiry.

Charles Edward Russell (333*)

[*Source not known Identity not certain —Ed.]

Page 24 : (21)

Will of Revolutionary

"I also wish my friends to speak little or not at all about me, because idols are created when men are praised, and this is very bad for the future of the human race. . . Acts alone, no matter by whom committed, ought to be studied, praised or blamed. Let them be praised in order that they may be initiated when they see to contribute to the common weal; let them be censured when they are regarded as injurious to the general well-being, so that they may not be repeated.

"I desire that on no occasion, whether near or remote, nor for any reason whatsoever, shall demonstrations of a political or religious character be made before my remains, as I consider the time devoted to the dead would be better employed in improving the conditions of the living, most of whom stand in great need of this."

*Will of Francisco Ferrer***
Spanish educator (1859-1909).

Executed after the Barcelona riots by a plot of his clerical enemies.

"Come follow me", said Jesus to the rich *Charity* : young man . . . To stay in his own set and invest his fortune in work of charity, would have been comparatively easy. Philanthropy has been fashionable in every age. Charity takes the insurrectionary edge off of poverty. Therefore, the philanthropic rich man is a benefactor to his fellow magnates, and is made to feel their gratitude, to him all doors of fashion swing. He denied the legitimacy of alms-giving as

**[Francisco Ferrer Guardia (1859-1909). Spanish educationist turned socialist. Despite his opposition to violence, he was arrested, charged and executed in a trial which was later termed as judicial murder. —Eds.]

a plaster for the deep-lying sore in social tissue.... Philanthropy as a substitute or justice—he would have none of it . . .

Page 25 (22)

Charity is twice cursed—it hardens him that gives and softens him that takes. It does more harm to the poor than exploitation, because it makes them willing to be exploited. It breeds slavishness which is moral suicide. The only thing Jesus would permit a swollen fortune to do was to give itself to revolutionary propaganda, in order that swollen fortunes might be forever after impossible . . .

*Bouck White, Clergyman, born 1874, U.S.A.
p. (353)**

Fight for Freedom

The power of armies is a visible thing
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave people into light can bring
Or hide, at will, —for freedom combating.
By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power that spirit whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves—from year to year
Spring this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

—*W. Wordsworth***

Page 26 (23)

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Half a league half a league,
Half a league onward,

*[Other details not available. —Eds.]

**[William Wordsworth (1750–1850)—a popular English poet among the early Romantics and also a poet of nature; radical and pro-republican in his youth. —Eds.]

All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' He said;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismayed?
Not, though the soldiers knew
Some one had blundered;

Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to the right of them,
Cannon to the left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell,
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered:

Page 27 (24)

Plunged in the battery—smoke
Right through the line they broke,
Cossacks and Russians
Reeled from the sabre stroke
Shattered and sundered.

Cannon to the right of them.
Cannon to the left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wondered.

Honour, the charge made
Honour, the Light Brigade !
Noble six hundred.

— Lord Tennyson l*

دل سے تو ہیں فرزند ہمارے اور دمار سے **
جو غم کی گوری کو سہا خوشی سے نہ مار سے +
سجا کر نصیحت امید نہ نامی کے پھولوں سے
کسی بیدار نے رکھ دی یہ روئے دل سے +

پھر نہ سزاؤں سے تو ڈر علم نہ نال
انہوں کو یاد دلائے ہو بولا ہو اسنا +

*[Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) the famous English poet. More than one generation of Indian students must have read this poem in their books. Obviously, it had a deeper meaning for Bhagat Singh and his band of young revolutionaries who also rode into the Valley of Death ! —Eds.]

**[The page ends with these 3 Urdu couplets. —Eds.]

Birth-right :

We're the sons of sires that baffled
Crowned and mirrored* tyranny;
They defied the field and scaffold
For their birth-rights — so will we !
(J. Campbell)**

Glory of the Cause :

Ah ! not for idle hatred, not
For honour, fame, nor self applause

Note : [The three couplets in Urdu on page 27 (24) of the Prison Notebook of Bhagat Singh as given on page 22 opposite are also reproduced below in the Roman script, with a line by line free translation. —Eds.]

Dil de tu is mizaaj kaa Parvardigaar de !
Jo gham ki gharhi ko bhi khushi se guzaar de !

Tr. (Give me a (stout) heart of such temperament
O ! Protector !
That it may pass the hour of sorrow also as a
happy hour !)

Sajaa kar mayyiat-e-umeed naakaami ke phoolon se
Kisi hamdard ne rakh di mere toote hue dil mein.

Tr. (The bier of (my) hope, bedecked with the
flowers of failure—
Some fellow-sufferer (friend) has placed it in
my broken heart !)

Chherh naa ai Farishte ! tu zikre ghame-Jaanaanaan !
Kyon yaad dilaate ho bhulaa huaa afsanaa !

Tr. (Do not start O' Angel with the sad tale of
the dear beloved !

Why must you remind (me) of that forgotten
episode (tale) ?)

*[Word not clear —Eds.] (*mirrored*)

**[Could be the Irish poet, Joseph Campbell (1879-1944) whose lyrics and ballads were based on Irish legends and folklore ! —Eds.]

But for the glory of the cause,
You did, what will not be forgot.

(Arthur Clogh)*

Immortality of Soul :

For you know if you can once get a man believing in immortality, there is nothing more left for you to desire; you can take everything in the world he owns — you can skin him alive if you please — and he will bear it with perfect good humour

(Upton Sinclair 403
c. g.)**

God's Tyrants ?

A tyrant must put on the appearance of uncommon devotion to religion. Subjects are less apprehensive of illegal treatment from a ruler whom they consider god-fearing and pious. On the other hand, they do less easily move against him, believing that he has the gods on his side §

Page 29 (26)

Soldiers and Thought :

"If my soldiers were to begin to reflect, not one of them would remain in the ranks."

(Frederick the Great)*@ 562

*[Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61) English poet. A pupil of Thomas Arnold at Rugby, a Fellow of Oriel, Principal of University Hall, London and an examiner in Education Office. —Eds.]

**[May be an abbreviated reference to "Cry for Justice" —already quoted. —Eds.]

§[Source not given; page corner torn out. —Eds.]

*@[Frederick of Prussia (1712-86) Administrator, military genius and a man of culture, who gave nationhood to Prussia —Eds.]

The Noblest Fallen :

The noblest have fallen. They were buried
obscurely in a deserted place.
No tears fell over them.
Strange hands carried them to the grave.
No cross, no enclosure, and no tomb stone tell
their glorious names.
Grass grows over them, a feeble blade
bending low keeps the secret.
The sole witness were the surging waves,
Which furiously beat against the shore,
But even they the mighty waves could
not carry farewell greetings to the
distant home.

(V. N. Figner)*\$

Prison :

"There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath,
Which neither was of Life nor death.

(The Prisoner of Chillon)*@@

Page 30 (27)

After Conviction :

During the moments which immediately follow upon his sentence, the mind of the condemned in many respects resembles that of a man on the point of death. Quiet, and as if inspired, he no longer clings to what he is about to leave, but firmly looks in front of him, fully conscious of the fact that what is coming is inevitable.

(V. N. Figner)*\$

*\$[Russian revolutionist and martyr (1852-1942) Vera Nikolaevna Figner—"One of the first women to declare war on Tsarism"—(E. Yaroslavsky in her obituary note) Her memoirs were published in 7 volumes. —Eds.]

*@[This poem by Lord Byron published in 1816 describes the imprisonment of a patriot Francois de Bonnavard (1496? 1570) in the castle of Chillon on the Lake of Geneva. (Lines 245-258/IV of the long Poem) —Eds.]

[*George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) Sixth baron, a popular and noted English poet who influenced the Romantics a lot. —Eds.]

The Prisoner :

"It is suffocating under the low, dirty roof;
My strength grows weaker year by year;
They oppress me; this stony floor,
This iron chained table,
This bed-stead, this chair, chained
To the walls, like boards of the grave,
In this eternal, dumb, deep silence
One can only consider oneself a corpse."

"N. A. Morozov"*

Naked walls, prison thoughts,
How dark and sad you are,
How heavy to be a prisoner inactive,
And dream of years of freedom.

(Morozov)*

تجھے ذبح کرنے کی خوشی ہے میری مرنیکا شوق **

میری بھی مرزی وہی ہے میرے صحابہ کی ہے۔

*[Nukolai Alexandrovich Morozov (1854-1946). A professional revolutionary (Since 1874) writer, poet and scientist. Met Karl Marx in London in 1880 and was handed the *Communist Manifesto* for translation into Russian. Studied and wrote about Sciences (28 volumes on Chemistry, Phsics. Mathematics and Astronomy) while in prison for nearly 25 years—(1875-78 and 1881 to 1905). Also wrote poetry and fiction. —Eds.]

** (An Urdu Couplet in Roman script —Eds.)

*Tujhe zabaah karne ki khushi, mujhe marne kaa shauq,
Meri bhi marzi whoi hai, jo mere sayyaad ki hai*

Tr: You delight in slaughter, I have a craving for death!

I have the same wish (intent) as has my executioner!

Page 31 (28)

"Everything here is so silent, lifeless, pale,
The years pass fruitless, leaving no trace;
The weeks and days drag on heavily,
Bringing only dull boredom in their suite.

(Morozov)*

Our thoughts grow dull from long confinement;
There is a feeling of heaviness in our bones;
The minutes seem eternal from torturing pain,
In this cell, four steps wide.

"Entirely for our fellowmen we must live,
Our entire selves for them we must give,
And for their sakes struggle against ill fate!

(Morozov)*

Came to Set me Free :

At last men came to set me free;
I ask'd not why and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be;
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own.

(The Prisoner of Chillon)**

←*[See note below page 26 —Eds.]

**[Poem by Lord Byron—XIV—Lines 370-378 —Eds.]

Page 32 (29)

“And from on high we have been honoured with a mission !
We passed a severe school, but acquired higher knowledge.
Thanks to exile, prison, and a bitter lot,
We know and value the world of truth and freedom.”
(Prisoner of Schlüsselburg)*

Death and Suffering of a Child

‘A child was born. He committed consciously neither bad nor good actions. He fell ill, suffered much and long, until he died in terrible agony. Why? Wherefore? It is the eternal riddle for the philosopher.’£

Frame of Mind of a Revolutionary :

“He who has ever been under the influence of the life of Jesus, who has borne, in the name of an ideal, humiliation, suffering and death; he who has once considered Him as an ideal and his life as the prototype of a disinterested love,—will understand the frame of mind of the revolutionary who has been sentenced and thrown into a living tomb for his work on behalf of popular freedom.”

(Veru N. Figner)**

Rights :

Don't ask for rights. Take them. And don't let any one give them to you. A right that is handed to you for nothing has something the matter with it. It's more than likely, it is only a wrong turned inside out.

*[Schlüsselburg—a town on marshy ground in Leningrad area, where river Neva issues from Lake Ladoga. On an island opposite is a fortress built by the army of Peter the Great in 1702, after its capture. (Schlüsselburg was the “key” to Sea, according to Peter the Great). The fortress was later converted into a prison whose inmates included Marshal Dolgoruki, the Tsar Ivan VI, many Decembrists (revolutionaries) the anarchist Bakunin, Polish patriot Lukashovskiy, and Lenin's brother who was hanged there. —Eds.]

**[See note on p. 25 p. 30/27 of the Notebook—Eds.]

£[Source not given. Torn sheet. —Eds.]

Page 33 (30)

No Enemies ?

You have no enemies, you say ?
Alas ! my friend, the boast is poor;
He who has mingled in the fray
Of Duty, that the brave endure,
Must have made foes ! If you have none,
Small is the work that you have done.
You've hit no traitor on the hip,
You've dashed no cup from perjured lip,
You've never turned wrong to right,
You've been a coward in the fight.

(Charles Mackay. 747)*

Child Labour :

No fledgling feeds the father bird,
No chicken feeds the hen;
No kitten mouses for the cat —
This glory is for men
We are the wisest, strongest Race —
Loud may our praise be sung !
The only animal alive
That lives upon its young !

(Charlotte Perkins Gilman)**

Page 34 (31)

No Classes ! No Compromise !!

(George D. Herron)

Under the Socialist movement there is coming a time, and the time may be even now at hand, when improved conditions or adjusted wages will no longer be thought to be an answer to the cry of labour; yes when these will be but an insult to the common

*[Perhaps the Scottish writer (1814–1889) and editor of Glasgow *Argus*, who composed several songs set to music. Also edited *A Thousand and One Gems of English Poetry* (1887) —Eds.]

**[Source illegible; bottom part of page is torn — Eds.]

intelligence. It is not for better wages, improved capitalist conditions or a share of capitalist profits that the Socialist movement is in the world; it is here for the abolition of wages and profits, and for the end of capitalism and the private capitalist. *Reformed* political institutions, boards of arbitration between capital and labour, philanthropies and privileges that are but the capitalists' gifts—none of these can much longer answer the question that is making the temples, thrones and Parliaments of the nation tremble. There can be no peace between the man who is down and the man who builds on his back. There can be no reconciliation between classes; there can only be an end of classes. It is idle to talk of goodwill until there is first justice, and idle to talk of justice until the man who makes the world possesses the work of his own hands. The cry of the world's workers can be answered with nothing save the whole product of their work.

(George D. Herrson)*

Page 35 (32)

*WASTES OF CAPITALISM

Economic estimate about Australia by *Theodore Hertzka (1886)***

Every family = 5-roomed 40 ft. sq. House to last for 50 years.

Workers' workable age : 16-50.
So we have 5,000,000.

Labour of 615,000 workers is sufficient to produce food for 22,000,000 people = 12.3% of labour.

Including labour cost of transport, luxuries need only 315,000 = 6.33% workers' labour.

That amounts to this—that 20% of the available labour is enough for supporting the whole of the continent. The rest 80% is exploited and wasted due to capitalist order of society.

*[Identity not established, as other details are not available. —Eds.]

**[Source and other details not available. —Eds.]

Page 36 (33)

Czarist Regime and the Bolshievist Regime *§

*Brazier Hunt tells that in the first fourteen months of their rule, the Bolsheviks executed 4,500 men, mostly for stealing and speculation.

After the 1905 Revolution, Stolypin, ** minister of Czar, caused the execution of 32,773 men within twelve months.

*(p. 390 Brass Check)

Page 37 (34)

Permanency of the Social Institutions

“It is one of the illusions of each generation that the social institutions in which it lives are, in some peculiar sense, “natural”, unchangeable and permanent. Yet for countless thousands of years, social institutions have been successively arising, developing, decaying and becoming gradually superseded by others better adapted to contemporary needs. . . The question, then, is not whether our present civilisation will be transformed, but how it will be transformed ?

It may, by considerate adaptation, be made to pass gradually and peacefully into a new form. Or, if there is angry resistance instead of adaptation, it may crash, leaving mankind painfully to build up a new civilisation from the lower level of a stage of social chaos and disorder, in which not only the abuses but

*§[Sources and further details not available—Eds.]

**Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin (1862-1911) was Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister for the Interior from 1906 to 1911 under the Czar. —Eds.]

§*[In the original notebook, this caption, like many others, has been given in the margin or diagonally across in the left hand corner. —Eds.]

The weapon of criticism cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Physical force must be overthrown by physical force; but theory, too, becomes a physical force as soon as it takes possession of the masses.

Page 42 (39)

A Revolution not Utopian

A radical revolution, the general emancipation of mankind, is not a utopian dream for Germany; what is utopian is the idea of a partial, an exclusively political, revolution, which would leave the pillars of the house standing.

"Great are great because**
We are on knees
Let us Rise!"

Page 43 (40)

Herbert Spencer on State :*@

"Whether it be true or not that man was born in equity and conceived in sin, it is certainly true that Government was born of aggression and by aggression."

Man and Manind :

"I am a man,
and all that affects mankind concerns me."
"Roman Dramatist"***

**[Many sub-captions and such lines have been given in the margins or written diagonally across the pages of the Notebook. —Eds.]

@*[Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) English philosopher who applied evolutionary theory to philosophy. Works include; *The Principles of Psychology (1855)* and *First Principles (1862)*. —Eds.]

***[Other details not given. —Ed.]

England's Condition Reviewed :

"Good people, things will never go well in England, so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they, whom we call lords, greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all come of the same father and mother, Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are greater or are better than we? If it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride. They are clothed in velvet and are warm in their furs and ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and their bread; and we oatcake, and straw, and water to drink! They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, rain and wind in the fields, and yet it is of our toil that these man hold their state."

Friar of Wat Taylor's Rebel**

Page 44 (41)

Revolution and Classes

All classes striving for power are revolutionary, and talk of Equality. All classes, when they get into power, are conservative and are convinced that equality is an iridescent dream. All classes but one—the working class, for as Comte has said, "The working class is not properly speaking, a class at all, but constitutes the body of society. "But the day of the working class, the fusion of all useful people, has not even yet arrived."

"World History for Workers" p. 47
by Alfred Barton*

**[A few words are not clear. *Source torn out except the words* : Friar of Wat Taylor's Rebel. —Eds.]

*[Other details not available. —Eds.]

Page 45 (42)

Sir Henry Maine has said : §

“That most of the land of England has passed to its present owners by the mistake of lawyers—mistakes that in lesser criminals were punished by hanging.”

“The law convicts the man or woman
Who steals the goose from of the Common,
But lets the greater felon loose
Who steals the Common from the goose.”

Page 46 (43)

Democracy :

Democracy is theoretically a system of political and legal equality. But in concrete and practical operation it is false, for there can be no equality, not even in politics and before the law, so long as there is glaring inequality in economic power. So long as the ruling class owns the workers' jobs and the press and the schools of the country and all organs for the moulding and expression of public opinion; so long as it monopolise(s) all trained public functionaries and disposes of unlimited funds to influence elections, so long as the laws are made by the ruling class and the courts are presided over by members of the class; so long as lawyers are private practitioners who sell their skill to the highest bidder, and litigation is technical and costly, so long will the nominal equality before the law be a hollow mockery.

§[Perhaps Sir Henry James Sumner Maine (1822-88) English historian and comparative jurist. Author of several books on Ancient Laws (1861) Village Communities in the East and the West (1871) Early History of Institutions (1875) Early Law and Custom (1883) Essays on Popular Government (1883) and International Law (1885). Also legal member of Council in India from 1863 to 1869 and Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University. —Eds]

In a capitalist regime, the whole machinery of democracy operates to keep the ruling class minority in power through the suffrage of the working class majority, and when the bourgeois govt. feels itself endangered by democratic institutions, such institutions are often crushed without compunction.

“From Marx to Lenin”
†(by Morris Hillquiel) (p. 58)

Democracy does not secure “equal rights and a share in all political rights for everybody, to whatever class or party he may belong.” (Kautsky)* It only allows free political and legal play for the existing economic inequalities. . . . Democracy under capitalism in thus not general, abstract democracy but specific bourgeois democracy, . . . or as Lenin** terms it—democracy for the bourgeois.

(Source & reference torn out) —Eds.

Page 47 (44)

Term Revolution Defined

“The conception of revolution is not to be treated in the police interpretation of the term, in the sense of an armed rising. A party would be mad that would choose the method of insurrection on principle so long as it has at its disposal different, less costly, and safer methods of action. In that sense, social democracy was never revolutionary on principle. It is so only in the sense that it recognises that when it attains political power, it can not employ it for any purpose other than the abolition of the mode of production upon which the present system rests”

“Karl Kautsky”*

†[Identity not clear —Eds.]

*[Karl Johann Kautsky (1854-1938) German politician who influenced the adoption of Marxist principles in Erfurt Programme (1891) for Social Democrats. Opposed Lenin and Bolsheviks in the Second International. —Eds]

**[Vladimir Ilych Lenin originally Ulyovov (1870-1924) Leader of the Bolshevik Revolution and founder of the Soviet State. —Eds]

Some facts and figures about United States

5 men can produce bread for 1000

1 man (can) produce cotton cloth for 250

1 man can produce woollens for 300

1 man can produce boots and shoes for 1000

*Iron Heel (p. 78)****

15,000,000 are living (in) abject poverty who can not even maintain their working efficiency.

3,000,000 child labourers.

Re : England*@

Pre-war estimates (!)

Total Production of England £ 2000,000,000
(per annum)

Gains through foreign investments £ 200,000,000
£ 2200,000,000

1/9th part of the population
took away 1/2 = £ 1100,000,000

2/9th ,, ,, 1/3 of the Rest = £ 1100,000,000
i.e. = £ 300,000,000

(the rest of details torn out)

***[Novel (published in 1908) by Jack (John) Griffith London (1876-1916) American novelist who, growing up in poverty, became a socialist essayist, journalist and author of about 10 books. —Eds.]

@*[Source of the data not indicated. —Eds.]

INTERNATIONALE**

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation !
Arise ye wretched on earth,
To justice thunders condemnation,
A better world's in birth.

No more traditions chains shall bind us.
Arise, ye slaves ! no more in thrall !
The earth shall rise on new foundations,
We have been naught, we be all.

[Refrain]

It is the final conflict,
Let each stand in his place,
The Internationale Party
Shall be the human race.

Behold them seated in their glory,
The kings of mine and rail and soil !
What would you read in all their story
But how they plundered toil ?
Fruits of people's work are buried
In the strong coffers of a few;
In voting for their restitution,
The men will ask only their due.

[Same Refrain]

Toilers from shops and fields united,
The party we of all who work;
The earth belongs to us, the people,
No room here for the shirk,
How many on our flesh have fattened ?
But if the noisome birds of prey,
Shall vanish from our sky some morning
The blessed sunlight still will stay.

[Same Refrain again]

**[A revolutionary song, first sung in France in 1871, and since then a popular song of workers and communists. Adopted as a 'national anthem' by several Communist countries. —Eds.]

Marseillaise -*

Ye sons of toil, awake to glory !
Hark, hark, what myriads bid you rise;
Your children, wives and grand sires hoary,
Behold their tears and hear their cries !
Shall hateful tyrants mischief breeding,
With hireling hosts, a ruffian band—
Affright and desolate the land
While peace and liberty lie bleeding ?

[Chorus]

To arms, To arms ! Ye brave !
The avenging sword unsheathe
March on, march on, all hearts resolved,
On Victory or death.

With luxury and pride unsounded,
The vile insatiate despots dare,
Their thirst for gold and power unbounded
To meet and vend the light and air;
Like beasts of burden would they load us,
Like gods would bid their slaves adore,
But man is man and who is more ?
Then shall they longer last and goad us ?

[The same Chorus again]

Oh liberty ! Can man resign thee,
Once having felt thy generous flame ?
Can dungeons bolts and bars confine thee,
Or whips thy noble spirit tame ?
Too long the world has wept bewailing,
That falsehood, daggers tyrants wield;
But freedom is our sword and shield,
And all their arts are unavailing ?

[Same Chorus again]

*[*La Marseillaise*—The French National Anthem—composed/improvised by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle, French Captain of Engineers, and a musical amateur, on April 24, 1792, in response to a call by the Mayor of Strasbourg for a patriotic song. It was adopted and sung with enthusiasm by troops on their march from Marseille to Paris. —Eds.]

Growth of Opportunism

It was the possibility of acting within law that reared opportunism within the labour parties of the period of Second Internationale.

(*Lenin vide Collapse of II Int. N.*)@

Illegal Work :

“In a country where the bourgeoisie, or the counter-revolutionary Social Democracy is in power, the Communist Party must learn to coordinate its legal work with illegal work, and the legal work must always be under the effective control of the illegal party.”

Bukharin §

Betrayal of II Int : N.'s Cause :

The vast organisation of socialism and labour were adjusted to such peace time activities, and when the crisis came, a number of the leaders and large portion of the masses were unable to adopt themselves to the new situation. . . . It is this inevitable development that accounts largely for the betrayal of II International.

Marx to Lenin. p. 140
(*Morris Hillquiet*)*

@[Vladimir Ilych Lenin, originally Ulyovov (1870-1924) Russian Revolutionary/Bolshevik leader who, returning from exile in Europe, led the overthrow of Kerensky's government (November, 1917) and laid the foundation of the Soviet State. —Eds.]

§[Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bukharin (1888-1938) Soviet political leader, a leading Marxist/Bolshevik theorist after Lenin. Executed during the Stalinist purges of the Communist Party. —Eds.]

*[Identity and other details not known—Eds.]

"The Cynic's Word Book"*** (1906)

Ambrose Priece** writes :

"Grape shot - (n.)—An argument which the future is preparing in answer to the demands of American Socialism."

Page 51 (48)

Religion a supporter of the established order :

Slavery :

In 1835, the General Assembly of the Presby-
train Church resolved that : "Slavery is recognised in
both Old and New Testaments, and is not condemned
by the authority of God".

The Charleston Baptist Association issued the
following in 1835 :

"The right of masters to dispose of the time of
their slaves has been distinctly recognised by the
Creator of all things, who is surely at liberty to vest
the right of property over any object whomsoever He
pleases."

The Revd. E D. Simon, Doctor of Divinity, a
professor in Methodist College of Virginia wrote :

"Extracts from Holy Writ unequivocally assert
the right of property in slaves, together with the usual
incidents to that right. The right to buy and sell is
clearly stated. Upon the whole, then, whether we
consult the Jewish policy instituted by God Himself,
or the uniform opinion and practice of mankind in all
ages, or the injunctions of the New Testament and the
moral law, we are brought to the conclusion that
slavery is not immoral. Having established the point
that the first African slaves were legally bought into
bondage, the right to detain their children in bondage
follows as an indispensable consequence. Thus we see
that the slavery that exists in America was founded in
right."

**[Identity and other details not available.

Marginal rule is in the text of the Notebook. —Eds.]

Capitalism Henry Van Dyke* writes in "Essay in
Supported : Application" (1905) :

"The Bible teaches that God owns the world. He
distributes to every man according to His own Good
pleasure, conformably to the general laws."

Page 52 (49)

Statistics about United States :— *

Army was 50,000 strong }
It is now 300,000 strong. }

Plutocracy owns 67 billions of wealth.
Out of the total persons engaged in occupations,
only 9/10% belong to Plutocracy
Yet they own 70% of the total wealth.

Out of Persons engaged in occupations
29% belong to Middle Class
They own 25% of the total wealth = 24 billions

Remaining 70% of the men in occupations belong to
the Proletariat and they only (have)
4% of the total wealth i.e. 4 billions.

According to Lucian Saniel,*† in 1900 :

Out of total people engaged in occupations
= 250,251 belonged to Plutocrats
" " = 8,429,845 to Middle Class
" " = 20,395,137 to Proletariat

(Iron Heel)**

Rifles :

"You say you will have majority in the
Parliament and State offices, but "How many rifles
have you got ? Do you know where you can get

†*[Further details not known. —Eds.]

**[Novel by Jack London. —Eds.]

plenty of lead? When it comes to powder, the chemical mixtures are better than mechanical mixtures. You take my word."

—*Iron Heel**** p. 198

Page 53 (50)

Power... [Rest of the heading torn out.

—Eds.]

A socialist leader had addressed a meeting of the plutocrats and charged them of mismanaging the society and thereby thrown the whole responsibility on their shoulders, the responsibility for the woes and misery that confronts the suffering humanity. Afterwards a capitalist (Mr. Wickson) rose and addressed him as follows :

"This, then, is our answer. We have no words to waste on you. When you reach out your vaunted strong hands for our palaces and purpled ease, we will show you what strength is. In roar of shell and shrapnel and in whine of machine guns will our answer be couched. We will grind you revolutionists down under our heel, and we shall walk upon your faces. The world is ours. We are its lords and ours it shall remain. As for the host of labour, it has always been in the dirt since history began, and I read history aright. And in the dirt it shall remain so long as I and mine, and those that come after us, have the power.

There is the word. It is the king of words—Power. Not God, not mammon but Power. Pour it over your tongue till it tingles with it. Power."

"I am answered." Earnest (the socialist leader) said quietly. "It is the only answer that could be given. Power. It is what we of the working class preach. We know, and well we know by bitter experience, that no appeal for the right, for justice, for humanity can ever touch you. Your hearts are hard

***[Novel by Jack London, American novelist. —Eds.]

as your heels with which you tread upon the faces of the poor. So we have preached power. By the Power of our ballots, on election day, will we take your government away from you. . . ."

"What if you do get a majority, a sweeping majority on election day," Mr. Wickson broke in to demand. "Suppose we refuse to turn the Government over to you after you have captured it at the ballot box?"

Page 54 (51)

"That also, have we considered," Earnest replied. "And we shall give you an answer in terms of lead. Power, you have proclaimed the king of words. Very good! Power, it shall be. And in the day that we sweep to victory at the ballot box, and you refuse to turn over to us the government we have constitutionally and peacefully captured, and you demand what we are going to do about it—(?)—in that day, I say, we shall answer you; and in roar of shell and shrapnel, in whine of machine guns shall our answer be couched.

"You can not escape us. It is true that you have read history aright. It is true that labour has, from the beginning of history, been in the dirt. And it is equally true that so long as you and yours and those that come after you, have power, that labour shall remain in the dirt. I agree with you. I agree with all that you have said. Power will be the arbiter, as it always has been the arbiter. It is a struggle of classes. Just as your class dragged down the old feudal nobility, so shall it be dragged down by my class, the working class. If you will read your biology and your sociology as clearly as do your history, you will see that this end I have described is inevitable. It does not matter whether it is in one year, ten or a thousand—your class shall be dragged down. And it shall be done by power. We of the labour host have conned that word over, till our minds are all atingle with it. Power. It is a kingly word."

Iron Heel (p. 88)* by Jack London*

*[This long extract of an argument from Jack London's novel can perhaps give some indication of Bhagat Singh's mind and his philosophy of revolution. —Eds.]

Figures*

England :

1922—Number of unemployment (?) = 1,135,000
1926—it has oscillated to 1½ and 1⅓ millions
i.e. 1,250,000 to 1,500,000.

Betrayal of the English Labour Leaders

The years 1911 to 1913 were times of unparalleled class struggles of the miners, railwaymen, and transport workers generally. In August 1911, a national, in other words a general, strike broke out on the railways. The vague shadow of revolution hovered over Britain in those days. The leaders exerted all their strength in order to paralyse the movement. Their motive was "Patriotism"; the affair was occurring at the time of the Agadir incident, which threatened to lead to a war with Germany. As is well known today, the Premier summoned the workers' leaders to a secret council, and called them to the salvation of the fatherland. And leaders did all that lay in their power, strengthening the bourgeoisie, and thus preparing the way for the imperialist slaughter.

(p. 3)
*Where is Britain. . . ?***
*Trotsky (?)***

*[Source not given. —Eds.]

**[Corner of page is torn and other words are not legible. —Eds.]

**[Leon Trotsky (1870-1940)—Russian revolutionary and journalist. Original name—Lev Davidovich Bornstein. —Eds.]

Betrayal :

Only after 1920, did the movement return within bounds, after 'Black Friday' when the Triple alliance of miners', railwaymen's and transport leaders betrayed the general strike.

(p. 3)*

For Reform a Threat of Revolution is Necessary :

. . . The British bourgeoisie reckoned that by such means (reform) a revolution could be avoided. It follows, therefore, that even for the introduction of reforms, the principle of gradualness alone is insufficient, and that an actual threat of revolution is necessary.

(p. 29)*

Social Solidarity :

. . . It would seem that once we stand for the annihilation of a privileged class which has no desire to pass from the scene, we have therein the basic content of the class struggle. But no, Macdonald** desires to "evoke" the consciousness of social solidarity. With whom? The solidarity of the working class is the expression of its internal welding in the struggle with the bourgeoisie.

*[Leon Trotsky—(1879-1940) - Original name : Lev Davidovich Bornstein—Russian revolutionary and journalist. In exile, before 1917, for Marxist revolutionary activities. After the Bolshevik Revolution, organised the victorious Red Army during Civil War (1918-20). Led opposition to Stalin, after Lenin's death in 1924. Expelled from the Communist Party in 1927 and exiled in 1929. Founded the Communist IVth International in 1937. Assassinated in Mexico City in 1940.

[Some books in English : *Defence of Terrorism* (1920); *The Lessons of October* (1925); *Lenin* (1924); *Where is Britain Going ?* (1926), *Towards Socialism or Capitalism* (1926); *Literature and Revolution* (1925); *My Life* (1925); *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937). —Eds]

[**Perhaps James Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) British statesman and Prime Minister, (1924, 1929-35).—Eds]

The social solidarity which Macdonald preaches, is the solidarity of the exploited with the exploiters, in other words, the maintenance of exploitation.

Revolution a Calamity :

"The revolution in Russia", says Macdonald, "taught us a great lesson. It showed that revolution is a ruin and a calamity and nothing more."

Page 57 (54)

Revolution leads only to calamity! But the British democracy led to the imperialist war, . . . With the ruin of which the calamities of revolution cannot, of course, be compared in the very least. But in addition to this, what deaf ears and shameless face are necessary in order, in the face of a revolution which overthrew Tzarism, nobility and bourgeoisie, shook the church, awakened to a new life a nation of 130 millions, a whole family of nations, to declare that revolution is a calamity and nothing more."

(p. 64)*

Peaceful ?

When and where did the ruling class ever yield power and property on the order of a peaceful vote—and especially such a class as the British bourgeoisie, which has behind it centuries of world rapacity?

(p. 66)

Aim of Socialism :— Peace

It is absolutely unchallenged that the aim of socialism is to eliminate force, first of all in its most crude and bloody forms, and afterwards in other more concealed forms.

(p. 80)

"Where is Britain Going?"
Trotsky*

*[Perhaps all these extracts are from Trotsky's book *Where is Britain Going?* —Eds.]

Aim of the World Revolution :

1. To over-throw capitalism
2. To control the nature for the service of humanity.

This is how Bukharin defined it. ★

Page 58 (55)

Man and Machinery :

The United States Bureau of Labour tells :

- 12 lbs package of pins can be made by a man working with a machine in 1 hr. 34 minutes.
- The same would take 140 hours and 55 minutes, if man works with tools only, but without machine.
(Ratio — 1.34 : 140.55 minutes)

- 100 pairs of shoes by machine work
take 234 hrs. 25 min.
- By hand it will take 1,831 hrs. 40 minutes.
- Labour cost on machine is \$ 69.55
,, by hand is \$ 457.92

- 500 yards of gingham checks are made by machine labour in 73 hours.
- By hand labour, it takes 5,844 hours.

- 100 lbs of sewing cotton can be made by machine labour in 39 hrs.
- By hand it takes 2,895 hours.

★[Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin (1888—1938)—leading Bolshevik/Soviet political theorist after Lenin's death, executed during Stalinist purges. —Eds.]

Rs: Agriculture:

- A good man with a scythe can reap 1 acre
a day (12 hrs)
- A machine does the same work in 20 minutes
- Six men with flials can thresh 60 liters of wheat
in half an hour.
- One machine thresher can do 12 times as much.

“The increased effectiveness of man-labour, aided by the use of machinery. . . varies from 150% in the case of rye, to 2,244% in the case of barley. . .”

Page 59 (56)

The Wealth of U S A. and Its Population : (1850-1912)

	Per capita	T. Population
In 1850 total wealth was		
	\$ 7,135,780,000	\$ 308 = 23,191,876
1860 „	\$ 16,159,616,000	\$ 514 = 31,443,321
1870 „	\$ 30,068,518,000	\$ 780 = 38,558,371
1880 „	\$ 43,642,000,000	\$ 870 = 50,155,783
1890 „	\$ 65,037,091,000	\$ 1,036 = 62,947,714
1900 „	\$ 88,517,307,000	\$ 1,165 = 75,994,575
1904 „	\$ 107,104,202,000	\$ 1,318 = 82,466,551
1912 „	\$ 187,139,071,000	\$ 1,965 = 95,4 0,503

Due to the use of machinery.

The machine is social in nature, as the tool was individual.

“Give us worse cotton, but give us better men” says Emerson.*

“Deliver me those rickety perishing souls of infants, and let the cotton trade take its chance.”

p. 81*

*[Identity and details not clear. Perhaps the poet, philosopher and essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson(1803-52) —Eds.]

The man cannot be sacrificed to the machine. The machine must serve mankind, yet the danger to the human race lurks, menacing, in the Industrial Regime.

Poverty & Riches (p. 81)**
Scott Nearing.**

Page 60 (57)

Man and Machinery:

C. Nanford Henderson(£), in his “Rayday” writes:

“This institution of industry, the most primitive of all institutions, organised and developed in order to free mankind from the tyranny of things, has become itself the greater tyranny, degrading a multitude into the conditions of slaves—slaves doomed to produce, through long and weary hours, a senseless glut of things and then forced to suffer for the lack of the very things they have produced.

“Pov. Riches.** (p. 87)”

Man is not for Machinery:

The combination of steel and fire, which man has produced and called a machine, must be ever the servant, never the master of man. Neither the machine nor the machine owner may rule the human race.

p. 88**

Imperialism:

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which monopolies and financial capital have attained a preponderating influence, the export of

(£)**[Poverty & Riches by Scott Nearing. Identity not clear. —Eds.]

**[May be the same sources as indicated above. —Eds.]

capital has acquired great importance, the international trusts have begun the partition of the world, and the biggest capitalist countries have completed the division of the entire terrestrial globe among themselves."

Lenin ***

Page 61 (58)

Dictatorship :

Dictatorship is an authority relying directly upon force, and not bound by any laws.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is an authority maintained by the proletariat by means of force over and against the bourgeoisie, and not bound by any laws.

Prol. Revo. (p. 18) - Lenin*

Revolutionary Dictatorship :

Revolution is an act in which one section of the population imposes its will upon the other by rifles, bayonets, guns, and other such exceedingly authoritarian means. And the party which has won is necessarily compelled to maintain its rule by means of that fear which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. If the Commune of Paris had not relied upon the armed people as against the bourgeoisie, would it have maintained itself more than twenty-four hours? Are we not, on the contrary, justified in reproaching the

***[Vladimir Ilyich Lenin — originally Ulyanov— (1870-1924) Leader of the Russian Revolution (1917) and founder of the Soviet State. Author of several books and articles which shaped the communist ideology. —Eds.]

*[Other details not clear. —Eds.]

Commune for having employed this authority too little ?"

F. Engels @

Bourgeois Democracy :

Bourgeois democracy, while constituting a great historical advance in comparison with feudalism, nevertheless remains, and can not but remain, a very limited, a very hypocritical, institution, a paradise for the rich and a trap and a delusion for the exploited and for the poor.

Lenin (p. 28)* =

Page 62 (59)

Exploitation of Labour and State :

"Not only the ancient and feudal, but also the representative state of today is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital."

—Engels @

Dictatorship :

"Since the state is only a temporary institution which is to be made use of in revolution, in order forcibly to suppress the opponents, it is perfectly absurd to talk of about a free popular state; so long as the proletariat still needs the state, it needs it not in

@[Friedrich Engels (1820-95)—German philosopher who helped shape the Communist ideology in collaboration with Karl Marx, starting with the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Besides his own works like *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism* (1878) and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) he also edited Marx's *Das Capital*. —Eds.]

* = [Source/reference not given. —Eds.]

@ [No other reference available. —Eds.]

the interest of freedom, but in order to suppress its opponents, and when it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the state, as such, ceases to exist "

Engels in his letter to Babel (?)£
March 28th 1875

The Impatient Idealists :

The impatient idealist — and without some impatience, a man will hardly prove effective — is almost sure to be led into hatred by the oppositions and disappointments which he encounters in his endeavour to bring happiness to the world.

Bertrand Russell **

Page 63 (60)

Leader :

"No time need have gone to ruin" writes Carlyle,*** "could it have found a man great enough, a man wise and good enough; wisdom to discern truly what the time wanted, valour to lead it on the right road thither; these are the salvation of any time."

Arbitrariness :

Kautsky*† had written a booklet with the title "*Proletariate Dictatorship*" and had deplored the act of Bolsheviks in depriving the bourgeoisie people from

£ (?) [No other details available. —Eds]

**[Well-known British philosopher (1872-1970)—Eds]

***[Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) British author, wrote *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34) *French Revolution* (1837) *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) and a Biography of *Frederick the Great*.

*†[Karl Kautsky—German politician—See footnote on page 37. —Eds.]

the right of vote. Lenin writes in his "*Proletarian Revolution*": (pp. 77)**

'Arbitrariness! Only think what a depth of meanest subserviency to the bourgeoisie, and of the most idiotic pendency, is contained in such a reproach. When thoroughly bourgeois and, for the most part, even reactionary jurists of capitalist countries, have in the course of, we may almost say, centuries, been drawing up rules and regulations and writing up hundreds of volumes of various codes and laws, and of interpretations of them to oppress the workers, to bind hand and foot the poor men, and to place a hundred and one hinderances and obstacles in the way of the simple and toiling mass of the people — when this is done, the bourgeois Liberals and Mr. Kautsky can see no "arbitrariness"! It is all Law and Order! It has all been thought out and written down, how the poor man is to be kept down and squeezed. There are thousands and thousands of bourgeois lawyers and officials able to interpret the laws that the worker and average peasant can never break through their barbed wire entanglements. This, of course, is not any arbitrariness. This, of course, is not a dictatorship of the filthy or profit-seeking exploiters who are drinking the blood of the people. Oh, it is nothing of the kind! It is 'pure democracy', which is becoming purer and purer everyday. But when

Page 64 (61)

the toiling and exploited masses, for the first time in history, separated by Imperialist War from their brothers across the frontier, have constructed their Soviets, have summoned to the workers of political construction, the classes which the bourgeois used to oppress and to stupefy, and begun themselves to build up a new proletarian State, begun, in the midst of raging battles, in the fire of Civil War, to lay down the fundamental principles of 'a State without exploiters', then all the scoundrels of the bourgeoisie, the entire band of blood suckers, with Kautsky, singing 'obliker to', scream about arbitrariness!

(Lenin) p. 77-78 **

**[Other details not available. —Eds.]

Party:

But it has become clear that no revolution is possible unless there is a party able to lead the revolution. (p. 15, *Lessons of October, 1917*).*

A party is the instrument indispensable to a proletarian revolution. (p. 17, *ibid* by Trotsky).*

Page 65 (62)**

B.K. Dutta
12/7/30
12/7/30

Law, morality, religion are to him (the working man) so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

Karl Marx—*Manifesto***†

*[Book by Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) published in 1925. (Marginal rule as in original notebook.) —Eds.]

**[The upper half of this page (almost 2/3rd space) is blank, except the (slanting) signature of B.K. Dutta with the date 12.7.30 written twice.

The quotation from Karl Marx is given below. —Eds.

**†[*Communist Manifesto* by Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), published in 1848. —Eds.]

Page 67 (64)★

B.K. Dutta
12/7/30

Autograph
of Mr. B.K. Dutta
taken on 12th July '30
in Cell No: 137
Central Jail Lahore.
four days before his final
departure from this jail.
Bhagat Singh!

★[Page no 66 (63) is missing.]

[The next page (No. 67-64) has only B. K. Dutta's signature with the date in the middle of the page and a short note by Bhagat Singh at the bottom right hand corner. Indeed these were both very significant entries, and the only ones with any dates. —Eds.]

[There is no page no. 68 in the Notebook. —Eds.]

Page 69 (66)

Aim of Communists *

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aim. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite!"@

Aim of Communist Revolution : *

"We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."

"Communist Manifesto"***

Page 70 (67)

To point out the mistakes of Karl Marx :

... And it certainly looks as if Trotsky belonged to what Germans called the school of "real politics" and was as innocent as Bismarck of any ideology at

*[Slanting marginal notes. —Eds.]

@(Last para of the *Communist Manifesto*) —Eds.]

**[From Section III of the *Manifesto*. —Eds.]

***[Commissioned by the London Congress (November 1847) of the Communist League, the *Manifesto* of the Communist Party was written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in December 1847 January 1848. Originally printed in German in London, February 1848. First published in English in 1850 in the *Red Republican*. —Eds.]

all. And it is, therefore, rather curious to note that even Trotsky is not revolutionary enough to say that Marx had made a mistake; but feels obliged to devote a page or so to the task of exegesis — that is, proving that the sacred books meant something quite different from what they said.

Preface to the *Lessons of October 1917* *† by Trotsky
*Preface by A. Susan Lawrence****

Voice of the People :

The Governments we know have all ruled, in the main, by indifference of the people; they have always been Govts of a minority, of this or that fraction of the country which is politically conscious. But when the giant wakes, he will have his way, and all that matters to the world is whether he will wake in time.

*Preface***

Page 71 (68)

"It so often happens," wrote Lenin in July, 1917, "that when events take a sudden turn, even an advanced party cannot adapt itself for some time to the new conditions. It goes on repeating yesterday's watchwords, watchwords which, under the new circumstances, have become empty of meaning and which have lost meaning 'unexpectedly', just in proportion as the change of in events has been 'unexpected'."

Lessons of October (p. 17)†*

Tactics and Strategy :

In politics as in war, tactics means the art of conducting isolated operations; strategy means the art of victory, that is the actual seizure of power.

(p. 18)*†

*†[First published in 1925. —Eds.]

**[As above. —Eds.]

Propaganda and Action :

And it is an extremely sudden change, when the party of the Proletariat passes from preparation, from propaganda and organisation and agitation, to an actual struggle for power and an actual insurrection against the bourgeoisie. Those in the party who are irresolute, or sceptical, or compromising, or cowardly . . . oppose the insurrection, they look for theoretical arguments to justify their opposition, and they find them, all ready made, among their opponents of yesterday.

Trotsky 19†*

Page 72 (69)

"It is necessary to direct ourselves, not by old formulas, but by new realities." *Lenin (p. 25)*†*

He always fought for the future against the past.
p. 41†*

. . . But a moment comes when the habit of thinking that the enemy is stronger becomes the main obstacle to victory.

Trotsky p. 48†*

. . . But in such circumstances not every party will have its Lenin.

. . . What does it mean to lose the moment? . . .

All the art of tactics consists in this, to match the moment when the combination of circumstances is most favourable . . .

(Circumstances had produced the combination and Lenin said) The crisis must be settled in one way or another. 'Now or never' repeated Lenin.

p. 52†*

*†[Obviously from Trotsky's *Lessons of October 1917*.
—Eds.]

Page 73 (70)

The strength of a revolutionary party grows to a certain point, after which the contrary may happen . . . §

"To hesitate is crime" wrote . . . (*Lenin*) . . . in the beginning of October, "To wait for the Congress of Soviets is a childish playing with formalities, a disgraceful playing with formalities, it is betraying the revolution." *†

Opportune Moment :

Twice is an important factor in politics; it is thousand times more so in war and revolution. Things can be done today that cannot be done tomorrow. To rise in arms, to defeat the enemy, to seize power, may be possible today, and tomorrow may be impossible. But, you will say, to seize power means changing the course of history; is it possible that such a thing can depend on a delay of 24 hours? Even so, when it comes to an armed insurrection, events are not measured by the long yards of politics but by short yards of war. To lose a few weeks, a few days, sometimes even one day, may mean giving up the revolution, may mean capitulation. *†

Political cunning is always dangerous, especially in a revolution. You may deceive the enemy, but you may confuse the masses who are following you. *†

Page 74 (71)

Hesitation :*

Hesitation on the part of the leaders, and felt by their followers, is generally harmful in politics; but in the case of an armed insurrection, it is a deadly danger. *†

§[Last words are indistinct. —Eds.]

*†[Probably from *Lessons of October 1917*. —Eds.]

*[Marginal noting. —Eds.]

War :*

... "War is War"; come what may, there must be no hesitation or loss of time. *†

The Inefficient Leaders :

... There are two kinds of leaders who incline to drag the party back at the moment when it should go fastest. One kind always tends to see overwhelming difficulties and obstacles in the way of revolution, and looks at them - consciously or unconsciously - with the desire of avoiding them. They alter Marxism into a system, for explaining why revolutionary action is impossible.

The other kind are mere superficial agitators. They see never any obstacles until they break their heads against them. They think they can avoid real difficulties by floods of oratory. They look at everything with supreme optimism, and, naturally, change right over when something has actually to be done.

p. 80*†

[Editor's Note : Pages no. 75 to 100 are missing in the copy of the Notebook available with us. The next page number is 101 (74) and starts with Bhagat Singh's Notes on Sociology. —Eds.]

Page 101 (74)

*Sociology *

Value :

"1 quarter corn = X/cost of iron. What does this question tell us ? It tells us that in two different things—in 1 quarter of corn and X cost of iron—there

*[Marginal noting. —Eds.]

†*[Probably all these extracts/quotes are also from Leon Trotsky's book, *Lessons of October 1917*. —Eds.]

exists in equal qualities something common to both. The two things must therefore be equal to a third, which in itself in neither the one or the other. . . Let us now consider the residue of each of these products; it consists of the same unsubstantial reality in each, a mere congelation of homogenous human labour, of labour power expended without regard to the mode of its expenditure. All these things now tell us that human labour power has been expended in their production, that labour is embodied in them. When looked at as crystals of this social substance, common to all, they are 'values.'*

Marx—"Capital", English Translation (pp. 3, 4, 5).*

✓Law :

"Society, however, does not rest upon law. This is a legal fiction. Rather the law must rest on society. It must be the expression of the interest and needs of society which result from the social and invariably material method of production as against the arbitrariness of the industrial. As for Napoleon Code, which I have in my hand, that has not engendered modern civil society. The society which arose in the 18th century and developed in the 19th finds in the Code only a legal expression. As soon as that no longer corresponds to social conditions, it is merely so much waste paper. . . The law necessarily changed with the changing conditions of life. The maintaining of the old law against the new needs and demands of the social development is at bottom nothing but a hypocritical assertion (in accord with the spirit of the age) of special interest against the common interest."

Marx (Before the Court of Jury of Cologne)**

*[Once again, we find Bhagat Singh taking notes as a young scholar seeking fresh knowledge (as a student of Marx). This may well be treated as a distinct section of his Study Notes. —Eds.]

✓[Sign marked in the original. —Eds.]

**[Further details not available. However, in the winter of 1848, Karl Marx was on trial for treason before
(continued) →

✓ Masses :

"The people is a fat and motley beast, ignorant of its prowess and hence enduring burdens, lash and cudgel. Driven it is by a feeble child, whom it can shake off in an instant. But it fears that child and so serves all its whims and fancies, never realising how much it itself is feared by that child. . . Marvellous thing ! They hang themselves with their own hands and send themselves to jails and bring upon themselves war and death for a single farthing, paid to them out of the many that they themselves have given to the King. Everything between heaven and earth belongs to them, but they do not know it, and should anyone tell them that, they would knock that man down and kill him."

Tommaso Campanella***

Page 102 (75)

"*Marxism Versus Socialism*"
(1908-12) by Vladimir G. Sikhovitch*†
Ph. D., Columbia University.

*†*He criticises all the Theories of Marx one by one and refutes all in :

1. Theory of Value

→ (continued)

a middle-class jury in Cologne, which later acquitted him. The preceding sequence of events and the immediate cause may be outlined thus: In May, 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, after a brief stay in France came to Cologne and with some friends' help founded a political daily, *Neue-rheinische Zeitung*—claimed to be 'An Organ of Democracy' with Marx as editor. In November, 1848, when the King of Prussia dissolved the National Assembly, Marx and his friends advocated non-payment of taxes and even armed resistance. While Cologne was put under seige, their paper was suspended. The trial over with his acquittal, Marx was expelled from Prussia. The backdrop to these happenings was the revolutionary ferment in Europe in 1848. —Eds.]

***[Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) Italian poet and philosopher. Dominion Monk. Author of *City of Sun* (1623) describing a utopian society. Wrote love lyrics in Italian and on theology in Latin. —Eds.]

†[This reference and its gist need no comment —Eds.]

2. Economic Interpretation of History
3. Concentration of Wealth in fewer hands i.e., the capitalists, and elimination of middle class altogether and swarming of the Proletariats class
4. Theory of increasing wisery, leading to the
5. Inevitable crises of the Modern State and social order.

He concludes that Marxism solely rests on these fundamental theories and refutes them one by one, concluding that all the vague apprehensions about the hurrying avalanche of the Revolution has proved futile till now. The middle class is not diminishing but growing. Rich class is growing in number, and the mode of production and consumption is also changing along with the circumstances, hence the reforms in the condition of the workers can avoid any sort of friction. It is not the growing poverty that is the cause of the social unrest, but it is the concentration of the poor classes in Industrial Centres that the class consciousness is growing. Hence all this hue and cry.*†*

Page 103 (76) :

Preface to Les Miserables : **

So long as there shall exist, by virtue of law and custom, a social damnation artificially creating hells in the midst of civilisation, and complicating the destiny which is divine with a fatality which is human; so long as three problems of the age—the degradation of man through poverty, the ruin of woman through hunger, the crippling of children through ignorance—are not solved; so long as in certain regions, social asphyxia is possible—in other words, and from a still wider point

†[It is obvious that as a keen student of Marxism, and society, Bhagat Singh would often take notes from such books. —Eds.]

**[See next page. —Eds.]

→

of view,—so long as ignorance and wretchedness exist on the earth, books like this cannot be useless.

“Victor Hugo”! **

A Judge } “A judge callous to the pain he inflicts
Defined: } loses the right to judge”

“Rabindranath Tagore”***

“But what unresisting martyrdom fails to do, righteous and resisting force does and renders tyranny impotent to do further harm.”*†

✓ “Rather get killed than converted” was the cry prevalent amongst the Hindus then. But Ram Das rose and exclaimed ‘No! not thus! Better get killed than converted’ is good enough; but it would be better so to strive as neither to get killed nor violently converted, by killing the forces of violence itself. Get killed if that must be, but get killed while killing to conquer—conquer in the cause of Righteousness.

Hindu Pad Pad:hahi p. 181-82†*

→ **[Victor (Marie) Hugo—(1802-85)—French poet, dramatist and novelist and a leader of Romanticism. Wrote *Les Miserables* in 1862 which became a classic novel. Other works include *Hernani* (a play—1830), the well-known *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), *La Legende des Siecles*—(history) 1859. Politically active, he was often excited. —Eds.]

***[Poet, philosopher, play-wright and novelist (1861-1941) awarded Nobel Prize for Literature (1913). Other details about this quotation not available. —Eds.]

*†[Source and other details not available—Eds.]

Page 104 (77) :

All Legislators Defined as Criminals :★

“All legislators and rulers of men commencing with the earliest down to Lycurgus,★ Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon★ etc. etc. have, one and all, been criminals, for, whilst giving new laws, they have naturally broken through older ones which had been faithfully observed by society and transmitted by its progenitors.

(Pp. 205) *Crime and Punishment*—Dostovsky @

“A true politician”, says Burke, “always considers how he shall make the most of the existing materials of his country.”*†

*[Slanting note in the margin. —Eds.]

@[Fëodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski—(1821-81) Russian novelist with psychological insight and realistic style. *Crime and Punishment* (1866) dealt with crime, feelings of guilt and redemption. Other well-known books include *The Idiot* (1868) and *The Brothers Karamzov* (1879-80) —Eds.]

★[Dostoyevski has apparently used the term ‘criminals’ for law breakers, and suggested that all law-givers tend to break the existing laws or codes of society.]

—Lycurgus was the reputed founder of the constitution of ancient Sparta. Scholars differ about his being a ‘god’ or a ‘hero’. His biographer, Plutarch (c. A. D. 46-120) called him “the law-giver”, while according to Herodotus, (c. 484-B. C-424 B. C.) he changed “all the customs”.

—Solon was an Athenian statesman (c. 639-c. 559 B.C.) who revised the constitution to create a limited democracy and introduce land reforms in ancient Athens/Greece.

--If the reference is to Prophet Mohammed (c. 570-632 A. D.) he has been mentioned here as a law-giver—as the founder of Islamic laws based on the Holy Koran as revealed to him—to suggest that he had to break away from the old laws or customs prevailing in the Arab lands.

—Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), is, of course, mentioned here for his *Code Napoleon* enforced/adopted in Europe. —Eds.]

*†[Edmund Burke (1729-97) British statesman and writer. Born in Dublin, he also became a prominent Whig orator and pamphleteer. In *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770) advocated less concern in American Colonies.

(continued) →

Page 105 (78) :

Jurisprudence : ***

Law :

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| { | 1. Legal exposition | } | as it exists. |
| { | 2. Legal History | } | as it developed. |
| { | 3. Science of Legislation | } | as it ought to be. |

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|--|
| { | 1. Theoretical | } | (i) Philosophy. Supplying foundation for the science |
| { | 2. General | } | Jurisprudence |

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| { | 1. Analytical | } | Jurisprudence |
| { | 2. Historical | } | Jurisprudence |
| { | 3. Ethical | } | Jurisprudence |

1. Analytical jurisprudence explains the first principles of Law. It deals with :

- (a) Conception of Civil Law
- (b) Relation between Civil and other Laws
- (c) Various constituent ideas that constitute the idea of Law viz. State, Sovereignty and administration of justice.
- (d) Legal sources of Law and Theory of Legislation etc.
- (e) Scientific arrangements of Law
- (f) Legal rights
- (g) Theory of Legal (civil and criminal) liability
- (h) Other legal conceptions.

→ Instigated the trial of Warren Hastings (1785-94). Denounced the French Revolution in *Reflection on the French Revolution in France* (1780) —Eds.]

***[This is how these brief notes have been jotted down. There is no way of knowing how and why Bhagat Singh was drawn to such diverse fields of study. —Eds.]

Page 106 (79)

2. Historical Jurisprudence deals with the general principles governing the origin and development of Law; legal conceptions. It is the history.

3. Ethical Jurisprudence : is concerned with the theory of justice in its relation to Law.

*Law and Justice :

{ The total disregard of the ethical implications of the law tends to reduce analytical jurisprudence to a system rather arid formation.

in England : *

{ Two different words, "Law" and "justice" are a constant reminder that these are two different things and not the same thing. And their use tends to hide from view the real and intimate relation which exists between them.

*& in Continent :

(Rechet : Right = Droit : Law)

{ Continental speech conceals the difference between "law" and "right", whereas English speech conceals the connection between them.

Page 107 (80)

Law :

"We term any kind of rule or canon whereby actions are framed a law". (Hooker)**

"Law in its most general sense signifies a rule of action, and is indiscriminately to all kinds of action whether rational or irrational, animals or inanimate.

*[Noted in the margin] —Eds.

**[Could be Richard Hooker, English theologian (1554-1600) who codified principles of Anglicanism in *The Law of Ecclesiastical Polity*. --Eds.]

Thus we say, the Laws of motion, of gravitation, of optics, of nature and of nations."

(Blackstone)*

Kinds of Laws :-

1. Imperative Law
2. Physical Law or Scientific Law
3. Natural or Moral Law
4. Conventional Law
5. Customary Law
6. Practical or Technical Law
7. International Law
8. Civil Law or the Law of the State.

Page 108 (81)

1. Imperative Law means a rule of action
 The sanction of } imposed upon men by some autho-
 Imperative Law- } rity which enforces obedience to it.
 1- Punishment, }
 Wars etc. } 'A Law is a command which
 obliges a person or persons to a
 course of conduct.' (Austin)**

Positive morality in society also amounts to the Imperative Laws.

†*Hobbes' View:- { It is men and arms that make }
 { the force and power of the Laws. }
 { (Hobbes)†* }

*[Could be Sir William Blackstone, English Jurist- (1723-80)--author of *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-69) an authoritative book on English legal doctrine. --Eds.]

**[John Austin (1911-1960) British philosopher who investigated linguistic use for knowledge. Works include, *How to Do Things with Words*. --Eds]

†*[Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) English philosopher, author of *Leviathan* (1651) and *De Corpore Politico* (1650) Advocated a State of order to offset natural anarchy, and favoured royal absolutism. --Eds]

2. Physical Law is an expression of actions as they are. (Moral Law or the Law of Reason is an expression of actions as they ought to be).

3. Natural or Moral Law means the principles of natural right and wrong — the principles of natural justice including all rightful actions.

Justice being of two kinds—the Positive and Natural.

|| Natural justice is justice as it is indeed and in truth.

Positive justice is justice as it is conceived, recognised and expressed.

Page 109 (82)

4. Conventional Law : is any rule or system of rules agreed upon by persons for the regulation of their conduct. Agreement is a law for the parties to it.

5. Customary Law : is any rule of action which is actually observed by men — any rule which is the expression of some actual uniformity of voluntary action. Custom is law of those who observe it.

6. Practical or Technical Law : consists of rules for the attainment of some practical end. In games, there are both 'Conventional Laws' and 'Practical Laws, the former being the rules agreed upon by players, the latter being the rules to make the play a success or for the successful playing of the game.

7. International Law : consists of those rules which govern sovereign states in their relations and conduct towards each other.

(i) Express Laws (Treaties etc.)

(ii) Implied Laws (Customary)

Again divisible into two kinds:—

(i) Common Laws (between all nations)

(ii) Particular Laws (between two or more particular nations).

8. Civil Law : Law of the State or of the land; is applied in the courts of justice.

Page 110 (83)

Punishment :

Political Crimes : We agree with the great body of legislators in thinking, that though, in general a person who has been a party to a criminal design, which has not been carried into effect, be not severely dealt with, yet an exception to this rule must be made with respect to high offences against the State; for State crimes, and especially the most heinous and formidable State crimes, have this peculiarity, that, if they are successfully committed, the criminal is almost always secure from punishment. The murderer is in greater danger after his victim is despatched than before. The thief is in greater danger after the purse is taken than before; but the rebel is out of danger as soon as he has subverted the Govt. As the penal law is impotent against a successful rebel, it is consequently necessary that it should be made strong and sharp against the first beginning of rebellion. . . ."

(II L.C.C. Judgement 1906 pp. 120)*††

Page 111 (84)

Punishment :

†Dream that merited Capital Punishment★ } When Marsays dreamed that he had cut Dionysius throat, the tyrant put him to death, arguing that he would have never dreamt of such a thing by night, had he not thought of it by day.

††*[Other details not available. —Eds.]

†[[Dionysius the Elder (c. 430-367 B. C.) Greek political leader in Sicily, became tyrant of Syracuse (406 B. C.) and resisted Carthage. —Eds.]

★[Marginal note.]

£' Capital Punishment and Draco's Law : ** } The Laws of Draco affixed the penalty of death in almost all crimes alike, to petty thefts, for instance, as well as to sacrilege and murder; and the only explanation Draco is said to have given of that is, that minor offences deserve that penalty, and he could find no greater for more heinous.

Punishment is thought by many philosophers to be a necessary evil.

★State and Man } The State is not really an end ✓|in itself and man is not here for the sake of Law or the State, but that these rather exist for man.

Page 112 (85)

Justice : The maintenance of right within a political community by means of the physical force of the State.

It has replaced the personal vengeance, when men avenged their own wrongs by themselves or with the help of their kinsmen. In those days, the principle of 'Might is Right' worked.

★Civil and Criminal Justice : } Civil Justice enforces rights. Criminal justice punishes wrongs.

£/[Marginal notings --Eds.]

**[Draco (Dracon)—7th Cent. B. C.—Statesman of Athens who codified the previously unwritten laws. Later, these laws were considered too severe because "for nearly all crimes, there was the same penalty of death". (Plutarch & Solon) —Eds.]

* [Underlined in the original. Other details not available. —Eds.]

★[Marginal noting with the rule. Eds.]

A man claims a debt that is due to him, or the restoration of property wrongfully detained from him. This is Civil.

In a Criminal Case, the defendant is accused of a wrong. Court visits the accused with a penalty for the duty already disregarded and for a right already violated as where he is hanged for murder and imprisoned for theft. Page 113 (86)

Both in civil and original proceedings, there is a wrong complained of.

In civil it amounts to a claim of right;

In criminal it amounts nearly to an accusation of wrong.

Civil justice is concerned primarily with the plaintiff and his rights;

Criminal with defendant and his offence.

The Purposes of Criminal Justice

Punishment :

@Then this cannot be useful in cases of disinterested 'offenders' such as politicals. It can be an evil bargain for him !

1. Deterrent : Chief end of the Law is to make the evil-doer an example and a warning to all that are like-minded with him. It makes every offence, "an ill bargain to the offender." (Changing motive)

2. Preventive : In the second place, it is preventive or disabling. Its special purpose is to prevent a repetition of wrongdoing by the disablement of the offender.

We hang murderers not merely that it may deter others, but for the same reason for which we kill snakes, namely because it is better for us that they should be out of the world than in it.

/[Underlined in original —Eds.]

@[Marginal notes & lines —Eds.]

3. Reformative : Offences are committed through the influence of motives upon characters, and may be prevented either by a change of motives or by a change of character.

Deterrent punishment acts in the former event (words not clear -Eds.) while Reformative deals with the second. Page 114 (87)

Advocates of "Reformative theory" admit only such forms of penalty as are subservient to the education and discipline of the criminal, and reject all those which (are) profitable only as deterrent or disabling. Death is in their view no fitting penalty; 'we must cure our criminals not kill them.' Flogging and other corporal punishments are condemned as relics of barbarism. Such penalties are considered by them to be degrading and brutalising both to those who suffer and to those who inflict them.

Result of severe Punishment. Dangerous and desperate Class of criminals springs up. * } The more efficient the coercive action of the State, the more successful it is in restraining all normal human beings from the dangerous paths, and the higher becomes the proportion of degeneracy among these who break the law.

4. Retributive Punishment :

\$†The most horrible theory ! People thinking in these terms are really maintaining the barbaric faculties of ancient and pre-civilisation times. } It gratifies the instinct of revenge or retaliation, which exists not merely in the individual wronged, but also by way of sympathetic extension in society at large. According to this view, it is right and proper that evil should be returned for evil. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is deemed a plain and self-sufficient rule

\$†*[There are few such occasions where Bhagat Singh has thus expressed his views in marginal comments. —Eds.]

of natural justice. Punishment becomes an End an
Itself.

Page 115 (88)

Punishment an Evil :

Punishment is in itself an evil, and can be justified only as the means of attaining a greater good.

But the--supporters of Retributive theory argue this way :—"Guilt plus punishment is equal to innocence".

"The wrong whereby he has transgressed the law of right, has incurred a debt. Justice requires that the debt be paid . . . the first object of punishment is to satisfy the outraged law."

Peine forte et dure : was death with torture . . . judgement for which was delivered as follows :

This punishment) "That you be taken back to the
was inflicted on) prison whence you came, to a long
people of both) dungeon into which no light can
the sexes alike,) enter; then you be laid on your
for all sorts of) back on the bare floor, with a cloth
offences not) round your loins, but elsewhere
extraordinary §†) naked, that there be set upon your
body a weight of iron as great as
you can bear, and greater; that you have no substance
save, on the first day, the morsels of the coarsest
bread; on the second day, three draughts of stagnant
water from the pool nearest to the prison door; on the
third day again three morsels of bread as before, and
such bread and such water alternately from day to day
until you die."

§†[Marginal comment and ruled as in the original.—Eds.]

Page 116 (89)

Foreign Subjugation :

Subjection to foreign yoke is one of the most potent causes of the decay of nations.

—Prof. A. E. Ross*

Domination of } No rule over a foreign people is so
a democracy } exacting and so merciless in its opera-
and Foreign } tions as that of a democracy.
Nations } —Lalaji**

*[Identity and full details not established. —Eds.]

**[This must be a reference to (Lala) Lajpat Rai—(1865-1928)—known as *Punjab Kesari* (Lion of Punjab). He rose from rather humble beginnings in a newly converted Arya Samaj family to become a successful barrister, an educationist and social reformer and an important political figure in India. Known for his radical, even extremist leanings in the Indian National Congress along with his contemporaries Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. Deported with Ajit Singh (Bhagat Singh's uncle) in 1907 to Mandlay (Burma) for his part in an agitation of canal settlers in the Canal Colonies. During his externment and extended visit to USA, he became a mentor to many Indians, including M. N. Roy; and authored — *Arya Samaj* (1915) *Young India* (1917) and *National Education in India* (1917/20). Later wrote *Unhappy India* (1928). Also *England's Debt to India : A Historical-Narration of Britain's Fiscal Policy*,

[Presided over the 1920 special session of the INC which launched the non-cooperation movement. Imprisoned for sedition in 1921. Released in August 1923. was elected to the Legislative Assembly. Associated for years with the trade union movement and attended the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1926. In later years, he had gravitated towards the political organisation of *Hindu Maha Sabha*

[Moved the resolution to boycott the visit of Simon Commission and later personally led a huge protest demonstration during the visit of the Commission to Lahore. Was brutally attacked in a *lathi charge* and believed to have later succumbed to his injury. To avenge his death (and the insult to the pride of Punjab) Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary young patriots shot at a police officer, Saunders. —Eds.]

Marriage :

*§Dr. Tagore holds that the marriage system all over the world — and not only in India — from the earliest ages till now, is a barrier in the way of the true union of man and woman, which is possible only when society shall be able to offer a large field for the creative work of woman's special faculty, without detracting in the creative work in the home.

Page 117 (90)

Citizen and Man :

The Spartan† Pedarctes presented himself for admission to the council of the Three Hundred and was rejected; he went away rejoicing that there were 300 Spartans better than himself. I suppose he was in earnest, there is no reason to doubt it,

That was a citizen.

A Spartan mother had five sons with the army. A Helot arrived; trembling she asked his news. "Your five sons are slain."

"Vile slave, was that what I asked thee?"

"We have won the victory". She hastened to the temple to render thanks to the gods.

That was a citizen.

—Emile pp. 8★

*§[Reference may be to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. —Eds.]

†[Citizen of Sparta, an ancient Greek City State —Ed.]

★[Emile—a novel (1762) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). Laid down the principle that the child may be given full scope for full development in natural surroundings and protected from the evil influences of civilization. —Eds.]

★[Jean Jacques Rousseau—(1712-1778). French philosopher, regarded as founder of Romanticism. His book on political theory *Social Contract* (1762) described an ideal state in which sovereignty vested with the people as a whole and individuals would retain freedom by submitting to the "general will". His novel *Emile* (1762) dealt with the theme of education. Also wrote his *Confessions*—an autobiographical piece. —Eds.]

Life and Education :

People think only of preserving their child's life; this is not enough, he must be taught to preserve his own life when he is a man, to bear the buffets of fortune, to brave wealth and poverty, to live at need among the snows of Iceland or on the scorching rocks of Malta. In vain you guard against death; he must needs die; and even if you do not kill him with your precautions, they are mistaken.

Teach him to live rather than to avoid death !

Life is not breath, but action ! The use of our senses, our mind, our faculties, every part of ourselves which makes us conscious of our being, Life consists less in length of days than in keen sense of living. A man may be buried at a hundred and may never have lived at all. He would have fared better had he died young.

—Emile pp. 10.

Page 118 (91)

Truth : Truth however does not lead to fortune, and the people confer neither embassies, nor professorships nor pensions.

Rousseau 122
S. C. ★

Crime and Criminals :

" . . . With readymade opinions one cannot judge of crime. Its philosophy is a little more complicated than people think. It is acknowledged that neither convict prisons, nor the hulks; nor any system of hard labour ever cured a criminal. These forms of chastisement only punish him and reassure society against the offences he might commit. Confinement, regulation, and excessive work have no effect but to develop with these men profound hatred, a thirst for forbidden

✓[Lines underlined or ruled in the margin as in original. —Eds.]

★[Maybe a quote from *Social Contract*. —Eds.]

enjoyment and frightful recalibrations. On the other hand, I am convinced that the celebrated cellular system gives results, which are specious and deceitful. It deprives a criminal of his force, of his energy, energates his soul by weakening and frightening it, at last exhibits a dried up memory as a model of repentance and amendment."

*The House of Dead pp. 17
Fedore Dostoiivsky†**

Page 119 (92)

Desire Vs. Contentment !

A conscious being whose powers were equal to his desires would be perfectly happy . . . The mere limitation of our desires is not enough, for if they were less than our powers, part of our faculties would be idle, and we should not enjoy our whole being, neither is the mere extension of our powers, enough, for if our desires were also increased, we should only be the more miserable. True happiness consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers.

— 44 *Emile*★

Page 120 (93)

"Bourgeois revolution is germinated by the circumstance already existing in its predecessor regime.

"The bourgeois revolution usually ends with the seizure of power. For the proletarian revolution the seizure of power is only a beginning; power, when seized, is used as a lever for the transformation of the old economy and for the organisation of a new one."

p. 20 = @

†*[Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski—(1821 - 81) Russian novelist. *The House of Dead* written in 1861 (and translated in English—1911) is based on his own prison impressions and experiences. —Eds.]

★[Novel by Rousseau. —Eds.]

= @[See footnote on next page. —Eds.]

"There still remain two gigantic and extremely difficult tasks—(even after the overthrow of the existing regime in one country—say Russia).

"First of all comes the internal organisation.

"The second crucial problem is that of the world revolution. . . —the need to solve international problems, the need to promote the world revolution—(without which communist regime cannot be quite safe from the international capitalist threat.)

p. 21-22 = @

Page 121 (94)

I. If the proletariat is to win over the majority of the population, it must first of all overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize the powers of the State.

II. Next, it must establish the Soviet authority breaking up the old State apparatus, and thus at one blow counteracting the influence which the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie apostles of class collaboration exercise over the working (though non-proletariat) masses.

III. Thirdly, the proletariat must completely and finally destroy the influence which the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie compromisers exercise over the majority of the working (though non-proletarian) masses; it must do so by the revolutionary satisfaction of the economic needs of these masses at the cost of the exploiters.

*Nikolai Lenin
p. 23 = @*

"Dictatorship of the proletariat means the masses guided and directed by the Communist Party. Though party exercise substantial influence or control, still it is not all. Apart from its guidance, the 'will' of the masses is necessary for the achievement of any particular object.

= @[Obviously these excerpts are from some writings by (Vladimir Ilych Ulyanov) Nikolai Lenin (1870-1924) the architect of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. —Eds.]

"We have to admit that the broad masses of the workers must be led and guided by the class conscious minority. And that is the Party. Party has 'Trade Unions to link the Party with proletariat labour, . . . 'Soviets' to link it with all the labouring masses in the political field, 'Cooperatives' in the economic field especially to link the peasantry, Page 122 (95) 'League of Youth' to train communists from amongst the rising generation. Finally, Party itself is the sole guiding force within the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." = @

Page 123 (96)

Figures : Inequality of incomes : †*

Production :

Pre-war United Kingdom's (England's)

{	Annual production amounted to :—	£ 2000,000,000
	Gained through foreign investments	£ 200,000,000
	Total :	<u>£ 2200,000,000</u>

Distribution :

1/9th of the whole population i.e. capitalist or bourgeois took away	least average income annual £ 160
1/2 of the total production	i.e. £ 1100,000,000
2/9th of the whole population i.e. petty bourgeoisie took away 1/3 of the remaining half or 1/6th of the whole	average income less than £ 160 a year
	i.e. £ 300,000,000
2/3rd of the population i.e. manual labour or proletariat got the rest	(average income £ 60 yearly
	i.e. £ 800,000,000

= @ [Probably from the same note by Lenin. —Eds.]

*† [Source not given. —Eds.]

United States America : —in 1890

{ 40% of total production was received by the owners of means
60% „ was given to all workers.*†

Page 124 (97)

Aim of Life

"The aim of life is no more to control mind, but to develop it harmoniously, not to achieve salvation hereafter, but to make the best use of it here below, and not to realise truth, beauty and good only in contemplation, but also in the actual experience of daily life; social progress depends not upon the ennoblement of the few but on the enrichment of the many; and spiritual democracy or universal brotherhood can be achieved only when there is an equality of opportunity in the social, political and industrial life." †

[There are no page nos. 125 to 164 in the Notebook but after Page (97) we have no. (100) in the the available text. What come next gives us an outline of Bhagat Singh's (proposed) Study of Science of the State. —Eds.]

*† [Source not indicated. —Eds.]

Science of the State : ††

Ancient Polity : } Subordination of the individual to
 Rome @ and | the state was the dominant feature
 Sparta : † | of these ancient polities, Sparta and
 Aristotle and | Rome. In Hellas or in Rome, the
 Plato : ★ } citizen had but a few personal rights;
 his conduct was largely subject to
 public censorship, and his religion was imposed by
 State authority. The only true citizens and member of
 the Sovereign body being an aristocratic caste of free-
 men, whose manual work is performed by slaves
 possessing no civil rights.

Socrates : *★

Socrates is represented as contending that who-
 ever, after reaching man's estate, voluntarily remains
 in a city, should submit to the Govt. even when he
 deems its laws unjust; accordingly, on the ground that
 he would break his covenant with the State by escaping
 from prison into exile, he determines to await the
 execution of an unjust sentence.

Plato : **

(Social Contract)★

He traces the origin of society and the State to
 | mutual need, for men as isolated beings are
 ★ | incapable of satisfying their manifold wants. He,

††No source or reference has been indicated for this
 section of the Notes. It would appear that the young revolu-
 tionary set out to study the Science of State. —Eds.]

★[Noted in the margin @ Reference is to ancient
 Republic and Empire, (†) A city of ancient Greece known
 for its assembly of citizens.

*[Socrates—(469-399 B.C.)—Greek philosopher. Died
 by drinking poison after he was tried and condemned by
 Assembly for 'corrupting' the youth. Writings of Plato,
 Xenophon and Aristotle have preserved his ideas.]

**[Plato—(c 427—c 347 B.C.)—Greek philosopher,
 disciple of Socrates. Author of *Republic*—ideal state based
 on rational order and ruled by philosopher kings. His other
 dialogues include *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras*, *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*
 and *Laws*. Founded Assembly in Athens (387 B.C.) where
 Aristotle was a student. —Eds.]

while depicting a kind of idealised Sparta says, "In
 an ideal State, philosophers should rule; and to this
 aristocracy or government of the best, the body of
 citizens would owe implicit obedience." He emphasises
 on the careful training and education of citizens.

Aristotle : ***

He was the first to disentangle politics from
 ethics, though he was careful not to sever them. "The
 majority of men", he argued, "are ruled by their
 passions rather than by reason, and the State must
 therefore, train them to virtue by a life-long course of
 discipline, as in Sparta.† Until political society is
 instituted, there is no administration of justice. . .
 (but) it is necessary to enquire into the best constitu-
 tion, and best system of legislation . . ." Page 166 (101)

"The germ of the State is found in the family
 or household. From the union of many households
 arose the village community. . . members being subject
 to patriarchal government†.*

"By the association of several villages was formed
 the State, a natural, independent, and self-sufficing
 organisation. †*

"But while the household is ruled monarchically,
 in constitutional governments, the subjects are free and
 on equality with their rulers. †*

"Natural sociability and mutual advantage imple-
 ments union. Man is by nature a political (social)
 animal. †*

"The State is much more than an alliance which
 individuals can join or leave without effect, for the

***[Aristotle—(384—322 B.C.)—Greek philosopher,
 pupil of Plato and tutor of Alexander the Great. Works
 include *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics* and *Poetics*
 Believed in Divine Being, but also that form and matter were
 not separate entities. Political ideal was an enlightened
 monarchy with limited democracy. —Eds.]

[The following excerpts/quotations could be attributed
 to Socrates. —Eds.]

*†[Ruled/underlined as in the Notebook. —Eds.]

independent or cityless man is unscrupulous and savage, something different from a citizen." †*

★*Plato*: Plato had anticipated this conception of the State as a body whose members combine harmoniously for a common end. †*

★*Aristotle*: Aristotle held that where freedom and equality prevail, there should be alternate rule and subjection, but it is best, if possible, that the same persons should always rule.

In opposition to Plato's communism*† he argued in favour of duly regulated private property*†, considering that only a moral unity is possible or desirable in the State.

★[*Kinds of Govts.*]

He divided governments into monarchies, aristocracies, and republics and their respective perversions, tyrannies, oligarchies and democracies, according as the supreme power is in the hands of one or a few or the many, and according as the end is the general good or the private interests of the rulers, regard also being paid to freedom, wealth, culture and nobility.

Each polity consists of three parts: (1) the deliberative, (2) the executive, and (3) the judicial bodies. *Citizenship is constituted neither by residence, nor by the possession of legal rights, but by participation in judicial power and Public office.

The many, having attained a certain standard of morality, should rule, for though individually inferior, they are collectively wiser and more virtuous than a select few. But, while undertaking all deliberative and judicial functions, they should be excluded from the *highest executive offices. The best Polity is that in which the middle class between the very rich and the very poor controls the govt., for that class has most

★†*[Noted/ruled in the margin or underliend in the original. —Eds.]

permanent life, and is the most conformable to reason, as well as Page 167 (102) the most capable of constitutional action. This is virtually an affirmation that sovereignty should reside*† in the majority of the citizens, slaves of course being ignored.

Democracies agree in being based on equality in*† respect of personal liberty, which implies the eligibility of all citizens to hold, or elect to the offices of State, and the rule of each over all and of all over each in turn.

Aristotle, like Plato, treated democracy as a debased form of Govt. and held that it is more suitable to large states than any others.

★ Stoics: **
★ Cynics:

★*Epicureans*: "Justice", said Epicurus "is nothing in itself, but merely a compact (as the basis of justice) of expediency to prevent mutual injury."***

★ *Stoic*: (ism)

A disciple of the philosopher Zeno*†* (340-260 B. C.) who opened his school in a colonnade called the 'Stoa Poiklite' (painted porch) at Athens. Later Roman stoics were Cato the Younger,† Seneca,†† Marcus Aurelius†††. The word stoic literally means, 'one indifferent to pleasure or pain'.

*†[Ruled in the original. —Eds.]

★[Noted in margin as sub-heading. ** (With comments below) —Eds.]

***[Epicurus—(341-270 B. C.)—Greek philosopher who believed that life should be made happy by avoiding pain and seeking pleasure in moderation, morality being a means to contentment. —Eds.]

†[Zeno—Greek philosopher believed in all-pervading divinity and life in harmony with nature. —Eds.]

†[Cato the Younger—Marcus Porcius Cato (95-46 B. C.) Roman philosopher who became Patron Saint of Stoics. —Eds.]

††[Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c4 B. C. —A. D. 65) Roman writer & statesman, tutor of Nero, wrote essays on Stoicism, also tragedies—*Medea, Phaedra, Oedipus*. For a while, virtual ruler of Rome, later ordered to commit suicide. —Eds.]

†††[Marcus Aurelius Antoninus — originally Marcus Annius Verus (121-180 A. D.). Roman philosopher and

→

Stoicism is a school of ancient philosophy strongly opposed to Epicureanism in its view of life and duty; indifferent to pleasure or pain.

★Cynicism :

A sect of philosophers founded by @Antisthenes of Athens (born c.444 B.C.) characterised by an ostentatious contempt for riches, arts, science and amusements. They are called Cynics because of their morose manners. Cynicism is sometimes used to denote the contempt for human nature.

★Epicureans : *

Epicurus (341-270 B. C.) was a Greek philosopher, who taught that pleasure was the chief good. Epicurean is used to denote one devoted to luxuries of the table or given to sensual enjoyment.

Page 168 (103)

★Roman Polity :*

'Little of direct importance was added to political theory by the Romans, but in a closely allied department viz jurisprudence — they made contributions of deep interest and value.'

Jus-Civik) Under the Republic, there had grown
★*Jus-Gentium*) up, beside the "Civil Law" (*Jus-Civik*)
a collection of rules and principles
called *Jus Gentium* (Law of Nations) which represented the common features prevailing among the Italian tribes.

Jus Naturale] The great Roman *juris-consults** (experts
★ in the science of Law) [deriving the idea
from the Stoics] came gradually to identify the Law of Nature (*Jus Naturale*) with the *Jus Gentium*.

← (from page 87)

Emperor (161-180) Defended borders against German tribes. Also wrote *Meditations*, a classic Stoic interpretation. —Eds.]

@[Antisthenes (c. 444-365 B.C.)—studied rhetoric in his youth and came under influence of Socrates. His simple life and teachings attracted the poor. —Eds.]

★[Noted in margin and *Underlined in original. —Eds.]

They taught that this Law was divine and eternal, and that it was superior in majesty and validity to the laws of particular States. Natural Law* was supposed to be actually existent and bound up with Civil Law.

In the *Antonian Era*,†* when Roman Law attained a high development and Stoic doctrines were most influential, the jurists formulated as juridical but not as political principles the maxims that :

“all men were born free”*

and that, by the Law of Nature, ‘All men are equal’* —the implication being that although the Civil Law recognised class distinction, all mankind were equal before the Law of Nature.

★ Social Contract in Roman Polity :* | Though the Roman jurists did not postulate a contract as the origin of Civil Society, but there is a tendency to deduce recognised rights and obligations from a supposed, but non-existent contract.*

With regard to sovereignty, the citizens assembled in the *Comitia Tributa* exercised the supreme power during the golden days of the Republic.

Under the Empire, the sovereign authority was vested in the Emperor, and according to the later *juris consults*, the people, by the *Lex Regia*, delegated the supreme command to each Emperor at the beginning of his reign, thus conferring on him all their rights to govern and legislate.

*[As underlined in original. —Eds.]

†*[After Antonius Pius (A.D. 86-161) Roman Emperor (138-161 A.D.). His reign was marked by peace and sound administration. —Eds.]

★[As noted in the margin and *underlined in the Notebook. —Eds.]

[From these notes and comments, it would appear that Bhagat Singh was on to a serious study of the Science of State in Greek philosophy or under the Roman polity. --Eds.]

Page 169 (104)

★ Middle Ages :*

★[Thomas Aquinas]

Thomas Aquinas :†* (1226-1274) is said to be the chief representative of the middle ages political Theory. He, following Roman jurists, recognised a natural law, the principles of which have been divinely implanted in human reason, together with positive laws that vary in different States.

He held that the legislative power, the essential attribute of sovereignty, should be directed to the common good, and that, for the attainment of this end, it should belong to the multitude or to their representative, the prince. A mixed government of monarch, nobles, and people, with the Pope as final authority, seemed to him the best.

★ [Marsilio of Padua ††*
(died in 1328)]

[Idea of Contract]★

In his "Defensor Pacis", Marsilio of Padua advocated the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty, and combated the papal pretensions to temporal power* that had been based on the Falso Decretals.

★[Sovereignty of the People]

*Since men adopted civil life for their mutual advantage, the Laws ought to be made by the body

★[Marginal note in the original. —Eds.]

†*[St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) Italian scholar and philosopher, became a teacher at Paris. He also systematised Catholic theology. Summa Theologica (1267-73) was a major work. —Eds.] * [Ruled in original. —Eds.]

††*[Marsilius of Padua—Italian political theorist, author of Defensor Pacis. Written for Emperor Louis IV on separation of Church and State, it became a controversial work. —Eds.]

of citizens; for laws are not likely to be the best possible, nor to be readily obeyed, unless enacted by those whose interests are directly affected and who know what they need.

*He affirmed that the legislative power belongs to the people, and that the legislature should institute the executive, which it may also change or depose.

Renaissance—Reformation !!

In Renaissance, all departments of knowledge were vitalised and the circumscribed philosophy—having served as a hand-maid of theology for a thousand years, rapidly gave place to a new philosophy of Nature and man, more liberal, more profound, and more comprehensive.

Bacon recalled man from metaphysics to nature and actuality †**

Philosophy must begin with universal scepticism. But one fact is soon found to be indubitable : the existence of a thinking principle in man. The existence of consciousness. !*

*[As ruled in margin. —Eds.]

†**[Roger Bacon (c 1215-c 1292) English scholar who believed in scientific experiment and learning as a necessary complement to faith. Also studied alchemy. He was also known as the 'Admirable Doctor'. Wrote an encyclopedic work : Opus Majus, Opus Minor and Opus Teetium. Was imprisoned for heresy. —Eds.]

†**[Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam (1561-1626) English philosopher and statesman, wrote The Advancement of Learning (1605) Novum Organum (1620) to reorganise human learning and to establish inductive method. Also known for his witty concise Essays (1597-1625) on manners and morals. Became Lord Chancellor (1625), but was barred from office after pleading guilty to accepting bribes. —Eds.]

★[Cartesian Philosophy]

* The appeal to subjective conviction, to the authority of the individual, which was so strongly emphasised in the Reformation, thus becomes the very basic of Cartesian Philosophy.*

Cartesian = Relating to a French Philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650 A.D.) and his Philosophy. ††**

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★ New Period :

After Reformation, the Papal authority having been shaken off, a wave of freedom swept minds of both the rulers and the people. But there was confusion. To settle new situation, great many thinkers began to meditate over the question of State. Different schools grew up.

★Machiavelli :@@@

Machiavelli—the famous Italian political thinker through the Republican form of Government to be the best one, but doubting the stability of such a form of government, he inculcated maxims of securing a strong princely rule and hence he wrote "*The Prince*".

His advocacy of centralised government had greatly affected political theory and practice in Europe.

Machiavelli was perhaps the first writer who treated "Politics" from a purely secular point of view.

★[In the margin. *Rured & Explained below. —Eds.]

††**[Rene Descartes (1596-1650) French philosopher and mathematician, founder of Cartesian School of Philosophy, based on distinction between spirit and matter (as expressed or summed up in his dictum: "I think, therefore, I am", in his *Discourse on Matter* (1673). Also laid the foundations of analytic geometry and algebraic notation, and contributed to the science of optics. —Eds.]

@@@[Machiavelli : Nicolo Machiavelli (1467-1527) a prominent Florentine. Retoration of the Medicis (1512) ruined his position. Author of *The Prince* (c 1517) well-known for its objective analysis of the means to achieve power. He and his book had much influence on the affairs of the state in his days, and in ages to come. —Eds.]

★Other Thinkers :

[Pact and Contract] ★

Majority of others favoured the theory of pact or contract. [In Roman Law, a *pact* was the product of an agreement among individuals and fell short of a *contract*, which was a *pact* plus an obligation].

There were two different sects of these thinkers. The first one expounded the theory based on the Hebrew idea of covenant between God and man supplemented by the Roman idea of contract. It postulated a tacit contract between the government and the people.

The second or modern form, relates to the institution of Political Society by means of a compact among individuals. Prominent thinkers of this school were Hooker, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. †† (1-4)

★ [Defenders of Popular Liberty :
(Huguenot) †††]

†††(1) *The Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579), ascribed to Huguenot Languet, †††(ii) contended that kings derive their power from the people's will, and that if a king violates the compact to observe the laws which he and the people promise conjointly at the institution of royalty, the latter are absolved from allegiance.*

★[In the margin. *and ruled —Eds.]

†† (1) [Richard Hooker (c 1554-1600) English theologian who codified the principles of Anglicism in the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594-1597)]

†† (2) [Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) English philosopher, author of *De Corpore Politico* (1650) and the better known *Leviathan* (1651). According to him, body politic was formed to avoid the natural state of anarchy. He advocated royal absolutism.]

†† (3) [John Locke (1632-1707) English philosopher and a leading empiricist. He criticised the theories of Hobbes. Wrote *Two Treatises on Government* (1689) which later influenced the framers of the U.S. Constitution, and *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) to uphold the concept of knowledge based on sense experience.]

†† (4) [Rousseau : Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) French philosopher, author of *Social Contract* (1762)

(Contd.)→

★Buchanan : *

(2) Buchanan also held that the king and people are mutually bound by a pact, and that its violation by the former entails forfeiture of his rights.

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★Jesuits : **

(3) Even the Jesuits Bellarmine** and Mariana*†† argued that kings derived their authority from the people, but they are subject to Pope.

(Contd) →

which offered the theory of Sovereignty vesting in the people and the 'General Will' to which individuals submit to retain their freedom. —Eds.]

††† → (from p. 93)

††† (1) [Huguenots—The name (a nickname) given to the Protestants of France from the middle of 16th century, because, at Tours, local Protestants used to meet by night near the gate of King Hugo (regarded as a spirit by the people).

††† (ii) Languet : Hubert Languet (1518–1581) French Huguenot, writer and diplomat. *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* which brought him fame, upheld the doctrine of resistance against tyranny but it must come from a properly constituted authority. His other works are some collection of letters—*Arcana seculi decimi sexti & Langueti epistolae Joach Camerarium, patrem et filium*, also correspondence with Sir Philip Sidney (edited and published later) and *Historica descriptio* (1568) dealing with the sriage of Gotha. —Eds.]

(P. 94) ★ [Noted in the margin —Eds.]

* [Buchnan : Perhaps reference is to James Buchnan, American statesman (1791–1868) and Democratic President (1857–61) who pursued moderate policies on the issue of slavery; but his efforts for compromise were viewed with suspicion by both sides—North and the South—in the Civil War—1861 —Eds.]

** [Jesuits : or members of the Society of Jesus, a Catholic Religious Order founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1540. It is a mendicant order whose members rely on alms for their support, and seek the spiritual perfection of all humans. Through the centuries, the Jesuits have played different but important role in several European countries and abroad. (Contd) →

(from page 94) →

* [Buchanan—In the context and sequence in which Bhagat Singh was studying the development of English political thought, most probably this reference was to the great Scottish humanist, George Buchanan (1506–1582) and his important work *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579) laying down the doctrine that 'the source of political power is the people, that the king is bound by conditions under which the supreme power was first committed to him, and that it is lawful to resist and even punish the tyrants'. In his chequered career as a crusader against the clergy or the established church, Buchanan suffered persecution and self-imposed exile because of his writings—including satires, tragedies and other treatises. On return to Scotland, he was made tutor to the young Queen Mary (1562). Also openly joined the Reformed Church. In recognition of his learning and administrative experience, he occupied several positions of note. As Secretary to the Commission to meet the English Commissioners at York later Westminster, to probe guilt of Mary, Queen of Scots, he brought to light documents which went against Mary. He was one of the perceptors of the future king, young James (Mary's son). He later became director of Chancery and Lord Privy Seal. A prolific writer, covering a long period from about 1536 up to his death, he is well known for his series of books in favour of Reformation and other allied matters. —Eds.]

** [Bellarmine (Italian—Bellarmino)—Roberto Francesco Romolo (1542–1621)—Italian Cardinal and theologian. Entered the Society of Jesus in 1560, and served in several areas. On return to Rome (1576) was chosen by the Pope to lecture on controversial theology in the new Roman College. His work *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei adversus huius temporis Haereticos* (in 3 volumes) became known far and wide. Was made Cardinal in 1599 and Archbishop of Padua (in 1601) resigned in 1605. Published *De Potestate summi Pontificis in rebus temporalibus* in 1610. According to him, the Pope had an indirect right to depose 'unworthy' rulers. —Eds.]

† [Juan de Mariana, (1536–1624) Spanish historian and Jesuit. Went to Rome (1561) to teach theology, where Robert Bellarmine was among his pupils. After service in Sicily, was sent to Paris in 1569, where his exposition of Thomas Aquinas' writings drew attention. Returned to Spain in 1674. His work—*Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* appeared in 15 books at Toledo in 1592; ten books were added in 1605, bringing the story up to the accession of King Charles V in 1519. Later, he completed it up to the accession of Philip IV in 1621 and translated it in Spanish (1601–29). His other treatise *De rege et regis institutione* (1599) is also well known—(English translation by G. A. Moore : *The King and Education of the King* (1948). He considered it lawful to overthrow a tyrant. —Eds.)

★ [In the margin. *Underlined/ruled as in original.—Eds.]

(P. 96) →

★ [King James I] ★(1609): James I †* admitted this theory in a speech to Parliament in 1609, saying that "every just king in a settled kingdom is bound to observe that paction made to his people by his laws, in framing his government agreeable there unto." *

★[Convention Parliament]★(1688): Convention Parliament declared in 1688 that James II, "having † endeavoured to subvert the constitution by breaking the original contract between the king and people", had rendered the throne vacant. *

★ Bodin | ★(1586) : †† 'The first comprehensive political philosopher of modern times', Bodin, author of the 'Republic' (1577 and 1586) says that "force and not a contract is the origin of a commonwealth"*. Primitive patriarchal governments were overthrown by conquest and natural liberty was thus lost.

* In his opinion "Sovereignty was the supreme power over citizens." He regarded "Sovereignty as independent, indivisible, perpetual, inalienable and absolute power. He confused his idea of sovereignty with the then existing kingship.

★ Althusius | ★(1557-1638) : He is notable for clearly asserting that sovereignty resides in the people alone *

* Kings being only their magistrates or administrators; and that the sovereign rights of the community are inalienable.

★[Noted in margin.] †*[James I-King of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (1602 to 1625) Succeeded to the throne of Scotland (as James VI) on the abdication of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, and to the English throne on the death of Queen Elizabeth I. He was in conflict with the Parliament when he asserted the Divine Right of Kings. A scholar (earlier tutored by George Buchanan) he also wrote several books—poetry and other tracts. —Eds.]

†[James II-(1633 to 1701) : King of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (1685 to 1688). He alienated his subjects by his pro-Catholic policies and assertion of arbitrary rule. Fled to France after the 'Glorious Revolution'—1688. —Eds.]

††[Bodin: French philosopher, Jean Bodin (1530-1596) Author of *Six Livres de la Republique* (1576). He advocated that the power of the sovereign should be modified by democratic parliament. —Eds.]

*[Ruled as in original. —Eds.]

★ Grotius/★(1625) : ††† In his work, "*De Jure Belli et Paris* (1628), Grotius holds that man has a strong *desire for a peaceable and ordered society. But he inculcates the theory of non-resistance and denies that the people are always and everywhere sovereign, or that all government is established for the sake of the governed. Sovereignty arises either from conquest or from consent; but he lays emphasis on the idea that sovereign is the indivisible power. *

★ Hooker : *†*

He, in his '*Ecclesiastical Polity*'—Book I (1592-3) postulates an original state of nature in which all men were equal and subject to no Law. Desire for a life suitable to man's dignity, and aversion to solitude, impelled then to unite in '*politic societies*'. 'Natural inclination' and an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together, were the two foundations of the present '*politic societies*'. It is the latter that we call "*the Laws of a Commonweal*".

Page 172 (107) ★ [Origin of State]

★ Sovereignty : ★Legislative Power controlling the Executive as well

{ 'To take away all mutual grievance, injuries and wrongs, the only way was to ordain some kind of government, or common judge'.

* He admitted with Aristotle that the origin of government was in kingship. But he says 'Laws not only teach what is good, but also have a constraining force, derived from the consent of the governed, expressed either personally or through representatives'.

†††[Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). Dutch jurist and statesman. His book is considered the first definition of international law. —Eds.] * [Ruled in original. —Eds.]

†[Hooker: English theologian Richard Hooker (c 1554-1650) who codified the principles of Anglicism in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594, 1597). —Eds.]

★[In the margin as a sub-heading/or comment. —Eds.]

“Laws human of what kind so ever, are available [i.e. valid] by consent”.

* “Laws they are not which public approbation hath not made so.”

★“Sovereignty of the people” *

[Thus he clearly affirmed that sovereignty or legislative power resides ultimately in the people.

★ 1620 :-

Famous Declaration of the “Pilgrim Fathers” †† on board the *Mayflower* (1620): “We do solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and of one another covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politic.

★ 1647 :-

The Agree of the People of England: (another famous Puritan document, which emanated from the Army of the Parliament) (1647) also indicates the same tendency of mind.

★ *Milton* : †††

★ 1649 [*Sovereignty of the People*] * * *

In his “*Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*” (1649), he also propounds similar principles. He affirms that “all men naturally were born free”. They “agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement. Hence came towns, cities and commonwealths ! “This authority and power of self-defence and preservation being originally and naturally

★ [Noted in the margin. * Ruled as in original. —Eds.]

†† [Pilgrim Fathers (1620): A group of Puritan objectors in the Church of England who sailed away in the *Mayflower* to escape persecution and settle in North America. —Eds.]

††† [Milton : English poet John Milton (1608-74) who wrote great epics in blank verse like *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) besides several other well-known works and classical drama *Samson Agonistes* (1671) despite having become blind after 1652. During the Protectorate (1653 onwards) he acted as Oliver Cromwell's Latin secretary —Eds.] [Also see footnote on p 99. —Eds.]

in every one of them and unitedly in all, was vested, in kings and magistrates as deputies and commissioners !” * * *

“The Power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred, and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of all, in whom the power yet remain(s) fundamentally and can not be taken from them without a violation of their natural birth-right. Hence nations may choose or depose kings, merely by the right and liberty of freeborn men to be governed as seems them best.” * * *

Page 173 (108)

★ Theory of Divine Rights of Kings : †

★/* [Patriarchal Theory]

In this very age when great many thinkers were thus propounding these principles of ‘Sovereignty of the People’, there were other theorists, who tried to prove that kingdom(s) being enlarged families, the patriarchal authority of the head of a household was transferred by primogenitary descent to the representative of the first sovereign who could be proved to have reigned over any nation. Monarchy was therefore presumed to rest on an indefeasible right, and the king was held responsible to God alone ! This was known as “Divine Rights of Kings !” This was known as the “Patriarchal Theory !” ††

★ Thomas Hobbes : ††

In his various works written in 1642-1650-1651, he combined the doctrine of the unlimited authority of

* * * [Quoting Milton thus, Bhagat Singh had noted diagonally in the margin in bold letters : Sovereignty of the People. —Eds.]

★† [Perhaps a new sub-heading ★/* Noted in margin. —Eds.]

†† [It is not clear how far Bhagat Singh was quoting from some source or authority, or whether these were all his observations. —Eds.] ††

★†† [Thomas Hobbes—See note on page 93. —Eds.]

the sovereign with the rival doctrine of an original compact of the people. Hobbes's defence of absolutism—passive obedience—was secular and rationalistic rather than theological. He regarded the happiness of the community (as a whole) as the great end of government.

★ [Man an unsociable animal]

Hobbes' philosophy is cynical. According to him, a man's impulses are naturally directed to his own preservation and pleasure, and he cannot aim at anything but their gratification. Therefore man is unsociable by nature! He says, "In the natural state, every man is at war with his fellows; and the life of every one is in danger, solitary, poor, unsafe, brutish and short". It is the fear of this sort of life that impel(s) them to political union.

★ [Perpetual danger forces] Since mere
[them to form State!] pact wouldn't do, hence
* the establishment of 'a supreme common power'—
* 'the Govt'."

★ ["Conquest" or "Acquisition"
and "Institution"
the only basis of all States.]

* Society is founded by "acquisition" i. e. by conquest, or "institution" viz. by mutual contract or compact. In the latter case, once the sovereign authority is established, all must obey. Any body rebelling must perish. He should be destroyed.

★ [Unlimited authority of the Sovereign !]

He gives the rights of Legislature, Judicature and Executive — one and all to the Sovereign. "To be effective", he writes, "the sovereign power must be unlimited, irreclaimable and indivisible. Unlimited power may indeed give rise to mischief, but the worst of these is not so bad as Civil war or anarchy."

★ [These short comments were given in the margin. - Eds.]

* [Ruled or side-ruled as in original. —Eds.]

In his opinion, monarchy, aristocracy or democracy do not differ in their power. Their achievement towards general peace and security rests on the obedience of the public or people they command. Anyhow he prefers 'Monarchy'! 'Limited monarchy' is the best in his opinion. But he presses that the sovereign must regulate ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs, and, determine what doctrines are conducive to peace.

Thus he holds a clear and valid doctrine of sovereignty, while retaining the fiction of a social contract to generate the king or sovereign.

★ Spinoza : ††† ★ [1677]

In his work *Tractatus Politicus*, 1677

★ [Unsociability of man] regarded men as originally having equal rights over all things; hence the State of nature was a State of War. Men, led by their reasons freely combined their forces to establish Civil Government. As men had absolute power, hence the sovereign authority thus established had the absolute powers. In his opinion, 'Right' and 'Power' are identical. Hence the Sovereign being vested with the 'power' had all the 'rights' *ipso-facto*. Hence he favours 'absolutism'.

★ Puffendor : *†*

[*Law of Nature and Nations* 1672.] **†

In his opinion, man is a sociable animal, naturally inclined towards family and peaceful life.

††† [Spinoza (1632-77): Dutch philosopher influenced by Descartes. In his book *Ethics* (1677) developed a system of thought in which all life is embraced by infinite God (or Nature) Excommunicated (1656) from his native sect for unorthodox views. —Eds.]

† [Pufendor—or Samuel Baron von Pufendorf (1632-94) German jurist and historian; held the view that natural law incorporates the laws of state. —Eds.]

**† [Could be the English title of his book: *De jure naturae et gentium*. —Eds.]

Experience of injuries that one man can inflict on another leads upto Civil Government, which is constituted (1) : by a unanimous mutual covenant of a number of men to institute a Comman Wealth, (2) by the resolution of the majority that certain ruler shall be placed in authority, (3) by a covenant between the Government and the subjects that the former shall rule and the latter shall obey lawful commands !

Page 175 (110)

★ Locke : *.*

[Two Treatises of Civil Government-1690]

"No man has a natural right to govern."

He portrays the state of nature—a state of freedom and equality in respect of jurisdiction and dominion, limited only by natural law or reason, which prohibits men from harming one another in life, health, liberty and possessions, the punishment requisite by way of restraint or reparation being in everyman's hands.

★ State of Nature !

*/- "Men living together according to reason without a common superior on earth with authority to judge between them is properly the State of Nature !"

★ Private Property !

*/- "Every man has a natural right of property in his own person and in the product of his own labour exercised on the material of nature. As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property.

★ Property and Civil Society !

*/- According to him "property" is antecedent to "civil society" !

.[Locke—See page 93. —Eds]

★[Noted as sub-captions in the margin and */- as ruled in original. These words/lines could have been actual quotes or extracts. —Eds.]

★ Origin of Civil Society !

* But it appears men were in some sort of dangers and fears, and therefore, they renounced their natural liberty in favour of civil liberty. In short, necessity, convenience, and inclination urged men *into society.

★ Definition of Civil Society !

* Those who are united into one body, and have a common established Law and judicature to appeal to, with authority to decide controversies between them and punish offenders, are in a civil society.

★ Consent :

* Conquest is not an 'original' of government. Consent was, and could be the sole origin of any lawful government.

The legislature assembly is not absolutely arbitrary over the lives, liberties and property of the people, for it possesses only the joint power which the separate members had prior to the formation of the Society, and which they resigned to it for particular and limited purposes.

★ Law :

* "The end of Law is not to abolish or restrain but to preserve or enlarge freedom."

★ Lcgislative :

* The legislative being only a fiduciary power for certain ends, the people may remove or alter it, when it violates the trust reposed in it.

★ Ultimate Sovereignty of the People !

* Thus the community always retains the supreme power or ultimate sovereignty, but does not assume it until the government is dissolved.

★[Sub-captions in the margin, and */ruled thus. —Eds.]

Page 176 (111)

★ Legislative and Executive]*

To prevent the sacrifice of the general welfare to private interests, it is expedient that the legislative* and executive powers should be in different hands, latter being subordinate to the former.

* Where both powers are vested in an absolute monarch, there is no civil government, for there is no common judge with authority between him and his subjects.

* The forms of different commonwealths in free societies are Democracy, oligarchy, or elective Monarchies together with mixed forms.

★ 'Right of Revolution' !

* "A Revolution is justifiable when the government ceases to fulfil its part of contract—the protection of personal rights."

Rousseau††

Rousseau : ††

★ Equality

* No one should be rich enough to buy another nor poor enough to be forced to sell himself. Great inequalities pave the way for tyranny.

★[Sub-captions in the margin. and */ ruled. —Eds.]

††[Rousseau—(See notes on pages 78 and 93-94. —Eds.)

[Note: In his Prison Notebook—page 176 (111)—Bhagat Singh had written Rousseau's name twice (once in bold letters) and underlined it to give it prominence, before noting down extracts from Rousseau's writings or making his own (rare) observations. —Eds.]

††[Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). For Genoa (Switzerland)-born Rousseau, Paris became an adopted home, where he came to hold a unique position as a man of

(Contd.)→

★ Property and Civil Society :

* The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying 'this is mine,' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of Civil Society.

* What wars, crimes, and horrors would have been spared to the race, if some one had exposed this imposture, and declared that the earth belonged to no one, & its fruits to all.

Page 177 (112)

"The man who meditates is a depraved animal"

★/[In the margin. * and ruled. —Eds.] (from page 104)→
eters, often raising controversies with his writings, and as an exponent of ideas in pre-Revolutionary France. During the Revolution, (1789 onwards) he was an 'idolized' figure. He won his place in Paris society, especially in circles of arts and letters, with his several operas *La Muses galantes* (1745) *Devin du village* (1752) and *Daphnis et Chloe* (1780) and other works, including a comedy: *Narcisse*, a couple of controversial and dust-raising essays, *Discours sur les arts et sciences* (1750); *Lettre a' d' Aemberi sur les spectacles* (1758); *Lettre a' M. deB caumont* and *Lettre de la montagne* (1763) and his novels such as *La Nouvelle Holiose* (1760) and *Emile* (1762) and above all, his famous *Contract Social* (1762).

His belief in the superiority of 'the noble savage' as compared to 'the civilised man' (*Discours*) held sway over the minds of the Paris society. In politics, he was a convinced republican; and a visionary in educational schemes, as outlined in *Emile*. Following some controversial writings, he was forced to seek asylum in London (1765-67) where he was lionised for a while; but had to run away from controversy, back to Paris.

His last writings included *Confessions* and *Dialogues* followed by a sequel to the *Confessions*—*Reveries du promeneur solitaire*, one of his best books

He died of apoplexy, though some hinted, it was suicide. In the last 10 to 15 years of his life, he was not wholly sane, what with his exciteable temperament being affected due to late recognition of his writing talents, his increasing solitude (perhaps because of the controversies he could raise) and his weak moral character. But with all that, he was a bold voice auguring in the French Revolution, his ideas of *Social Contract* having taken roots in the minds of the men and women of Revolution. —Eds.]

★ Civil Law }*

Pointing to the oppression of the weak and the insecurity of all, the rich craftily devised rules of justice and peace, by which all should be guaranteed their possessions, and established a Supreme ruler to enforce the Laws.

This must have been the origin of Society and of the Laws, which gave new chains to the weak and new strength to the rich, finally destroyed natural liberty, and, for the profit of a few ambitious men, fixed for ever the law of property and of inequality, converted *a clever usurpation into an irrevocable right, and subjected the whole human race hence-forward to labour, servitude and misery.

★ Re : Inequalities

{ * But it is manifestly opposed to natural law that a handful of people should gorge superfluities while the famished multitude lack the necessities of life.

Page 178 (113)

★ Fate of his Writings

Emile and *Social Contract*, both published in 1762. the former burnt in Paris, Rousseau narrowly escaping arrest, then both being publically burnt in Genoa, his native place whence he expected greater response.

★ Sovereignty of Monarch to that of the People

* Rousseau retains the French ideas of unity and centralisation; but while in the seventeenth century, the State (or sovereignty) was confounded with the monarchy. Rousseau's influence caused it in the 18th Century to be identified with the people.

★[Noted in margin. * Ruled as in original. —Eds.]

★ Pact

| By pact men exchange natural liberty for civil liberty and moral liberty.

★ Right of First Occupancy

Right of Property :—

* Its justification depends on these conditions :—
(a) that the land is uninhabited; (b) that a man occupies only the area required for his subsistence; (c) that he takes possession of it not by an empty ceremonial, but by labour and cultivation.

Page 179 (114)

★ Religion :

{ * Rousseau places even religion under the tyranny of the sovereign.

Introductory Note :— **

I wish to enquire whether, taking men as they are and laws as they can be made, it is possible to establish some just and certain rule of administration in civil affairs . . .

* . . . I shall be asked whether I am a prince or a legislator that I write on politics. I reply that I am not. If I were one, I should not waste time in saying what ought to be done, I should do it or remain silent."

Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.

★[Noted in the margin. */ and side-ruled. or underlined. —Eds.]

**[No indication where this or the next extract or note has been taken from. Maybe the Introductory Note to *Social Contract*. —Eds.]

★ Shaking off the Yoke of Slavery by Force !

* I should say that so long as a people is compelled to obey and does obey, it does well; but that, so soon as it can shake off the yoke and does shake it off, it does better; for, if men recover their freedom by virtue of the same right (i. e. force) by which it was taken away, either they are justified in resuming it, or there was no justification for depriving them of it. *†*

Page 180 (115)

★ Force

"Power which is acquired by violence is only a usurpation, and lasts only so long as the force of him who commands prevails over that of those who obey; so that if the latter become the strongest in their turn and shake off the yoke, they do so with as much right and justice as the other who had imposed it on them. The same law (of force) which has made the authority, then unmakes it; it is the law of the strongest."

Diderot—*Encyclopaedia* *†††
"Authority"

* Slaves lose everything in their bonds, even the desire to escape from them; ††

★ The Right of the Strongest }

"Obey the powers that be. If that means, yield to force, the precept is good but superfluous; I reply that it will never be violated. ††

★[As in the margin, and */ruled. Eds.]

*†††[Denis Diderot (1713-84)—French philosopher & Chief Editor of *Encyclopedie*. He also wrote the first French 'Bourgeois' drama—*Le Neveu de Rameau*. He was anti-clerical and was imprisoned because of his works like *Lettres sur les Aveugles* (1749). —Eds.]

††[Source not clear. Maybe Diderot or Rousseau. -Eds.]

★ Right of Slavery]

'Do subjects, then, give up their persons on condition that their property also shall be taken? I do not see what is left for them?'

'It will be said that the despot secures to his subjects civil peace. Be it so; but what do they gain by that, if the wars which Page 181 (116) his ambitions bring upon them, together with his insatiable greed and the vexations of his administration, harrass them more than their own dissensions would? ††

To say that a man gives himself for nothing is to say what is absurd and inconceivable."

Whether addressed by a man to a man, or by man to a nation, such a speech as this will always be equally foolish: "I make an agreement with you wholly at your expense and wholly for my benefit, and I shall observe it as long as I please, while you also shall observe it as long as I please." ††

Equality :

If then you wish to give stability to the State, bring the two extremes as near together as possible; tolerate neither rich nor beggars. These two conditions, naturally inseparable, are equally fatal to the general welfare; from the one class spring tyrants, from the other, the supporters of tyranny; it is always between these that the traffic in public liberty is carried on; the one buys the other sells. ††

Page 182 (117)

"Hail lays waste a few cantons, but it rarely causes scarcity. Riots and civil wars greatly startle the chief men; but they do not produce the real misfortunes of nations, which may be abated, while it is being

★[Noted in the margin. */Ruled as in original. †† Source of these extracts not clear. —Eds.]

disputed who shall tyrannise over them. It is from their permanent conditions that their real prosperity or calamities spring; when all is left crushed under the yoke, it is then that everything perishes; it is then that the chief men, destroying them at their leisure, "Where they make a solitude, they call it peace." ††

"pp. 176"

Page 183 (118)

** French Revolution : †**

★ America : * American war of Independence had great effect on the French situation. (1776).

★ Taxes : * Court or ministry acting under the use of the name 'The King', framed the edicts of taxes at their own discretion and sent them to the Parliament to be registered; for until they were registered by the Parliament, they were not operative. @

The court insisted that the Parliament's authority went no further than to show reasons against it, reserving to itself the right of determining whether the reasons were well or ill founded and, in consequence thereof, either to withdraw the edict as a matter of choice, or to order it to be enregistered as a matter of authority. @

The Parliament, on the other hand, insisted for having the right of rejection. @

†† [Source not indicated. Difficult to pin-point. —Eds.]

** [Here are notes for a new chapter of study, but the source not indicated. —Eds.]

★ [In the margin, and * / side-ruled. —Eds.]

†** [French Revolution : 1789) may be dated from the meeting of the 'States-General' at Versailles on May 5 before the fall of Bastille on July 14. See below next page. —Eds.]

@ [In this context, Parliament (or *parlement*) would mean a body or session of king's counsellors, and not an elected representative body. Also see next page. —Eds.]

† M. Calonne the minister wanted money. He was aware of the sturdy disposition of the Parliament with respect to taxes. He called an "Assembly of* Notables" (1787). ††

(Contd) → †** [It is not clear which book, if any, on French Revolution had reached Bhagat Singh's hands. It is however, apparent from his notes that he was more interested in the basic tussle or conflict between 'authority' of the King or the old regime on one hand and the new 'popular' forces which appeared on the scene to challenge that authority.]

[Also, Bhagat Singh did not seem to have much time at his disposal for a more serious or in-depth study of all the events. His notes seem to be cursory but factual. Perhaps he was conscious that time was running out. —Eds.]

@ (Ref page 110) [Parlement : Early reference was to the sessions of the principal vassals and prelates to the royal court of France for advice which in Paris, grew into a permanent court of justice and other authority. Gradually, there were parlements in the provinces too, having some political rights or jurisdictions beside their judicial functions.]

[In the present context, Parlement may be taken as a body of King's counsellors. Under pressure from the nobles etc. and in a mood of appeasement, King Louis XVI had restored the 'dormant' *parlement* in 1776.]

[King's edicts (or laws) were to be registered by the *parlement* before they came into force. The King would send *lettres de cache* or his *lettres de Jussion*. Parlement would examine and approve these or refer them back through remonstrances. By the 18th century, *parlements* had come to favour voluntary registration. —Eds.]

† [M. Calonne—French statesman, Charles Alexandre de Calonne (1734–1802) who became controller-general of finance (November, 1783). The State coffers being empty, he sought to raise loans; but the Parlement resisted though in vain. He then proposed to the King to suppress internal customs and duties, and tax notables and the clergy. An 'Assembly of Notables' was called in January 1787, but his proposal to curtail their privileges was opposed. He was dismissed in April, and went to England in exile (In 1789, when the States-General was about to convene, he crossed over to Flanders; but was not allowed to enter France. He then joined the "emigre party" at Colbenz. His critical view of financial matters and measures taken by Necker—Jacques Necker (1732–1804) as French finance minister for fiscal reforms was published in London (1790). Allowed to return to Paris in 1802, he died soon after.) —Eds.]

It was not a States-General †† which was elected, but all the members were nominated by the King and consisted of 141 members*. Even then he could not get the majority support. He divided it into *7 committees. Every committee consisting of 20 members. Every question was to be decided by majority votes in committees and by majority committee votes in Assembly. He tried to have 11 members whom he could trust in each of any four committees, thus to have a majority. But his devices failed.

Page 184 (119)

†††* M. de Lafayette was Vice-President of a second committee. He charged M. Calonne for having sold

*[Ruled as in original. —Eds.]

†*† and ††[While the Assembly Notables were nominated, the States-General represented the nobility, clergy and bourgeoisie —Eds.]

†††*[M. de la Fayette:—Full name—Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Mortier, Marquis de la Fayette—(1757-1834) Came from an old established family with an estate near Aix, which gave the family its name. Orphaned at 16, he joined the Guards; and at the age of 19, while serving as a captain, was captivated by the news of the revolt of American colonies against the English. Thus began his romantic adventure, first into the American War of Independence and then in the French Revolution. He became personal friend of George Washington. After leading a few skirmishes, he returned to France and was instrumental in bringing France on the American side which provoked England to declare war against France. Acclaimed in his homeland, he became a colonel in the French cavalry (1779) and was promoted as major-general in 1781.

[He took his seat in the 'Assembly of Notables' in 1787, and demanded that the King may convene the States-General. He was elected to it; and on July 11, 1789, presented a declaration of rights on the model of the 1776 American Declaration of Rights.

[In 1790, he was promoted as colonel-general in the new National Guard of Paris, and played a very active part in the early rounds of the Revolution until 1792, when (on August 19) he was declared a traitor by the Assembly for espousing the cause of constitutional monarchy. In exile, he was held a prisoner of state for 5 years in Prussian and

crown land to the amount of two millions of livres. He gave it in writing too. Sometimes afterwards, M. Calonne was dismissed.

The Archbishop of Tolouse ††* was appointed the Prime Minister and Finance Minister. He placed before the Parliament two taxes — Stamp Tax and a sort of land-tax. The Parliament returned for answer,

That with such a revenue as the nation then supported, the name of taxes ought not to be mentioned but for the purpose of reducing them,

and threw both the edicts out. Then they were ordered to Versailles, where the King held, 'A Bed of Justice' and enregistered those edicts. Parliament returned to Paris. Held a session there. Ordered the enregistration to be struck off. Declaring everything done at Versailles to be illegal. All were served with 'letter de cachets' and exiled. And afterwards they were recalled. Again the same edicts were placed before them.

Page 185 (120)

Then arose the question of calling a States-†† General. The King promised with the Parliament. But ministry opposed. They put forth a new proposal for

(Contd.)→

Austrian prisons for his initial role as a prime mover of the Revolution. Released on the intervention of Napoleon Bonaparte, he returned to France in 1799. Soon he was to vote against Napoleon being made a Consul for life (1802) and then his assumption of the imperial title (1804). He lived in retirement during the First Empire, but returned to public affairs during the Restoration. He was a Deputy of the Assembly for many years until his death holding a temporary command of the National Guard during the 1830 Revolution. —Eds.]

††*[The Archbishop of Tolouse—Reference is to Etienne Charles de Lomenie de Brienne, archbishop of Tolouse, an ancient town in south-western France, who succeeded Calonne to the Treasury in 1787. His proposal to the Parlement, modelled on those by Calonne to extend the stamp duty and levy a general land-tax were refused, and referred to the State-General. —Eds.]

the formation of a 'Full Court'. It was opposed on two grounds: Firstly, for principle's sake, Govt. had no right to change itself. Such a precedent will be harmful. Secondly, on the question of form; it was contended that it was nothing but an enlarged Cabinet.

The Parliament rejected this proposal. It was besieged by armed forces. For many days, they were there. Still they persisted. Then many of them were arrested and sent to different jails.

A deputation from Brittany came to remonstrate against it. They were sent to Bastille.

'Assembly of Notables' again recalled, decided to follow the same course as adopted in 1614 to call States General.

"Parliament decided that 1200 members should be elected, 600 from commons, 300 from clergy and 300 from nobility.

††States General †† met in May 1789. Nobility and clergy went to two different chambers.

Page 186 (121)

The third estate or the Commons refused to recognise this right of the clergy and nobility and declared themselves to be the 'Representatives of the Nation' denying the others any right whatsoever in any other capacity than the national representatives

*††[See note below p 112 (& 185 of the Notebook,)]

††[States-General: Met in May 1789, after a long gap of nearly 175 years (since after 1614). King Louis XVI was compelled to call the representatives of the nobility the clergy and the bourgeoisie because of the bankruptcy of his treasury. About 300 members each of the first two ranks and twice the number of the third category attended. It soon became the epicentre of a new kind of political struggle. popular representatives grabbing the initiative and then setting the course of future events. Storming of the Bastille, the much-hated symbol of tyranny and oppression, on July 14, was one such expression of the people's mood, as was the march of Paris citizens on Versailles and the enforced return of the King and his retinue as their hostages. The old order was in its death row. -Eds.]

sitting alongwith them in the same chamber. Hence the States General became the 'National Assembly'. They sent invitations to other chamber. Majority of Clergy came over to them. 45 of the aristocracy also joined them; then their number increased to eighty and afterwards still higher. ***†**

Page 187 (122)

★ Tennis Court Oath

The malcontents of Nobility and Clergy wanted to overthrow the National Assembly. They conspired with ministry. The door of the chamber was shut in the face of the Representatives of the Nation and were guarded by militia. They then proceeded to a tennis court in a body, and took an oath never to separate until they had established a constitution.

★ Bastille*

The next day the chamber was again thrown open to them. But secretly thirty thousand troops were mobilised to besiege Paris. The unarmed Parisian Mob attacked Bastille; and Bastille was taken.

14th July 1789 *
***†**

★ Versailles :*

5th October 1789*—Thousands of men and women proceeded towards Versailles to demand satisfaction from 'Garde du Corps' for their insolent behaviour in connection with national cockade. It is known as Versailles expedition. As a result of further developments, the King was brought to Paris. ***†**

***†**[As these extracts show, Bhagat Singh seemed to be interested in how the people's representatives came to influence the course of the Revolution. —Eds.]

★[Noted in margin. —Eds.]

*[Ruled as in original. —Eds.]

***The wisdom of every country when properly exerted, is sufficient for all its purposes.

(pp. 112 / Rs of man) †*

***That the form of a government was a matter wholly at the will of a nation at all times, that if it chose a monarchical form, it had a right to have it so; and if it afterwards chose to be a Republican, it had a right to be a republic: and to say to a king, "we have no longer any occasion for you."

House of Lords. Minister Earl of Shelburne

†*†*

***[These two extract/notes have been written diagonally across the page in hold letters. —Eds.]

†*[May be from *Rights of Man* by Thomas Pains. —Eds.]

†*†*[Difficult to say, but this extract of a speech may be attributed to either the 1st Earl of Selborne—Roundel Palmer (1812–1895)—Lawyer, statesman. Member of British Parliament, who became Lord Chancellor (1872) under Gladstone with the title of Lord Selborne, and continued to play an important part in the promotion of 1867 Reforms and later the reform of judiciary; in his later life he was active in the defence of the Church of England and promotion of university and legal education;

or to his son, William Waldegrave Palmer, (1859–1942) 2nd Earl of Selborne, also an M. P., who became Under-Secretary for Colonies (1895–1900) First Lord of Admiralty (1900); High Commissioner for South Africa (1905) and Governor of Transvaal and Orange river Colony; He left South Africa (1910) after an active role in its Union and transition into a Republic. Minister for Agriculture (1915) in the coalition government during the First World War, resigned (1916) in protest of a compromise policy on Ireland. Supported self-government in the church, leading to the Church Enabling Act of 1919. Later was a votary of constitutional political reforms—especially, the House of Lords and its relations with the House of Commons. —Eds.]

★ King :

If there existed a man so transcendently wise above all others, that his wisdom was necessary to instruct a nation, some reason might be offered for monarchy; but when we cast our eyes about a country and observe how every part understands its own affairs; and when we look around the world and see that, of all men in it, the race of kings are the most insignificant in capacity, our reason fails to ask us—
What are these men kept for? ***

112.

★ Libeller : "If to expose the fraud and imposition of monarchy and every species of hereditary government to lessen the oppression of taxes — to propose plans for the education of helpless infancy, and the comfortable support of the aged and distressed — to endeavour to conciliate nations to each other — to extirpate the horrid practice of war — to promote universal peace, civilisation and commerce — and to break the chains of political superstition, and raise degraded man to his proper rank — if these things be libellous, let me live the life of a libeller, and let the name of "Libeller" be engraven on my tomb."

xi ***

→ But when principle and not place, is the energetic cause of action, a man, I find, is everywhere the same.

→ Death : If we were immortal we should all be missrable; no doubt it is hard to die, but is sweet to think that we shall not live for ever.

(pp. 45. Emile)†

***[Source not known. —Eds.]

→ [These extracts (on pp. 117–118) have been written diagonally across the page in bold letters. —Eds.]

†[Emile by Rousseau. —Eds.]

→ Socialistic Order :

“From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” ††

→ Audacity is the soul of success in Revolution.

→ “Action, Action. Power first discussion afterwards,” said Danton*††*

†† [A communist axiom or goal first projected by Marx and Engels. —Eds.]

†† [George Jacques Danton (1759-94), French revolutionary, came from a respectable family of Champagne, but was drawn to liberal, republican/revolutionary ideas after he came to Paris (1780) to study law and establish a professional foothold. He became a powerful orator and one of the leaders of the radical Cordeliers group (or the Club of members from the Paris district by that name) a group or Society of the Friends of the *Rights of Man* and of the Citizens during the early phases of the Revolution.]

[He helped organise the overthrow of the monarchy (1792); became head of the ‘Provisional Government’, and set up the Committee of Public Safety (1793) which became an instrument of ‘revolutionary terror’. Ultimately, losing in struggle of power with Robespierre, he met his end under the guillotine. (See below) —Eds.]

[Maxmilien Francois Marie Isidore de Robespierre (1758-94) was a Jacobin leader in the Revolution and member of the Public Safety Committee which perpetrated its Reign of Terror (1793-94). In the on going power struggle, he ousted rivals like Danton and Hebert (1757-94)—(the latter, a prominent Jacobin and leader of the Cordeliers was a popular radical who was tried on false charges of conspiracy at the instance of Robespierre and guillotined) Robespierre could exercise his dictatorial powers for a while through the Revolutionary Tribunal; but was overthrown by the Convention and himself met the fate of his rivals. —Eds.]

Page 191 (126)

Russian Experiment *★*

1917-27

1. *Face and Mind of Bolshevism* ★† by Rene Fulop-miller “The philosophy of the Bolsheviks is utterly, aggressively materialistic, whose one redeeming feature even their bitterest enemies will have to recognise, viz. the utter absence of any illusion.
2. *Russia* by Makeev-O’Hara
3. *Russian Revolution* by Lancelot Lowton (Macmillan)
4. *Bolshevist Russia* by Anton Karlgreen They held firmly to the faith of their founder that
5. *Literature and Revolution* —Trotsky “Everything can be explained by natural laws or, in a narrower sense, by Physiology !”
6. *Marx-Lenin and Science of Revolution* by Anton Karlgreen★† —p. 30. ††

“Philosophers,” said Marx, “have merely interpreted the world in many ways; the really important thing is to change it.”

Page 192 (127)

Religion and Socialism :

“Religion is an opium for mankind” said Marx.

††

★ [Russian Experiment—The caption given by Bhagat Singh to this sequence of notes is interesting. Perhaps he was referring to a book by that title, which covered the developments in Russia after the Revolution up to 1927. He also listed out a few books on the left-hand side of the note-sheet. One wonders if he had the time to read these, or whether (and when) his studies were interrupted. In this last but one section of his notes, one has the feeling as if he was ‘rushing through’ his work. Or maybe we are imagining things !] —Eds.]

★† [Book titles and authors as could be deciphered from the Notes. —Eds.]

†† [Source not indicated. —Eds.]

"All idealistic considerations lead in the end to a kind of conception of Divinity, and are, therefore, pure non-sense in the eyes of Marxists. Even Hegel saw in God the concrete form of everything good and reasonable that rules the world; the idealist theory must put everything on the shoulders of this unfortunate grey beard, who, according to the teachings of his worshippers, is perfect, and who, in addition to Adam, created fleas and harlots, murderers and lepers, hunger and misery, plague and vodka, in order to punish the sinners whom he himself had created, and who sin in accordance with his will . . . From the scientific standpoint, this theory leads to absurdity. The only scientific explanation of all the phenomenon of the world is supplied by absolute materialism.

[(p. 32) †† Bukharin]**

According to them,

In the beginning, Nature; from it, life; and from life, thought and all the manifestations we call mental or moral phenomenon. There is no such thing as Soul, and Mind is nothing but a function of matter, organised in a particular way.

.33. ††

Page 193 (128)

Marx on Insurrection :

Firstly : "Never play with insurrection, if there is no determination to drive it to the bitter end (literally—to face all the consequence of this play) An insurrection is an equation with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day. The forces to be opposed have all the advantages of organisation, discipline and traditional authority.

**[Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin—(1888-1938)—Soviet political leader, writer and editor. He was a leading Bolshevik theorist after the death of Lenin Executed during the so-called Stalinist purges of the Communist Party. —Eds.]

††[These extracts could be from his book. —Eds]

"If the rebels cannot bring great forces to bear against their antagonists, they will be smashed and destroyed.

Secondly : "The insurrection once started, it is necessary to act with the utmost determination and pass over to the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it perishes before it has measured forces with the enemy. The antagonists must be surprised while their soldiers are still scattered, and new successes, however small, must be attained daily; the moral ascendancy given by the first success, must be kept up. One must rally to the side of insurrection the vacillating elements, which always follow the stronger, and which always look out for the safer side . . . In one word act according to the words of Danton—the greatest master of Revolutionary policy yet known — Audacity . . . audacity . . . and yet again audacity !"

††



Editor's Note : *The next written page in the Notebook is numbered 273. Pages no. 194 to page no. 272 are blank. Earlier too, as we have seen, there are similar gaps or blanks. It is possible that Bhagat Singh had apportioned different sections or parts of the 400-and-odd pages of the Notebook, with gaps in between, to note different aspects or extracts of his wide range of study and other occasional jottings. In the section just finished, from page nos 165 to 193, the main focus or continuity of his notes relates to his (projected) study of the Science of State—the twin concepts of liberty and sovereignty and their evolution, leading on to the French Revolution and then the Russian Experiment. What follows may be taken as another Miscellaneous Section of assorted notes and extracts.* →

††[Exact source of this extract not known. Perhaps from a book by Bukharin. —Eds.]

→ Perhaps it may not be correct to assume that Bhagat Singh recorded his notes or extracts in a well-set sequential order, one after another. It is quite possible that he had marked out different sections/pages earlier, and noted down the extracts as and when he came across them. However, there is an underlined yet obvious holding together of the last section of notes which mostly relate to the contemporary Indian situation, and some related topics. How this section would have developed, given the time or opportunity, one wonders! —Editors



Page 273 (130) *

“... Do you want an expansion of the Legislative Councils? Do you want that a few Indians shall sit as your representatives in the House of Commons? Do you want a large number of Indians in the Civil Service? Let us see whether 50, 100, 200 or 300 civilians will make the government our own... The whole Civil Service might be Indian, but the civil servants have to carry out orders—they cannot direct, they cannot dictate the policy. One swallow does not make the summer. One civilian, 100 or 1000 civilians in the service of the British Government will not make the government Indian. There are traditions, there are laws, there are policies to which every civilian, be he black or brown or white, must submit; and as long as these traditions have not been altered, as long as these principles have not been amended, as long as that policy has not been radically changed, the supplanting of Europeans by Indian agency will not make for self-government in this country... ”

If the Government were to come and tell me today, “Take Swaraj”, I would say thank you for the gift, but I will not have that which I cannot acquire by my own hand... ”

*[This how the page is numbered. —Eds.]

“We shall in the imperative compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us.

“... The Primary thing is the prestige of the Government.

Page 274 (131)

“Is really self-government within the Empire a practicable ideal? What would it mean? It would mean either no real self-government for us, or no real over-lordship for England. Would we be satisfied with the shadow of self-government? If not, would England be satisfied with the shadow of over-lordship? In either case, England would not be satisfied with a shadowy over-lordship, and we refuse to be satisfied with a shadowy self-government. And, therefore, no compromise is possible under such conditions between self-government in India and the overlordship of England... If self-government—(real)—is conceded to us, what would be England's position not only in India, but in British Empire itself? Self-government means the right of self-taxation; it means the right of self-control; it means the right of the people to impose protective and prohibitive tariffs on foreign imports. The moment we have the right of self-taxation, what shall we do? We shall not try to be engaged in this uphill work of industrial boycott. But we shall do what every nation has done. Under the circumstances in which we live now, we shall impose a heavy, prohibitive, protective tariff upon every inch of textile fabric from Manchester, upon every blade of knife that comes from Leeds. We shall refuse to grant admittance to a British soul into our territory. We would not allow British capital to be engaged in the development of Indian resources, as it is now engaged. We would not grant any right to the British capitalists to dig up the mineral wealth of the land and Page 275 (132) to carry it to their own isles. We shall want foreign capital. But we shall apply for foreign loans in the open markets of the whole world, guaranteeing the credit of the Indian Government, the Indian Nation, for the repayment of the loan... And England's commercial interests would not be furthered in the way these are being furthered now, under the condition of

popular self-government, though it might be within the Empire. But what would it mean within the Empire? It would mean that England would have to enter into some arrangements with us for some preferential tariff. England would have to come to our markets on the conditions that we would impose upon her for the purpose, if she wanted an open door in India; and after a while, when we have developed our resources a little and organised our industrial life, we would want the open door not only to England, but to every part of British Empire. And do you think, it is possible for a small country like England with a handful of population, although she might be enormously wealthy, to compete on fair and equitable terms with a mighty continent like India with immense natural resources, with her teeming population, the soberest and abstemious population known to any part of the world?

"If we have really self-government within the Empire, if 300 millions of people have that freedom of the Empire, the Empire would cease to be British. It would be the Indian Empire, . . ."

Bep. Ch. Pal in †*

New Spirit 1907

†*[Should be *Bipin Chandra Pal*, a prominent Indian leader (1858-1932)—who came to the forefront in the *Swadeshi* and Boycott campaigns in Bengal and outside, in the wake of the popular upsurge against the Partition of Bengal (1905). As he observed (in 1907) . . . "it was Curzon and his Partition plan . . . that had destroyed our old illusion about British India . . . !". Thus began a new phase of militant nationalism. Pal grew to political activity and maturity under stalwarts like Arbinda—Aurobindo Ghose. Later well-known for his "extremist" views in the Indian National Congress, he became identified with the "extremist" trio—of Pal, Bal and Lal as the stormy petrels of the once moderate Congress. A 'political' journalist of repute, he was the editor of *New India* (1901) and *Bande Matram* (1906); also edited *Swaraj* from London for some time. In 1920, he became editor of Motilal Nehru's newspaper, *The Independent*. His writings include: *The National Congress* (Lahore 1887) *New Spirit* (1907)(?) *Nationality and Empire* (Calcutta 1916) *Why I Advocate Home Rule for India?* (Adyar 1918) and *Memories of My Life and Times* (Reprinted, Calcutta, 1973).

Page 276 (133)

Hindu Civilisation :

It may seem to us to present in many of its aspects an almost unthinkable combination of spiritualistic idealism and of gross materialism, of asceticism and of sensuousness, of overweening arrogance when it identifies the human self with the universal self and merges man in the Divinity and the Divinity in man, and of demoralising pessimism when it preaches that life itself is but a painful allusion and that the severest remedy and end of all evils is non-existence.

Chirol, 26 p. ***

Indian Unrest

Education Policy :

The main original object of the introduction of Western Education into India was the training of a sufficient number of young Indians to fill the subordinate posts in the public offices with English-speaking natives.

p. 34. †

Page 277 (134)

How many of the Western educated Indians who have thrown themselves into political agitation against the tyranny of the British bureaucracy have ever raised a finger to free their own fellow countrymen from the tyranny of those social evils? How many of them are entirely free from it themselves, or, if free, have the courage to act up to their opinion?

India Old & New p. 107 ***

***[Sir Valentine Chirol (1858-1929)—A well travelled journalist and author of at least two books about India viz. : *Indian Unrest* and *India Old and New*. Was in charge of the *Times* Foreign Department from 1890 to 1912, beside being a member of the Indian Public Service Commission (1912-1914). Visited India 17 times. —Eds.]

†[Perhaps from *Indian Unrest*. —Eds.]

★ No Indian Parliament Conceivable !

The Indian National Congress assumed unto itself, almost from the beginning, the function of a Parliament. There was and is no room for a Parliament in India, because, so long as British rule remains a reality, the Government of India, as Lord Mosley has plainly stated, must be an autocracy — benevolent and full of sympathy with Indian ideas, but still an autocracy.

154 Unrest ***

★ Aim or Goal of the Congress :

“The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-government members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms.”

Malviyaji from the Chair in 1909 *†*†
(Lahore Session of the Congress)

★ [Noted in the margin, perhaps as a comment. —Eds.]

* [Ruled on the side for emphasis. —Eds.]

*** [Indian Unrest by Chirol. —Eds.]

†† [Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya—(1861-1946)—A prominent national leader, and educationist. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1886, and became its President in 1909 (Lahore session) and 1918 (Delhi). He was Member of the United Provinces Legislative Council from 1902 to 1912, of the Central Legislative Council (1912-1919) and then of the Central Legislative Assembly (1924-46). He founded the Benaras Hindu University in 1915 and was its Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1939, and its Rector from 1939 to 1946. He attended the second Round Table Conference (1931-32). He was also President of the Hindu Maha Sabha in 1923, 1924 and 1936. —Eds.]

Re. : CONSTITUTION OF FREE INDIA *†*†

No one but the voice of the Mother herself will and can determine when once she comes to herself and stands free what constitution shall be adopted by Her for the guidance of Her life after the revolution is over . . . Without going into detail we may mention this much that whether the head of the Imperial Government of the Indian Nation be a President or a

(Contd.) →

†† [Malviyaji's extract on the preceding page (126) (page 278/135 of Bhagat Singh's Notebook) is from Chirol's summary account of the Lahore Congress in context of the politics of the "moderates", under chapter heading—Indian National Congress —page 160 of *Indian Unrest* —Eds.]

†*† [Bhagat Singh has referred to Valentine Chirol's book *Indian Unrest* again and again (pages 273/130 onwards).

[Extracts on pages 273 to 275 (130 to 132) of Bhagat Singh's Notebook are from pages 10-12 of Chirol's book. (See page 122 onward of this book—Eds.)

[Actually, there is an extra lead to the extract on page 273/130 (or p. 122 of this book) an extra line— . . .

“You may get a High Court judgeship here, membership of the Legislative Council there, possibly an Executive Membership of the Council. . . .” ((Then comes the extract as quoted.—Eds.) —Eds.]

[Very early in his book (*Indian Unrest* page 10 to 14) Chirol picked on the person of Bepin Chandra Pal and his speeches as representing the spirit of “nationalism” in India, which then stood for “Swaraj” or ‘Colonial Self-Government’. In Chirol's view, Pal was an “advanced” leader “who does not rank amongst the revolutionary extremists . . .” — . . . “a high-caste Hindu and a man of great intellectual force and high character” . . . who had had Western education and travelled a great deal in Europe and America, to feel at home in London as much as in Calcutta. In 1907, (three years before Chirol's book came out), Bepin Chandra Pal gave a series of lectures at Madras on the “New Spirit”, which were published widely, and “may be regarded as the most authoritative programme of “advanced” political thought in India.” —Eds.]

††*† [From a leaflet then in circulation—‘Choose, O Indian Princes’. It was a ‘seditious leaflet’—a ‘characteristic document’ sent by the “extremists” to the Rulers/Chiefs of Native States. One chief gave it to Chirol who has given two extracts from it on pages 196-197 of his book, with his interlinking comments. —Eds.]

King depends upon how the revolution develops itself . . . The mother must be free, must be one and united, must make her will supreme. Then it may be that she gives out this Her will either wearing a kingly crown on her head or a Republican mantle round her sacred form.

Forget not, O Princes ! that a strict account will be asked of your doings and non-doings, and a people newly born will not fail to pay in the coin you paid. Everyone who shall have actively betrayed the trust of the people, disowned his fathers, and debases his blood by arraying himself against the Mother—he shall be crushed to dust and ashes . . . Do you doubt our grim earnestness ? If so, hear the name of Dhingra** and be dumb. In the name of that martyr,

**[Regarding Dhingra, the author of *Indian Unrest* stated on p 147 of his book—while discussing the activities of the London-based 'Indian House' group, considered to be "the most dangerous organisation outside India" (with its headquarters at the 'India House' at Highgate, . . .)—"It was there that Dhingra appears to have concocted the plot which resulted in the murder of Sir W. Curzon Wylie and Dr. Lalca . . ." Chirol briefly described the links and activities of the India House group, set up by Shyamji Krishnavarma, (1905). —Eds.]

[Madanlal Dhingra was a young revolutionary associated with the 'Indian Home Rule Society' and the 'India House' Centre. Its founder Shyamji Krishnavarma had moved to London in 1897, and gathered round him young patriots like Hardayal, Savarkar and Dhingra with the aim to educate public opinion and train other patriots. They also ran a paper, the *Indian Sociologist*. They did not rule out use of violence for the cause. When Shyamji had to leave London, Savarkar took over the Centre's activities with Dhingra as his close associate.

[On July 1, 1909, Dhingra fired a fatal shot at Sir Curzon Wylie at a function at the Imperial Institute in London "in humble protest against the inhuman transportation and hangings of Indian youth." (Reference was to the events in India—1905 to 1909).

[Dhingra was hanged in the murder case. Savarkar was arrested and sent back to stand trial in the Nasik Conspiracy Case. He made an unsuccessful attempt at Marsilles to escape through the ship's port-hole, and was then transported for life. Hardayal moved over to the U. S. A. to lead the Ghadar Party. —Eds.]

O Indian princes, we ask you to think solemnly and deeply upon these words. Choose as you will and you will reap what you sow. Choose whether you shall be the first of the nation's fathers or the last of nation's tyrants.

p. 196 *Indian Unrest*
"Choose O' Princes"

Untouchables : †*†

From the political point of view the conversion of so many millions of the population of India to the faith of their rulers would open the prospects of such moments that I need not expatiate upon them.

P. 184 †*†

Page 280 (137)

*★*HATYA NOY JAGNA

Tempted by gold, some native devils in form of men, the disgrace of India — the police — arrested

†*†[These are the concluding comments of author, Valentine Chirol at the end of Ch. XIV—'The Depressed Castes'—of his book page 184. He was dealing with the question whether British/rulers should "take in hand" the elevation of the depressed castes. . . . —Eds.]

★[This long extract has been reproduced from pp. 341-342—the Notes section of Valentine Chirol's book *Indian Unrest* (Macmillan and Co., London, 1910). It follows the main caption : *THE "REMOVAL OF INFORMERS"* with the following comment by the author :

"Shortly after the murder of Shams-ul-Alam, the following Appeal" was printed and issued in Calcutta with reference to the 'removal of informers'—(Then follows the extract under the caption/sub-captions) :

Hatya Noy Jagna (Not Murder but Sacrifice)
Cash price : the head of a European or the heads of two informers.

50th issue, Calcutta, Sunday 8th Chaitra, 1316]

[This Note (no. 8) refers to some incidents mentioned on page 97 of the book—incidents of violence, bomb explosions and attacks on (or attempts on the life of) government dignitaries, police officers and informers. →

those great men Birendra Ghose*†* and others who worked for the freedom of their country by sacrificing their interests and dedicating their lives in the performance of the sacred ceremony of 'Jagna', (यज्ञ), preparing bombs. The greatest of these devils in human form, Ashutosh Bishwas*†† began to pave for these heroes the way to the gallows. Bravo Charu! (the murderer of Biswas)*††* all honour to your parents. To glorify them, to show the highest degree of courage, disregarding the paltry short span of life, you removed the figure of that monster from the world. Not long ago, the Whites, by force and trick, filched India from Indians (*in the original, text, the Mohammedans*—Eds). That mean wretch Shamas-ul-Alam ††† who espoused the cause of

→ [Bengal (and most of the country) was then seething with anger and revolt in the wake of the Partition of Bengal, and the launching of the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. Among other things, four attempts had been made on the life of the Lt. Governor of Bengal (as mentioned by Chirol).]

† [Bindra Ghose—Barendra Ghose in the original—was involved and convicted in the Alipore Conspiracy Case (May 1909). Younger brother of Aurobindo, he was a leader of the Maniktala group of revolutionaries active during the Swadeshi movement, with their periodical *Yugantra* exhorting the youth to action. —Eds]

*†††[As mentioned by Chirol, 'on February 10 1909, Mr. Ashutosh Biswas the Public Prosecutor and a Hindu of high character and position, was shot dead outside the Alipur Police Court...' His overzealous, high-handed and unfair ways as a prosecutor drew the anger of the revolutionary youth. —Eds]

† [Charu Chandra Guha, a daring teen-ager (though handi capped from birth, being without his right palm and fingers) who shot prosecutor Bishwas dead from close range, because, as Charu later confessed 'he was an enemy of the country.' He was hanged in the Alipore Central Jail on March 10, 1909. —Eds]

††† [In the words of Chirol, Shamas-ul-Alam was "a Mohamedan Inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department in the High Court itself of Calcutta" who was gunned down on January 24, 1910, by young Birendra Nath Datta (a 19 year old who was caught and executed on February 21, 1910). —Eds.]

Alamgir Padsha, who put a stain on the name of his forefathers for the sake of gold — today you have removed that fiend from the sacred soil of India. From Nuren Gossain*†† to Talit Chakravarti, all turned approvers through the machinations of that fiendish wizard Shamas-ul-Alam and by his torture. Had you not removed that ally of monsters, could there be any hope for India?

Many have raised the cry that to rebel is a great sin. But what is rebellion? Is there anything in India to rebel against? Can a Fering hee be recognised as the King of India, whose very touch, whose mere shadow compels Hindus to purify themselves?

These are merely Western Robbers looting India. . . Extirpate them, ye good sons of India! where ever you find them, without mercy, and with them their spies and secret agents. Last year, 19 lakhs of men died of fever, small pox, cholera, plague and other diseases in Bengal alone. Think yourself fortunate that you were not counted amongst those, but remember that plague and cholera may attack you tomorrow, and is it not better for you to die as heroes?

When God has so ordained, think ye not that at this auspicious moment, it is the duty of every good son of India to slay these white enemies? Do not allow yourselves Page 282 (128) to die of plague and cholera, thus polluting the sacred soil of the Mother India. Our *Shastras* are our guide for discriminating between virtue and vice. Our *Shastras* repeatedly tell us that the killing of these white fiends and of their aiders and abettors is equal to a great ceremonial sacrifice

*†† [Narendranath Gossain had turned approver in the Bomb Case following an attack aimed at Mr Kingsford, the Magistrate of Muzaffarpur, when Mrs and Miss Kennedy fell victims (April 30, 1908) Young Khudiram Bose had then made a brave confession and paid for his deed with his life, thus to become a popular hero and martyr for the resurgent youth Naren Gossain or Narendranath Gossain was shot dead by two co-accused 'anailal Datta and Satyendranath Bose on August 31, 1908. —Eds.]

(Aswamedh Yagna). Come, one and all ! Let us offer our sacrifice before the alter in chorus, and pray that in this ceremony all white serpents may perish in its flames as the vipers perished in the serpents slaying ceremony of *Jamajay-Yagna*. Keep in mind that it is not murder but *Jagna*—a sacrificial rite.

(p. 342, Notes)

I. U. ††

“Total electors in India 62,00,000 viz. 2%, $\frac{3}{4}$ % of the total population throughout India under direct British administration, excluding the areas to which the 1919 Act was not to be applied.”

194.

I. O. N. **

Page 283 (140)

India Old and New : Chirol V. **

“The British people will have to beware that if they do not want to do justice, it will be the bounden duty of every Indian to destroy the Empire.”

Mahatmaji (Nagpur Congress)

191 **

Rural and Urban Question :

Some official ingenuity had been displayed in grouping remote towns together without any regard for geography, in order to prevent townsmen undesir-

††[As mentioned, this long extract is from the book by Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (Notes—p. 342). —Eds.]

**[Reference may be to pp. 194 & 191 of *India Old and New*, also by Valentine Chirol. —Eds.]

ably addicted to advanced political view from standing as candidates for the rural constituencies in which many of the smaller towns would otherwise have been naturally merged. This was a last effort based on the old belief that the population of the Punjab could be divided into goats and sheep, the goats being the ‘disloyal’ townsmen and the sheep being the ‘loyal’ peasantry.

†

★ Khalsa College was
opened in 1892 ★

Page 284 (141)

★ India as I Knew It ! *†

“Truly the path of a ‘Mahatma’ is difficult, and it is not surprising that Gandhi has recently tried to repudiate the title — and its responsibilities. His influence in India is steadily waning, but his asectic pose and the vague impracticable Tolstoyan theories which he so skilfully enunciates as great moral truths, seem to have deluded many well-meaning but weak-minded people in sentimental England and some even in logical France, who are on the look out for a new light from the East.”

P. 65. *†

†[Source not mentioned; could be from *India Old & New*. —Eds.]

★[Noted in a slanting manner in the margin at the bottom of the page. —Eds.]

★[Written a cross the margin. Eds.]

*†[Book by Sir Michael O'Dwyer—*India as I Knew it* : 1885-1923. (London—Macmillan 1925/28—Indian reprint—Mittal Publications Delhi. 1988) O'Dwyer was Lt Governor, Punjab, during the years of the First World War, when he mobilised ‘support’ for the war effort and recruited soldiers

★ Informer: **†

The failure of the authorities in that case to conceal and protect the informer (or James Carey who betrayed the Invincible gang of the revolutionaries and due to whose evidence Brady, Fitzherbert and Mullen were hanged for the Phoenix Park double ††murder, i. e. of Chief and Under-Secretaries. The informer was shot dead on board at Durban by a young revolutionary, O'Donnell) even though his assassin was brought to justice, was I believe, one of chief reasons why the supply of that contemptible *but useful class, previously so common in Irish Conspiracies, ran dry at the source. As Licut. Governor of Punjab, before and during the Great War, I had to deal with many revolutionary conspiracies, in unravelling which the genus informer played a considerable role, and our precautions were so thorough that not in a single case did an informer come to any injury. **†

(Continued) →

from Punjab through often coercive methods, and who was also there when the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre took place. He was known and disliked for his 'Jabardust' or strong and imperious ways. Even a moderate leader like Annie Besant was forced to condemn (in 1912) the 'harsh and oppressive rule of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, his press-gang methods of recruitment, his forced war-loans and his cruel persecution of all political leaders'. His book was a justification or vindication of his conduct and of other authorities or British rulers. —Eds.]

★ **† [In this extract, O'Dwyer drew attention to a parallel situation from the annals of the Irish revolutionary movement, and to his own role in dealing with Punjab revolutionaries.

†† [Phoenix Park Murders & other references relate to the well-known activities of the Irish Revolutionaries. The brave and daring deed of Patrick Donnell who had shot dead James Carey, the approver in Phoenix Park murders' case was much admired in India and emulated by young Bengali revolutionaries. —Eds.]

*[Underlined as in the Notebook. Eds.]

Page 285 (142)

One can imagine how thoroughly the Indian conspirator, with his low cunning, abnormal vanity, inborn aptitude for intrigue, and capacity for glossing over unpleasant facts, was at home in this atmosphere.

P. 187 *†

India as I Knew It

★ Arya Samaj :

In fact the Arya Samaj is a nationalist revival against Western influence; it urges its followers in the *Satyarth Prakash*, the authoritative work of Dayanand, who was the founder of the sect, to go back to the *Vedas*, and to seek the golden future in the imaginary golden past of the Aryas. The *Satyarth Prakash* also contains arguments against non-Hindu rule, and a leading organ of the sect, a few years ago, claimed Dayanand as the real author of the doctrine of *Swaraj*.

However, the Arya Samaj in 1907, thought it wise to publish a resolution to the effect that as mischievous people here and there spread rumours hostile to them, the organisation in reiterating its old creed, declared that it had no connection of any kind with any political body or with any political agitation in any shape. While accepting this declaration as disassociating the Samaj as a body from extremist politics, it should be noted in fairness to the orthodox Hindus that while the Samaj does not include perhaps more than 5% of the Hindu population of the Punjab, an enormous proportion of the Hindus convicted of sedition and other political offences from 1907 down to the present day are members of the Samaj.

P. 184/ Ibid *†

*† [See notes on pp. 133-134. The extract shows the bias of the author, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. —Eds.]

★ [Caption written diagonally across the margin. —Eds.]

Statistical Figures About India :

In England and Wales 4/5 of people live in towns.

Standard of urban life begins when 1000 people live together. Only then Municipal drainage, lighting and water supply can be organised	}	India (British)
		Out of total
		244000,000
		<u>226000,000</u>
		live in villages.

England—In Normal times gives to Industry 58% of people to Industry 8% to Agriculture.

India gives : 71% to Agriculture 12% to Industry 5% to Trade 2% to Domestic Service 1½% to independent Professions 1½% to Govt. Service, including Army.

—In whole of India, 226 millions out of 315 millions are supported by soil.

—208 millions out of them live or depend directly upon agriculture.

(Montford Report) **††

**†† [Montford Report—on Indian constitutional reforms, so-called because of the joint authorship of Secretary of State, Montague, and Governor-General Chelmsford. Report came out on July 8, 1918. (Contd.)→

Total area —1,800,000 square miles ***†† 20 times of Great Britain —700,000 square miles, or more than 1/3 (rd), are under States' control. Indian States are 600 in number. —Burma is greater than France. Madras and Bombay are greater than Italy separately.

Total population of India (1921 census)— 318,942,000 i. e. 1/5th of the whole human race. —247,000,000 are in British India and 71,900,000 in States.

2½ million persons were literate in English. —16 in every thousand males and 2 in every thousand females.

Total Number of Vernaculars is 222 Total Number of Villages 500,000.

***††(Contd.)→[These Statistics may also be from Montford Report. Shortly after Mr. Edwin Montague, a former Under-Secretary of State for India, had made a scathing criticism of the system of Government in India on 12 July, 1917, he was appointed the Secretary of State (in place of Mr. Austen Chamberlain. In that capacity, Montague made his historic announcement (on 20 August, 1917) "about increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration, ..." with a view to "progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India..." Lord Chelmsford was then the Governor General in India (1916 to 1921). (Also see An Indian Diary by E.S. Montague (Hienemann, London, 1930.) —Eds.]

Page 288 (145)

Suez Canal Opened in 1869 *

Total Export of India at that time was :

Rs. 80 crores = £ 80,000,000

1926-27 and preceding two years, the average was :

Rs. 350 crores i. e. about £ 262,500,000

Total population = 319 millions, out of which
32½ million

i. e. 10.2% live in towns and cities (urban)

while in England the percentage is

79%

And the most difficult part of the task will be to
instil into the minds of the slum dwellers themselves
the desire for something better.

pp. 22 *†††

Simon Report

*[Source of the data not known. —Eds.]

*†††[Simon Report: Report of the Indian Statutory Commission
(London, 1930.)

The Commission was set up on November 8, 1927 by the
British Cabinet to enquire into the working of the 1919
Reforms under a provision of the Government of India Act,
1919. The seven-member Commission had no Indian repre-
sentative, which became the first issue and rallying point for
widespread protests in India, where-ever the Commission
went. The Commission's arrival in Bombay on February 3,
1928 was greeted with a country-wide *hartal*; and the tempo
of protests was kept up throughout its visit. (We have
seen already how the protest demonstration at Lahore
Railway Station led to a brutal lathi-charge injuring Lala
Lajpat Rai, leading to his demise soon after, which inci-
dents prompted young revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and
his colleagues to resort to retaliatory action.) —Eds]

(There is no entry on
Page No. 289 to Page 303.)

Page 304 *†*

Initials of BHAGAT SINGH

Dated : 12.9.1929

† [Last page of the Notebook has Bhagat Singh's
initials with this date (as did the first page) by way of
acknowledging the supply/receipt of the notebook. The
number of pages mentioned on the top (first page) was 404.
Here we have only 304 pages (as numbered with a rubber
stamp). There is no indication or account of the remaining
100 pages. Were they taken away or used for some other
purpose? When was the numbering with rubber stamp
done? Also, as we can see, Bhagat Singh recorded his
notes only on 145 pages with a few gaps. —Eds]

Editor's Note

The sudden and abrupt manner in which these Notes end with apparent gaps or breaks in the sequence (or jumps from one text or subject to another) may leave the readers in a state of suspended expectation, and perhaps with feelings of emptiness and pain. At the end of it all, several questions remain unanswered.

Most of all, to what purpose was Bhagat Singh keeping this Notebook and jotting in it extracts and quotable quotes from the various books he was able to read? What was he seeking, after all? What was he trying to communicate through the notes either to his contemporaries or to his successors—to his invisible but potential audiences?

There may arise some more pertinent questions. What were his ideals? His goals and objectives? His methods and strategies? What were Bhagat Singh and his valiant comrades trying to do?

*To find some plausible answers to these and related questions, we are adding two annexures to this compilation. One, a short monograph on **Bhagat Singh—the Man and his Ideology** by Dr. Kamlesh Mohan, a Punjab University scholar, and the second, a recollection by his colleague and comrade-in-arm, Shiv Verma, the Preface and the First Chapter of his edited volume : **Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh** We earnestly hope that these two supplements will help place the life, work and writings of Bhagat Singh and his companions in their proper 'revolutionary' perspective, and also throw some light on the kind of total and comprehensive revolution they sought to bring about.*

As Shri Shiv Verma has mentioned in his Preface, Bhagat Singh had managed to write at least four books during his last, endless days in the prison. The manuscripts could be smuggled out of the jail; but these were unfortunately lost (during the 1942 Movement). The four books were :

- 1. The Ideal of Socialism**
- 2. Autobiography**
- 3. History of Revolutionary Movement India**
- and 4. At the Door of Death*

Some other writers have given similar or slightly different titles in Hindi.

*We have some justification to believe that perhaps some of these Notes were by way of collecting preparatory material for the books he began writing. We also hope that he could use some of these for necessary references in his four manuscripts. In any case, these Notes would have served the background of his writings in the jail. Since the four manuscripts are now lost, these Notes (now compiled in **A Martyr's Notebook**) may be the only available substitutes we have.*

Bhupendra Hooja

Bhagat Singh—
The Man and His Ideology

Dr. Kamlesh Mohan

This is a reprint of a short monograph by Dr. Kamlesh Mohan (University of Punjab, Chandigarh) published by the Director of Information and Public Relations, Punjab.

—Editor

Because of the obvious but unfortunate gaps in the Notebook kept by Bhagat Singh in his last prison days, and because many other notes and writings of Bhagat Singh have since been lost due to certain unfortunate circumstances—as mentioned by his surviving colleagues, Shiv Verma and others—we think that it would be useful and helpful to the readers if we add to the Martyr's Notebook some annexures which may help fill in the gaps and place the Notebook in a better and more comprehensible ideological context.

It was nice of Dr. Kamlesh Mohan to have allowed us to use the monograph when we first approached her for some relevant material about Bhagat Singh and his times. Except for a slight editing of her Preface and the Foreword by Professor S. S. Bal, we are reproducing the monograph without any change.

—Bhupendra Hooja
(Editor)

[Also see Dr. Kamlesh Mohan's book : "Militant Nationalism in the Punjab" (1985)—Manohar Publications, New Delhi, for a more detailed appreciation. —Eds.]

Preface

The story of Bhagat Singh held a great fascination for me even as a school-student. With the passage of time, this feeling of hero-worship turned into an obsession for understanding his concept of revolution, strategy and his fervent patriotism. This monograph, in a way, is my tribute to Bhagat Singh's ideological contribution to the Indian Freedom Struggle.

Bhagat Singh's message, perhaps, was never more relevant than in the mind-boggling present situation which is a welter of anxiety, fear, suspicion, frustration and hope. By elucidating his ideology in this monograph, I have tried to answer a few questions and discount wrong impressions about political culture and ideology of the people of Punjab, particularly its youth leadership in 1920s. One such recurring question is regarding the contribution of Punjabis to the Indian Freedom Struggle. It reflects a certain amount of cynicism in view of the present 'gun totting' spree. I seek to highlight the intellectual aspect of the Punjab's contribution to the growth of political culture in India which owed a considerable debt to the Marxist ideology. Bhagat Singh was one of the pioneer exponents of this trend in India. It shows that Punjabis were not mere believers in brawn and the muscle culture.

This monograph also seeks to discount the wide-spread impression that Punjab has a record of chronic communalism. Very few of us seem to remember the Punjabi heritage of composite culture signifying a harmonious blend of the beliefs, ideologies and life-styles of a variety of people—Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

Bhagat Singh's ideology underlines this breadth of cultural vision of socio-religious leaders. But as a progressive intellectual he advocated the urgent need of detaching religion from politics so that Indians would learn to be rational and scientific in thinking.

It shall give me a great sense of fulfilment if this monograph reaches the hands of youth particularly students who will play a crucial role in the resurgence of Punjab today.

Punjab University
Chandigarh.

Kamlesh Mohan

Foreword

Bhagat Singh was not only one of India's greatest freedom fighters, but also one of its early socialist thinkers and ideologues. Bhagat Singh chose to sacrifice his life at the very young age of 23, so that India may live. In his short but meaningful life-span, he had evolved his political ideology and practice. Bhagat Singh had aroused so much admiration and love by his courage, self-sacrifice and patriotism and heroic actions as compelled Mahatma Gandhi to acknowledge the growth of "Bhagat Singh cult" in 1931.

It is a widespread impression that the death-defying and patriotic actions like Saunders' murder and Assembly Bomb Explosion of Bhagat Singh and his comrades had caught the fancy of contemporary writers, radical Congress leaders and the Indian youth. But 'terrorism'—official British label—cannot be an adequate explanation of either their motives or their ideology. Bhagat Singh, the most articulate ideologue of the Punjab revolutionaries in 1920s, disavowed complete reliance on bombs and pistols. His powerful intellect and his strong involvement with the sorrows and sufferings of the common man helped him to see the limitations of violence and terrorism. Bhagat Singh had great faith in the immortality of ideas. A realist to the core, he was "trying to stand like a man with an erect head to the last, even on the gallows". This slim monograph '*Bhagat Singh—The Man and His Ideology*', offers insight into his ideas, beliefs and strategy of fight against the British imperialism and capitalism in India.

In view of the resurgence of the youthful spirit and idealism in India today, Bhagat Singh's views on nationalism, secularism and unifying role of language assume great significance. India is not alone in expressing its faith in the leadership of youth. By proclaiming 1985 as the Year of the Youth, the world community has also hailed the potentialities of the youth for constructing a new social, economic, and political world. In the midst of the present welter of hopes and anxiety, this publications by Dr. Kamlesh is most timely.

S. S. Bal

Bhagat Singh—

The Man and His Ideology

Bhagat Singh has become a legend and a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice and patriotism for Indians. His heroic 'actions' as a freedom fighter won him love and respect of his countrymen. Bhagat Singh's immense popularity as a hero of the Indian Youth then and even now, is in stark contrast with the scant awareness of his ideology. His socialist ideas hardly drew any notice and evoked much less appreciation and understanding among his contemporaries and his so-called admirers today. As a result, obscurantists, reactionaries and communalists have misrepresented and exploited Bhagat Singh's ideas for promoting their own political interests and ideology. In this monograph, I seek to put his revolutionary 'actions' usually labelled as 'individual terrorism' and his concept of the revolutionary process, its ideals and goals in a proper perspective.

II

Innumerable songs and legends grew up about Bhagat Singh—his boyhood and his precocious patriotism. Feelings of national love and service in young Bhagat Singh were the natural result of the revolutionary traditions of his family. Born on 26 September, 1907, the child was called 'Bhaganwala' by his grandmother, because the news of release of his uncle Ajit Singh from Mandalay jail and his father Kishan Singh on bail from the Central Jail, Lahore, had coincided with Bhagat Singh's birth. Bhagat Singh spent his childhood in an atmosphere surcharged with excitement, caused by frequent discussions on plans for liberating India and activities of the Indian patriots at home and abroad. Instead of fairy tales, he was nurtured upon stories of Kuka Movement and the agrarian and political agitation of 1907-08 in Punjab and the consequent deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh.¹ The story of Ghadrite rebellion (1913-1914), notably the heroic efforts of Rash Behari Bose and Sachindra Sanyal, made a lasting impact on Bhagat Singh's receptive mind. The nineteen year old Ghadr martyr Kartar Singh Sarabha's death-defying courage, fearlessness and burning hatred against the British raj remained his model of a patriot.²

The bravery and sacrifice made by the Babbar Akalis had moved him deeply.³ Although Bhagat Singh was bewitched by the 'romance of violent methods', he sensed that the Ghadrite and the Babbar Akali campaigns for the elimination of toadies had potential for mischief and distortion of revolutionary struggle.⁴ However, in the early stages of his intellectual development, Bhagat Singh remained under the spell of the terrorist movement in Bengal, Maharashtra and in Europe.

Bhagat Singh's intellectual development was considerably influenced by the cultural heritage of Punjab, which was interpreted in terms of nationalist and socialist goals. The message and sacrifices of the Sike Gurus had three-fold significance for him.⁶ Firstly, he believed that the language and literature of Punjab could serve as a powerful instrument for creating national consciousness, solidarity and desire for social equality. Poetic utterances of the Sikh Gurus—devotional or war songs—were a source of courage and confidence. Actually, conscious of the role of language and literature in generating political consciousness, Bhagat Singh urged the intelligentsia of the Punjab to develop and enrich Indian languages and also to solve their own language problem without losing time. In order to keep this issue alive in the consciousness of the people, he wrote a number of articles in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. Secondly, Guru Teg Bhadur's teachings of the uplift and protection of the down-trodden as the chief duty of the Sikhs appealed to Bhagat Singh's humanitarian and socialist consciousness. Thirdly, Bhagat Singh and his comrades found in Guru Gobind Singh's invocation to the sword and militarisation of the Sikh community a meaningful ideological support in their stipulated armed struggle against the tyrannical British rule.

A number of epoch-making events in the contemporary world had also aroused hope and inspired a new confidence among the youth. The Japanese victory against Russia in 1905, and then the thunderclap message of the Bolshevik Revolution had found a ready appeal in the hearts of radical minded students of the National College, Lahore such as Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Yashpal and others. The glorious success of Russia, the young socialist state, in its struggle and survival against internal odds and external enemies impressed the young revolutionaries. Jogesh Chander Chatterjee referred to the gradually increasing interest in the Soviet Union, shown by the revolutionaries, as early as 1924.⁸ The Marxist writings and

literature on the Soviet Union had captured the imagination of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and others so much that they began to regard the Soviet Union as the State which was nearest to their idea.⁹ In this connection, Ajoy Ghosh observed, "Socialist literature was trickling in, the triumph of the November Revolution, the consolidation of the Socialist Regime in Russia and more than any thing else, the aid given by the Soviet power attracted us towards the ideas and principles it embodied".¹⁰ Besides, the November Revolution also attracted members from the left wing of the Indian National Congress, the terrorist organisations and parties all over India. So far, its revolutionary ideals were fermenting in the minds of the idealists and the eager admirers of the Soviet Union, which were later to become the basic articles of Bhagat Singh's creed and ideology.

In 1921, Bhagat Singh's brief association with the Indian National Congress as a volunteer in the Non-Cooperation movement (1920-22) also impelled him to search for effective alternative to the Gandhian method and ideology of struggle. A number of young patriots such as Jogesh Chander Chatterjee, Chander Shekhar Azad, Jatinder Nath Das, Shiv Verma and Bhagat Singh had plunged into the Non-Cooperation movement with hope and passion. On account of violence at Chaura Chauri on 5 February 1922, Gandhi decided to suspend the movement. All of them were disillusioned by its sudden withdrawal at a time when it was gaining momentum. Desperate to liberate India and to save their countrymen from traumatic episodes like Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and humiliations of martial law in 1919, they groped for a more efficacious form of struggle. In the heat of moment, these impatient young patriots including Bhagat Singh stumbled upon revolutionary terrorism as an alternative. Desire for self-sacrifice underlay their choice. Later on, Bhagat Singh, who assumed the role of their spokesman, helped his associates to perceive the limitations of the method of terrorism, and potency of socialism as a weapon of political national and economic change.

The spread of the ideas of scientific socialism in early 1920s, leading to the formation of the early communist groups in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Lahore,¹¹ went a long way in enlarging the framework of Bhagat Singh's consciousness. In the course of his efforts to establish rapport with these small communist groups, Bhagat Singh came into contact with Sohan Singh Josh, one of the founders of Workers' and Peasants' Party in Punjab in April 1926.¹² In fact, their intellectual interaction gave a new orienta-

tion to the youth movement in this region. It weakened the spell of revolutionary terrorism over the minds of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Chander Shekhar Azad, who turned to Marxism for guidance.

III

A great deal of intensive study of Socialism became an important factor in the development of Bhagat Singh's ideology. He made a serious study of books on the theories of socialism, economics and revolution. J. N. Sanyal, a close associate of Bhagat Singh in the revolutionary struggle and the latter's first biographer, regarded him as "an extremely well-read man".¹³

Among the books that influenced him the most, Bakunin's *The God and the State* claimed the first place and Kropotkin's *Memoirs* came next.¹⁴ The title page of Bakunin's book carried the statement "If God existed, it will be necessary to abolish him". Obviously, Bhagat Singh had imbibed the idea of abolishing God from Bakunin and it fitted in well with his conscious efforts for a scientific understanding of the problems of the Indian revolution.¹⁵

The impact of Bakunin's ideas was prominently reflected in Bhagat Singh's earlier half-baked views regarding the use of violence, especially, individual terrorism, in bringing about political change.¹⁶ Michael Collins, the leading strategist of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), was known to have developed the use of selective terror against the security system of the British imperialists. Since Bhagat Singh had studied the history of Irish Revolution, he might have been influenced by the tactics employed by the IRA.

The idea of "propaganda by deed", expounded by Bakunin and later developed by Kropotkin, formed a part of the strategy of Bhagat Singh and his associates. In spite of his ambivalent attitude towards violence, Kropotkin justified its use to "awaken the masses".¹⁷ Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev perceived the value of the anarchist method which they described as "propaganda by deed". However, the ideal of self-sacrifice remained their first priority.

In the later phase of his intellectual development, however, ideas of Lenin and Trotsky acquired such powerful hold over Bhagat Singh and his comrades that they disavowed their faith in and reliance on terrorism and emphasised the need for political awakening and struggle by the masses.¹⁸

Bhagat Singh felt upset by the vicious role played by the religious and communal leaders, who were ready instruments for implementing the British policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Fully aware of the resentment of the radical youth against the obstructions put by religion in the growth of national movement, he was keen to detach the revolutionary creed from it. Formerly, *Ganapati* in the South and *Kali* in Bengal were the custodians of the faith and conscience-keepers of the revolutionaries. Manmath Nath Gupta aptly remarked, "We see that in the revolutionary movement, Khudi Ram went to the gallows with a copy of the *Gita* slung across his neck in 1909, and a Muslim, Ashfaqulla going to the gallows in 1927 with a copy of the *Quran* slung in the same manner".¹⁹ Bhagat Singh understood their need for dependence upon religion and mysticism for acquiring spiritual strength to overcome personal temptation, depression and to sacrifice their physical comforts, joys of family ties and even life. But these artificial spiritual crutches were no longer necessary for those who understood the nature of their duty towards their country and saw hazards in the path of freedom fighters. As a convict in the Dushehra Bomb Case 1926, Bhagat Singh refused to seek solace in prayer and God's will, when his rationalism and courage were put to test. As a result, he realised that nothing less than a total commitment to the cause of revolution could win freedom for India.²⁰ Sohan Singh Josh, a senior revolutionary, also endorsed Bhagat Singh's views about religion, nationalism and revolution.²¹

IV

Bhagat Singh's conscious attempts at independent thinking and scientific analysis eventually helped him to see the existing political, social and economic conditions in a broader perspective. In his view, the gloomy situation created by the orgy of communal violence, ineffective Swarajist policy of parliamentary politics in 1920's, constructive programme of the non-changers and economic exploitation by the native capitalists could be retrieved by selfless and single-minded devotion to the task of organising scattered nationalist forces and individuals. One such step in this direction was the organisation of the youth bodies throughout India. In March 1926, the first branch of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was founded at Lahore, with the collective efforts of Bhagat Singh Sukhdev, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Comrade Ramkishan.²² Apart from the radical youth, its members included a few notable personalities like Saifud-din Kitchlew, Pindi Dass, the poet Lal Chand 'Falak' and Dr. Satypal. Bhagat Singh was not only the most dynamic member of the Sabha, but also its leader and ideologue.

What was the object of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Lahore? It aspired to establish a completely independent republic of labourers and peasants throughout India. Its object was to create a united nation by inspiring the feelings of patriotism and spirit of sacrifice among Indians. It tried to inculcate a spirit of general toleration in matters of religion and a secular outlook.²³ Along with his comrades, Bhagat Singh worked feverishly to launch a vigorous youth movement throughout the country by establishing the network of the Naujawan Bharat Sabhas at tehsil, district and provincial levels and constituting a central organisation.²⁴

As a result of their efforts, the Naujawan Bharat Sabha established its branches not only in the Punjab, but also in Bombay, Bengal, Central Provinces and Rajputana. In the Punjab itself, the Sabha had its branches at Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Montgomery, Morinda, Multan, Telagang (District Attock), Sargodha and Sialkot.²⁴ Bhagat Singh's dream of organising a national organisation of the radical-minded patriots came true with the organisation of All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha with its head-quarters at Delhi in 1930.

The Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha created immense political awakening and inspired people with the ideals of patriotism and self-sacrifice through its activities. One such activity was the showing of magic lantern slides, accompanied by a narration of the heroic deeds of Kartar Singh Sarabha (Ghadr hero), Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah and other Kakori martyrs.²⁵ The Sabha adopted the effective practice of celebrating various important days of national significance such as the 'Kakori Martyr's Day', 'Kartar Singh Sarabha Day', 'Naujawan Sufferers Day', 'May Day', and 'Jalianwala Bagh Day'.²⁶ Under the watchful eye of Bhagat Singh, the Sabha started a Tract Society in order to reinforce its campaign for the aims and ideals of the youth movement. For a wider circulation, it published low-priced pamphlets which lashed at the evils of British rule, and superstitions and ignorance of the people. Among its publications were included *Why Do We Want Swaraj?*, *Naujawanon Se Do Do Baten*, *Bharat Mata Ke Darshan* and many other titles.²⁷ Organisation of frequent public meetings and demonstrations to publicise vital national issues were the other activities of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha.

Under the leadership of Bhagat Singh, the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha had succeeded in mobilising the Indian youth to some extent. However, he felt the urgency of establishing a

new association on inter-provincial basis in order to coordinate plans and activities of the patriotic youngmen from Punjab, U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan and Bengal. With the active help of Chander Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh succeeded in rallying the individuals of identical political views at Kotla Feroz Shah, Delhi, on 8-9 September, 1928. Prominent among them were Sukhdev, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Brahm Dutt, Surinder Pandey, Jatinder Nath Das, Mahabir Singh, Kundan Lal Gupta, Jaidev Kapoor, Phonindra Nath Ghosh and Manmohan Banerjee.²⁸ They decided to reorganise the Hindustan Republican Association formed by Sachindra Nath Sanyal in 1924.²⁹ With a view to integrating nationalistic and socialistic goals, Bhagat Singh persuaded his associates to rename the Association as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).³⁰ The immediate purpose of the HSRA was to awaken and enthuse Indians, and its ultimate object was to establish an Indian Socialist Republic.

By September, 1928, Bhagat Singh and his band had been able to construct a sound organisational framework for launching their struggle for freedom. In October, when the Simon Commission was scheduled to arrive at Lahore, they got an opportunity to test the efficacy of their organisations—the local Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the HSRA. In collaboration with the Indian National Congress, they took a leading part in preparing and organising the people of Punjab to boycott the Simon Commission appointed to review the fitness of Indians for further reforms and extension of parliamentary democracy. When the Simon Commission arrived at Lahore for its enquiry, it was greeted by the usual 'Go Back Simon' demonstration. The police tried to beat the non-violent procession led by the veteran leader Lala Lajpat Rai,³¹ who was injured and later died. On 17 December, 1928, John Poyntz Saunders (Assistant Superintendent of Police, responsible for lathi-charge) was shot dead by Bhagat Singh,³² the ideological leader of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha and a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Along with his associates Rajguru and Azad, Bhagat Singh managed to escape to Calcutta. The act of 'murdering' Saunders, the first shot in the battle between imperialism and nationalism, had invested them with the halo of heroism. However noble was their motive of vindicating national honour, they regretted the shedding of human blood.³³

In order to carry on the work of arousing the masses through daring actions of individual heroism and sacrifice, the HSRA decided to emerge from the hiding. On 8 April, 1929,

Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt hurled bombs from the visitors' gallery at the government benches (in the Central Assembly). Soon after, copies of the pink leaflet, which proclaimed their motives, were showered. The bombs exploded noisily without causing much harm. Bhagat Singh and Dutt did not want to kill any one, but proposed "to make the deaf hear".³⁴ They had lodged their protest against the legislation of Trade Disputes Bill and Public Safety Amendment Bill, which would enable the executive to suppress all public activity. Instead of fleeing away, they owned their responsibility, and offered themselves to be arrested. Their purpose was to use the court as a forum for explaining their ideology. Hereafter, the British Government launched a massive hunt to arrest the other revolutionaries. Bhagat Singh and his associates were tried under the Lahore Conspiracy Case (1929-31) which opened on 10 July, 1929.³⁵

V

The story of Bhagat Singh's intellectual endeavour and his leading role in the establishment and activities of the Punjab Naujwan Bharat Sabha and the HSRA show that he had formulated a well-defined ideology. In fact, his foremost contribution was as an ideologue. His ideas about the nature of freedom struggle and his vision of social, political and economic order in independent India, deserve analysis.

Bhagat Singh and his companions cherished the dream of liberating India through an armed revolution and transforming the Indian society through mass-awakening and movement. It was Bhagat Singh who coined a suitable slogan for revolutionaries — 'Inquilab Zindabad' or 'Long live Revolution'—and it replaced 'Bande Matram' as the nationalist war cry.³⁶ Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt explained the significance of the slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad' in their letter to the Editor of the *Modern Review*.³⁷ They refuted the allegation that this slogan had symbolised anarchy. They conceded that this slogan had been raised by the Russian revolutionaries; the anarchist characters in the novels, *Boston and Oil* by Upton Sinclair had also mouthed this slogan. But revolution for Bhagat Singh and his band was the expression of an intense urge and longing for progress and change and not anarchy. It was regarded as the "inalienable right of mankind". In their Joint Statement, dated 16 June 1929, Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt emphasised :

'Human urge for change and revolution could not be strangled by atrocious measures and cruel suppressions.

Bastille could not crush the French Revolution. The Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian Revolution and the bloody Sundays could not arrest the courage of Irish struggle for Independence. How could then these atrocious measures extinguish the flame of freedom burning bright in human mind.'³⁸

Similarly, the British Government's repressive measures such as the Trade Disputes Bill, and the Public Safety Bill could not suppress revolutionary ideas and longing for freedom.

Bhagat Singh, the most articulate spokesman among his comrades, had also defined the nature of the revolutionary struggle. An extract from the *Manifesto of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association* (1929) elaborated :

'.....Revolution is certainly not (an) unthinking, brutal campaign of murder and incendiarism; it is not a few bombs thrown here and a few shots fired there; neither it is a movement meant to destroy all remnants of civilisation and blow to pieces time-honoured principles of justice and equity. Revolution is not a philosophy of despair or a creed of desperadoes. Revolution may be anti-God, but is certainly not anti-Man. It is a vital living force which is indicative of eternal conflict between the Old and the New, between Life and living Death, between Light and Darkness. There is no concord, no symphony, no rhythm without revolution. 'The music of the spheres' of which poets have sung, would remain an unreality, if a ceaseless revolution were to be eliminated from the space. Revolution is Law, Revolution is Order and Revolution is the Truth.'³⁹

It is obvious that Revolution, radical in its concept, is a challenge to the old order of things, which has outgrown its utility and validity.

Revolution has usually been associated with violence, and the cult of the pistol and the bomb, and the revolutionaries have been called terrorists or anarchists. An analysis of various documents, letters and personal reminiscences reveal that the revolutionaries were not terrorists. As a prominent ideologue of the HSRA, Bhagat Singh argued : "...Terrorism is never the object of revolutionaries, nor do they believe that terrorism alone can bring independence."⁴⁰ The other members also disclaimed that revolution was merely "the cult of the bomb and pistol". In fact,

the aim of the revolutionary party was, as they stated in the words of Lenin, "opposition to all violence". Its aim was to eradicate "injustice, oppression, violence and bloodshed from society".⁴¹

Violence was "physical force applied for committing injustice"⁴² and that was certainly not what the revolutionaries stood for. Bhagat Singh and his band believed that the basis of foreign rule was violence, and they wanted to eradicate it by launching a forceful attack on it. Although they committed violence in the form of murders or bomb-outrages, they never treated it as an end in itself. For them, revolutionary violence performed a cleansing function by removing fear or tyranny, exploitation and religious superstitions from the hearts of the potential votaries of revolution—the youth, the workers and the peasants.⁴³

Bhagat Singh, Yashpal and others differentiated between a terrorist and a revolutionary. Bhagat Singh confessed that he had been a terrorist,⁴⁴ but later on, when his ideas matured, he disavowed complete reliance on bombs and pistols. He believed that bombs and pistols would serve no useful purpose for the cause of revolution, and might prove harmful instead. Bomb explosion might be needed only in very special circumstances.⁴⁵ Hence, the Assembly Bomb Action on 8 April, 1929, was deliberately planned. The *Joint Statement* of Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt offered an illuminating commentary on their motives of throwing bombs in the Assembly Hall on 8 April, 1929 :

"...We dropped the bombs on the floor of the Assembly chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was "to make the deaf hear", and to give the heedless a timely warning."⁴⁶

It can be said that use of loud methods, a part of the creed of Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries, was meant to be used against the foreign rulers, who were insensitive to arguments, appeals and constitutional agitation and responded only to force. Bhagat Singh in his preface to the *Dreamland*—a book of poems by Lala Ram Saran Das—expounded the necessity of a judicious use of violent and non-violent means for building up a socialist society in India.⁴⁷ The revolutionaries never directed their attack against an individual, but against an institution. Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt, in their *Joint Statement* in the Assembly Bomb Case, expressed their dislike for individual terrorism :

"We are next to none in our love for humanity. Far from having any malice against any individual, we hold life sacred beyond words. We are neither perpetrators of dastardly outrages, and therefore, a disgrace to the country, as the pseudo-socialist Dewan Chaman Lal is reported to have described us, nor are we 'Lunatics' as *The Tribune* of Lahore and others would have it believed".⁴⁸

Similarly, the pink leaflets thrown in the Assembly Hall avowed the same abhorrence for bloodshed :

"We are, sorry to admit that we, who attach so 'great sanctity' to human life, who dream of a very glorious future, when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty, have been forced to shed human blood. But the sacrifice of individuals at the altar of the 'Great Revolution' that will bring freedom to all, rendering the exploitation of man by man impossible, is inevitable.

"Long live the Revolution".⁴⁹

Thus, the militant nationalists did not glorify homicide, but were compelled to do so in order to quicken the pace of revolutionary movement and herald the dawn of the new era.

It is true that Bhagat Singh and his comrades were imbued with righteous indignation against injustice—social, economic and political. Their firm determination to end exploitation of mankind and their relentless fight against foreign and native capitalists was softened by their sympathy with the fate of the innocent children of the exploiters. Their critics may call them 'terrorist', but their 'actions' were based on the humanistic principles.

Chaos, a part of the revolutionary process, did not unnerve Bhagat Singh and the other members of the HSRA. But it had certainly a terrifying prospect for the foreign rulers, the bureaucrats, the capitalists and even the middle classes. They were conscious, however, that forces of disorder could not be checkmated if revolution—social, political and economic—did not follow in its natural course. *The Manifesto of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association* (1929) highlighted the views of the young freedom-fighters :

'Without Revolution there is no possibility of enthroning Order, Law and Love in place of Chaos, Legal Vandalism and Hatred which are reigning Supreme today'.

Acutely aware of the anarchic drift in the contemporary Indian society and polity, Bhagat Singh and his associates gave a call to the other nationalists to join hands with them in generating a creative force so that human civilisation could be saved. Anarchy, for them, had a regenerative role in the revolutionary process. The ideologues of the HSRA, particularly Bhagat Singh, no longer believed in the narrow concept of revolution which might sometimes be confused with rebellion. For them, rebellion was not revolution; it might lead to it.⁵¹ He broadened its scope and definition and enriched its content. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt endowed it with social significance when they observed, "By Revolution we mean that present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change."⁵² It was a force for social regeneration and betterment of the political and economic conditions.⁵³

It was evident that Bhagat Singh and his associates had a catholic outlook and regarded radical change in the existing social order indispensable for national liberation. At the ideological level, if not at the practical level, they treated national revolution as a stepping stone to the world federation.⁵⁴

What kind of order would emerge after revolution? An answer to this question showed the extent of Bhagat Singh's understanding of the Marxist and socialist view of society and polity in the future. He envisaged a socialistic pattern of society for the liberated India. Injustice and exploitation would be replaced by liberty, equality and fraternity. *The Philosophy of the Bomb* delineated a bright picture of the future social order :

'...it will usher in a new social order. The revolution will ring the death-knell of capitalism and class distinctions and privileges. It will bring joy and prosperity to the starving millions who are sweating today under the terrible yoke of both foreign and Indian exploitation. It will establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and will for ever banish social parasites from the seat of political power'.⁵⁵

Revolution would usher not only a new social order, but also establish a new co-relation of social, economic and political forces. In the future classless society, there would be sovereignty of the people and "establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat,"⁵⁶ which was considered as the ultimate goal of revolution. In order to realise their dream, Bhagat Singh and his band made efforts to bring about a revolution which would end exploitation of man by man, as the leaflet, circulated after Saunders' 'murder'

on 17 December 1928, proclaimed. Their commitment to socialism was reiterated in the pink leaflet, scattered after the Assembly Bomb 'Action'.⁵⁷ The idea of a socialist society had been floated earlier by the Hindustan Republican Association in the *Revolutionary*, 1925. This pamphlet had suggested a few measures such as nationalisation of railways, other means of transport and communication and of large scale industries such as steel and ship building.⁵⁸ Such stray suggestions, however, don't prove that the leadership of the Hindustan Republican Association had grasped the principles of socialism.

Bhagat Singh, Bhagwati Charan and Bejoy Kumar Sinha had made considerable progress in understanding the theories of Marxism and socialism. They appeared to have grasped the essential fact that socialism as a system was the product of the condition of social existence and social forces.⁵⁹ Starting with this view of the revolutionary process, Bhagat Singh had worked out the role of objective conditions and subjective factors. Writing to Sukhdev, he observed :

"If we had not entered the field, would it have meant that no revolutionary action would have occurred. You are wrong, if you think so. It is true that we helped to a large extent change the (political) atmosphere. At the same time, we are mere products of the necessity of our times. I would even say that the creator of Communism, Marx, was in fact not the creator of this ideology. It was the industrial revolution in Europe which produced many persons of a particular way of thinking. Marx was just one of these men. In his situation, Marx undoubtedly imparted a particular motion to the movement of his times. I and you have not created the socialist or communist ideas in this country. On the other hand, they are the result of the impact on us of our time and circumstances."⁶⁰

Later, Bejoy Kumor Sinha, an associate of Bhagat Singh hailed him as a "crusader for the socialist causes",⁶¹ but he and his comrades retained a marked modesty. In their *Joint Statement*, Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt referred to themselves as "two insignificant units"⁶² whose death at the hands of imperialist exploiters would not kill ideas and crush a spirited nation. None of them claimed to be a revolutionary leader or a pioneer.

Bhagat Singh perceived the close alliance between capitalism and modern imperialism. For him, the British rule in India was "the rule of the foreign capitalists".⁶³ Later, *The*

Philosophy of the Bomb endorsed Bhagat Singh's observations regarding the nature of foreign rule in India. It proclaimed, "There is no crime that British (rule) has not committed in India. Deliberate misrule has reduced us to paupers, has 'bled us white'. As a race and a people we stand dishonoured and outraged".⁶⁴

Bhagat Singh and the other militant nationalists realised that the attack on capitalism had to be two-pronged. Hence, another aspect of their fight against capitalism was an on-slaught on the domestic exploiting classes. It was equally important as the latter was inclined to collaborate with the foreign capitalists in order to ensure its own survival. *The Manifesto of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (1929)* elaborated:

"The position of the Indian proletariat is, today, extremely critical. It has to bear the onslaught of foreign capitalism on the one hand, and the treacherous attack of Indian capitalism on the other; the latter is showing a progressive tendency to join forces with the former."⁶⁵

These views were frequently reiterated in the other pamphlets, published by the HSRA. For example, a pamphlet in Hindi entitled *Hindustan Socialist Prajatantra Sangh* stated bluntly:

"...In fact, British rule is to a great extent same thing as capitalism, and one cannot be banished without expelling the other. . . . It is the belief of the HSRA (the party of Bhagat Singh) that the easiest and the best method of driving out the British Govt. from this country is to establish socialism for which a revolution is indispensable."⁶⁶

Bhagat Singh, in a message from prison, also specified that "The peasants have to liberate themselves not only from foreign yoke, but also from the yoke of landlords and capitalists".⁶⁷

VI

Engaged in the task of radicalising political beliefs and values, Bhagat Singh and his associates articulated their views regarding the social basis of the revolutionary movement and the nature of its leadership. The leadership of HSRA relied on the youth, peasants, labourers and the radical intelligentsia. The older generation of leaders was not explicit about the desired hegemonic role of the working classes. The fact that the Hindustan Republican Association had only stressed the need of organising labourers and peasants, but not of enlisting them as

members, indicated a relatively less awareness of their potentiality as the fighting force against imperialism and capitalism. As early as 1924, the Hindustan Republican Association had chalked out a programme "to start labour and peasant organisations. Suitable men must be engaged on behalf of the Association to organise and control labourers in the different factories, the railways and the coal-fields."⁶⁸

Dissatisfied with these vague suggestions, Bhagat Singh underlined the socialistic stance of the resurrected Association—the HSRA—in September 1928. Addition of a new word "socialist" was meaningful, as it was more expressive of its aims and ideals. As such, interests of labourers and peasants became the core of its programme and it drew its substance from the masses. By emphasising the role of the common people at every stage in the revolutionary struggle, Bhagat Singh had broadened its social basis.

The aims and objects of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha also reflected Bhagat Singh's serious concern with the political problems of the Indian Revolution. As its success depended upon the extensive involvement of the masses, the *Manifesto of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha* stated, "The future programme of preparing the country will begin with the motto: 'Revolution by the masses and for the masses'".⁶⁹ One of the aims and objects of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was to organise labourers and peasants.⁷⁰ Convinced of the need of integrating the nationalistic and socialistic goals, Bhagat Singh and Bhagwati Charan Vohra made an appeal to "Our countrymen—to the youth, to the workers and peasants, to the revolutionary intelligentsia—to come forward and join us in carrying aloft the banner of freedom."⁷¹

In a message from prison in 1931, Bhagat Singh reiterated the urgency of organising labourers and peasants.

Why did the HSRA ideologues count upon the support of the labourers and peasants?⁷² Their hope of carrying on the struggle was pinned on the masses because the capitalists and the upper classes had tended to rally round the foreign imperialists. In theory, Bhagat Singh and the other leaders of the HSRA were clear regarding the social basis of the revolutionary movement. In practice, however, they failed to involve peasants and workers. For example, the branches of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha at the village Morinda and tehsil Jaranwala existed in name only. Of course, the Sabha had tried to stir agitation over the failure of

the wheat harvest, ⁷³ and to support Congress campaign against the Bardoli reassessment. ⁷⁴ But these were of no consequence. In fact, as many revolutionaries, particularly Bhagat Singh, confessed, no practical steps had been taken either to organize peasants and workers or to mobilise their support for the cause of independence. ⁷⁵

The mantle of leadership fell over the shoulders of the youth. Perhaps, it was owing to the fact that the peasants and the workers were then ignorant, dumb and unaware of their potential force. Hence the youth were called upon to awaken, enlighten and enthuse the people. The *Manifesto of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (1929)* made a stirring appeal to the youth :

“The future of India rests with the youths. They are the salt of the earth. Their promptness to suffer, their daring courage and their radiant sacrifice prove that India's future in their hands is perfectly safe. Youths ! ye—soldiers of the Indian Republic, fall in. Don't stand easy, don't let your knees tremble; shake off the paralysing effects of long lethargy. Yours is a noble Mission. Go out into every nook and corner of the country and prepare the ground for future revolution which is sure to come. Respond to the clarion call of duty. Don't vegetate. Grow!Sow the seeds of disgust and hatred against British Imperialism in the fertile minds of your fellow youths. And the seeds shall sprout and there shall grow a jungle of sturdy trees, because you shall water the seeds with your blood. . . .” ⁷⁶

An Appeal to the Young and the Revolution, circulated among members of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, also urged the youth to rise in revolt. ⁷⁷ Obviously, Bhagat Singh's belief in the potentialities of the youth had almost become an integral part of the creed of the militant nationalists who carried on the struggle for national freedom.

'Propaganda by death' and other activities of Bhagat Singh and his comrades were meant to attract the youth of the lower middle class, especially students. Almost the entire membership of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was recruited from the lower middle and poor strata of society. ⁷⁸ The youth were not only the vanguards of revolution but also the precursors of revolution, because they

were engaged in the primary task of preparing the political situation and psychological climate by popularising socialism and revolution. ⁷⁹

Students were regarded as the potential vanguards of the national revolutionary struggle. Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev advised Hans Raj Vohra that efforts should be made to carry on propaganda work openly through the Lahore Students' Union, in order to win the sympathy of the students. ⁸⁰ As a result of their efforts, the HSRA recruited a large number of students, studying either in high schools or colleges of Lahore. Jai Gopal, a student of the Diamond Jubilee Technical Institute, ⁸¹ Pandit Kishori Lal and Prem Dutt, students of 1st year in D.A.V. College, Des Raj, a fourth year student of D.A.V. College, ⁸² Hans Raj, a student of the Forman Christian College, ⁸³ Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev of the National College Lahore, ⁸⁴—all of them were members of the Association. The Lahore Conspiracy Case aroused the sympathy of the public, especially students. In order to mobilise their support for the ongoing revolutionary struggle, Bhagat Singh, Bejoy Kumar Sinha and the other accused filed an application against the general order of the Court regarding the non-admission of students ⁸⁵

Bhagat Singh insisted that the proceedings should be made public, since they had many friends amongst the College students who desired to watch the proceedings. ⁸⁶ His demand was genuine. Actually, a large number of persons, especially college students, daily waited outside the Court for permission to watch the proceedings and raised slogans 'Up with Revolution' and 'Down with Imperialism', and used to court arrest daily. Obviously, Bhagat Singh had succeeded in rousing anti-imperialist sentiments among the youth all over the country.

VII

The ideologues of the HSRA formulated a clear-cut programme of action. Their strategy of the revolutionary struggle had two aspects : armed fight and propaganda. The secret preparation for armed struggle and dissemination of the socialist ideas had to be carried on simultaneously. ⁸⁷ The former included sending of suitable men to foreign countries for training in warfare and manufacture of weapons and ammunition, keeping contact with the revolutionaries in other countries and other similar activities. ⁸⁸ The latter included propaganda by various means : open and secret press, private conversations, public platforms, libraries, system of organised *kathas* and magic lantern slides.

Bhagat Singh familiarised the people with his ideas on revolution and his vision of the future social and economic order by writing articles in the *Pratap*⁹⁰ and the *Kirti*⁹¹. Most of the articles in the "Phansi Number" of the *Chand* had been contributed by Bhagat Singh. He was a prolific writer and wrote a number of books in Jail. Among his writings, the prominent ones were :—(i) *Autobiography* (ii) *The Door to Death* (iii) *The Ideal of Socialism*, and (iv) *The Revolutionary Movement in India*. It is believed that all the manuscripts have been lost, unfortunately.⁹² However, it is evident that Bhagat Singh's ideas grew and developed in the jail, as he had a chance to read a number of books and broaden his out-look.

Bhagat Singh had initiated many of his associates into reading socialist literature. At Lahore, the Dwarka Das Library was a rendezvous for the radical-minded students who had been introduced to the socialist literature by Bhagat Singh. Yashpal was one such eager intellectual.⁹³ Bhagwan Das Mahour, too, regarded Bhagat Singh as his first teacher who awakened his interest in socialism and urged him to read Marx's *Capital* Bakunin's *God and the State* and other books. Bhagat Singh's belief in the dynamic of scientific ideas promoted him to build up a library at Agra,⁹⁴ where the Party Office had been shifted temporarily. Here, the members were constantly urged to read and discuss socialism and other revolutionary ideas.

Lending of literature to students was an essential part of the propagandist work done by the Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the HSRA under the guidance of Bhagat Singh, Bejoy Kumar Sinha and Bhagwati Charan. A number of trustworthy revolutionaries such as Sukhdev and Phonindra Nath Ghosh used this method for locating and enlisting potential national workers. In addition to the histories of freedom movement in European countries, publications of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Hindustan Republican Association, and the HSRA were circulated amongst the youth.⁹⁵ However, it was not a foolproof technique of judging the integrity of a potential recruit. For example, threats or promises of material gain tempted Hans Raj Vohra, Kailashpati, Lalit Kumar Mukherjee and many others to become approvers.

In order to expose British imperialism and to disseminate revolution ideology, Bhagat Singh and his associates also made use of hunger-strikes, petitions and other tactics for obstructing legal proceedings.⁹⁶ Their appeal in the Privy Council, made with a

view to challenge the Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance 1930, was another such tactic. It also sought to postpone the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru till that time when it should have maximum effect. Their hanging on 23 March 1931 justified the political insight of the revolutionaries, especially Bhagat Singh and B. K. Sinha.⁹⁷

VIII

In the course of the national struggle for freedom, differences between Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh on the issues of the interpretation of 'Swaraj' and the methods to be adopted constantly remained in focus. Resentment against enervating British rule was shared by them, but not the hope of liberating India by voluntary transfer of power by the foreign imperialists.

Bhagat Singh's view of the nature of British rule seemed to endorse W.S. Blunt's observations on the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie by Madan Lal Dhingra : "...My experience is that when England has her face well-slapped, she apologises, not before."⁹⁸

But Gandhi had great faith in the British sense of justice and honesty, though it was not absolute.⁹⁹ Keeping this in view, the nature and involvement of a Satyagrahi and a revolutionary can be seen in the proper perspective. The method of non-violent confrontation between man and man, and man and state left wide margin for re-adjustments and withdrawals, since it was a comprehensive fight against various social and economic evils in course of Gandhi's march on the road to *Swaraj* and long-term project.

Gandhi's non-violence was not to operate in isolation, it was expected that even the British would co-operate in leading India to freedom. According to Gandhi, "...the peoples of the West... can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it."¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, revolutionary nationalism, the creed of Bhagat Singh and his associates, was more exacting and it demanded complete commitment to the method as well as to the cause.¹⁰¹ It was a total struggle and there was no half-way house. An extract from the *Philosophy of the Bomb* indicates the extent of their identification with the revolutionary cause :

'We shall have our revenge—a people's righteous revenge on the Tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for a

compromise and peace. We ask not mercy, and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end—to Victory or Death.¹⁰²

Bhagat Singh and his associates sought no compromise between Independence and slavery. They spurned 'Dominion Status', the goal of the Indian National Congress at one stage. They nevertheless believed that Gandhi and the Congress only wanted to replace British capitalism by Indian Capitalism.

However, Bhagat Singh did not completely reject the role of compromise as a measure of strategy. He gave a new dimension to the use of compromise in the anti-imperialistic struggle. It was to be used as a strategic measure for advancing towards the goal in the initial stages, and for consolidating one's position. It would enable the final assault on the enemy to be so powerful as to wipe it off.¹⁰³

Interestingly, both Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh were confident of their success. In spite of their mutual differences, both of them appreciated each other's honesty of purpose. Mahatma Gandhi admired the spirit of sacrifice and peerless courage of Bhagat Singh and his band, and exhorted youngmen to cultivate these inestimable qualities. But he called them 'misguided youth' and warned the Indian youngmen against following the methods of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.¹⁰⁴ The revolutionaries too admired Gandhi's role in creating mass-awakening and this novel character of satyagraha. But they called him an 'impossible visionary'¹⁰⁵ and 'a kind-hearted philanthropist.'¹⁰⁶ Their disapproval of Gandhian method was based on their contention that mental and moral climate was not favourable for its success. The provocative attitude of the British Government was another hurdle in the *Satyagraha* movement, based on non-violence.¹⁰⁷

IX

One important measure of Bhagat Singh's contribution as an ideologue and leader is the extent to which he altered the ideas, beliefs and values of his associates and countrymen at large. Did he and his associates succeed in arousing socialistic and anti-imperialist consciousness? Were they able to replace the existing leadership and its tactics which had prompted the young radicals to search for an alternate ideology and strategy? Did they mobilise and prepare the young people to launch the armed struggle for which they had been preparing secretly?

One of the goals of the HSRA was to popularise socialism. Its 'propaganda actions' and its slogans of '*Inquilab Zindabad*', 'Down with Imperialism' caused great excitement amongst the admirers of revolutionaries then, and even later. The heroic fight of its members and the death-defying courage of Bhagat Singh won unprecedented popularity which reflected itself in the growth of a vast mass of revolutionary literature in the form of books, penny-pamphlets, songs, poems and legends. But their crusade for socialism hardly evoked any response. In fact, the ideologues of the HSRA could hardly be blamed for it. Owing to the ban on the publication and circulation of the revolutionary literature, their message reached a limited number of people. Moreover, there were not many other channels for broadcasting their ideology. Occasionally, Bhagat Singh's messages, letters and appeals appeared in *The Tribune*, the *Pratap* and in other dailies and magazines of other provinces.

As a result of the propaganda of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the educated people in Lahore, Jullundur, Amritsar, Ludhiana and other cities of the Punjab became aware of the HSRA's goals: complete independence, federalism, secularism and promotion of social and economic change. Towards the close of 1920s, when the Sabha gained all-India prestige and power, it was declared an unlawful organisation. With the arrest of Bhagat Singh (on 8 April, 1929), the chief spokesman and leader of the radical youngmen, the task of creating a socialistic consciousness came to a temporary stop. Nevertheless, a change was evident—the radical ideas of socialism and Marxism found greater respectability and acceptance. It put a check on the sectarian and parochial tendencies to some extent by focusing attention upon the needs and demands of the masses.

Secondly, whereas the revolutionary nationalists, including Bhagat Singh, failed to replace the existing leadership, they succeeded in strengthening the hands of the left-wing in the Congress. Their persistent endeavours compelled the Congress to broaden its objective so as to integrate masses with the programme of national independence. That was evident from the adoption of the resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy in the Karachi session in March 1931, even though it may be regarded as an astute move on the part of the Congress leadership to maintain its hold over the masses even after Gandhi-Irwin pact.

Bhagat Singh and his comrades could not launch the stipulated armed struggle for freedom as they had lost faith in it. The leadership of the HSRA, though clear in its goal and strategy at

theoretical plane, failed to organise masses for the purpose, despite immense public admiration for their courage and patriotism. Their failure can be explained in terms of the unequal pace of intellectual development among the members of the HSRA, which led to a hiatus between the socialist consciousness and nationalist consciousness. While the ideologues of the HSRA, particularly Bhagat Singh, had graduated from nationalism to socialism, the majority of its members had functioned at the level of nationalist consciousness.

In spite of these limitations, Bhagat Singh and his comrades made a solid contribution towards the development of anti-imperialist consciousness into a mighty force for the destruction of the British Raj in India. The Lahore Conspiracy Case Trial (1929-1931) had heightened the anti-imperialist sentiment by exposing the hollowness of the British ideals of justice and fairness and weaknesses of the regime. As a result, the infrastructure of illusions regarding the beneficent British rule tumbled down. The romance of socialism, which they strove to weave, continues to be an important aspect of ideology even today.

Another aspect of the anti-imperialist consciousness created by Bhagat Singh's heroic 'actions', was an upsurge of youth awakening. As a result, there was a mushroom growth of the youth and students' organisations all over India, namely, in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Punjab in 1930s.

From 1929 onwards, separate conferences for the youth and students began to be held in various Provinces. The first U.P. Youth Conference was held at Lucknow, under the presidentship of Sarojini Naidu, on 15 September 1929. It was followed by the Andhra Pradesh Youth Conference which assembled at Bezwada on 3 November. Similarly, a number of separate students' conferences were held all over India. The All Bengal Students' Conference, presided over by Mohammad Alam, was held at Mymen-singh on 30 September 1929. It was followed by the second Punjab Students' Conference on 20 October at Lahore. The All India Students' Convention held under the presidentship of Madan Mahan Malviya on 30 December at Lahore was a determined move for the unification of the politically-conscious student community throughout India. The youth not only emerged as a formidable force in India's struggle for freedom and socialism, but also stamped it with a marked youthfulness symbolised by Bhagat Singh, and later by Subhash Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru.

In conclusion, it can be said that Bhagat Singh had contributed to the growth of a new political culture which was secular and nationalist with a pronounced socialist stance. He had detached the revolutionary movement from the earlier trend of religious revivalism which formed the basis of the creed of revolutionaries from Bengal and Maharashtra before 1920. Bhagat Singh's foresighted emphasis on rationalist thinking, rather than on misuse of religious 'slogans and teachings' is more relevant for interpreting our cultural heritage and Indian national movement by the scholars, academicians, political leaders and the youth.

In Bhagat Singh's view, the battle for political, social and economic change could be fought more meaningfully through propaganda and constructive work such as education and amelioration of economic and living conditions of peasants and working classes. He had realised that guns and bombs had a nuisance value in terms of demoralising the foreign rulers. Use of violence against one's own countrymen was pointless and waste of talent so badly needed for national regeneration. This is the essence of Bhagat Singh's message. It is in this context that Bhagat Singh's slogan '*Inquilab Zindabad*' must be interpreted and understood. The slogan does not give a call for blood-shed, but revolution through propaganda, social and political pressure. For him, it was more heroic and romantic for youth to act in this fashion. □

Appendix-1

The Tribune, Tuesday, December 24, 1929 ††

“LONG LIVE REVOLUTION”

—REJOINDER TO “MODERN REVIEW”

CONSPIRACY CASE ACCUSED EXPLAIN THEIR
MEANING

Lahore, Dec. 22,

Sardar Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt, two of the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, have submitted the following letter to the Special Magistrate for transmission to the Editor of the *Modern Review* :

“You have, in the December (1929) issue of your esteemed magazine, written a note under the caption, “Long Live Revolution”, and have pointed out the meaninglessness of this phrase. It would be impertinent on our part to try to refute or contradict the statement of such an old, experienced and renowned journalist as your noble self, for whom every enlightened Indian has profound admiration. Still we feel it our duty to explain what we desire to convey by the said phrase, as in a way, it fell to our lot to give these “cries” a publicity in this country at this stage.

We are not the originators of this cry. The same cry had been used in Russian Revolutionary movements. Upton Sinclair, the well-known Socialist writer, has, in his recent novels, “*Boston*” and “*Oil*”, used this cry through some of the anarchist-revolutionary characters. The phrase never means that the sanguinary strife should ever continue, or that nothing should ever be stationary even for a short while. By long usage, this cry achieves a significance which may not be quite justifiable from the grammatical or the etymological point of view, but nevertheless we cannot abstract from them the association of ideas connected with them.

“All such shouts denote a general sense which is partly acquired and partly inherent in them. For instance, when we shout, ‘Long Live Jatin Das’, we cannot and do not mean thereby that Dass should physically be alive. What we mean by

††[As this item in *The Tribune* shows, Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary colleagues/never missed a chance to explain their views, not even when facing their trial. —Eds.]

that shout is that the noble ideal of his life, the indomitable spirit which enabled that great martyr to bear such untold suffering and to make the extreme sacrifice for that ideal, should ever live. By raising this cry, we wish that we may show the same unflinching courage in pursuance of our ideals. It is that spirit that we allude to.

“Similarly, one should not interpret the word ‘Revolution’ in its literal sense. Various meanings and significances are attributed to this word, according to the interests of those who use or misuse it. For the established agencies of exploitation, it conjures up a feeling of blood-stained horror. To the revolutionaries, it is a sacred phrase. We tried to clear in our statement before the Sessions Judge, Delhi, in our trial in the Assembly Bomb Case, what we meant by the word Revolution.

“We stated therein that Revolution did not necessarily involve sanguinary strife. It was not a cult of bomb and pistol. They may sometimes be mere means for its achievement. No doubt, they play a prominent part in some movements, but they do not, for that very reason, become one and the same thing. A rebellion is not a revolution. It may ultimately lead to that end.

“The sense in which the word Revolution is used in that phrase, is the spirit, the longing for a change for the better. The people generally get accustomed to the established order of things and begin to tremble at the very idea of a change. It is this lethargical spirit that needs to be replaced by the revolutionary spirit. Otherwise, degeneration gains the upper hand, and the whole humanity is led astray by the reactionary forces. Such a state of affairs leads to stagnation and paralysis in human progress. This spirit of Revolution should always permeate the soul of humanity, so that the reactionary forces may not accumulate to check its eternal onward march. Old order should change, always and ever, yielding place to new, so that one good order may not corrupt the world. It is in this sense that we raise the shout—‘Long Live Revolution’.”

Yours sincerely,
Bhagat Singh B.K. Dutt

Appendix-II

The Tribune, October, 22, 1929 (Page-2)

WIRELESS MESSAGE FROM BHAGAT SINGH & DUTT

*†★ The President, Subhash Chandra Bose, then read the following message which he said, the 2nd Punjab Students' Conference has received by 'wireless' from Sardar Bhagat Singh and Mr. Batukeshwar Dutt. :

"We can not advise youngmen to take up bombs and pistols. The students have greater work to do. The Congress is going to declare grim fight for country's liberation in the coming Lahore session. At that critical moment of national history, tremendous responsibility would rest on shoulders of young community."

"All over the world, the students have fought till death in the front ranks of the battle for freedom. Will the Indian youths, in this hour of trial, hesitate to display the some grim determination. The youths have to convey the message of revolution to the farthest corner of the country, to the sweating millions in factory, slums and village huts, a revolution that will bring freedom and would render exploitation of man by man impossible. The Punjab is considered rather politically backward—(Here the President said he questioned this and did not agree with Bhagat Singh and Dutt). For that the responsibility of youths is still greater. Let them prove the contrary by their unswerving fortitude and firmness in the ensuing struggle and setting the glorious example of our beloved martyr Jatinder Nath Dass"

*†★ [This wireless message must have been read out at the Second Punjab Students' Conference, as per press report. —Eds.]

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1. J.N. Sanyal, Amar Shaheed Bhagat Singh in Hindi (First edition published in 1931 and confiscated forthwith : Mirzapur, 1970), pp. 6-7.
2. Balwant "Kartar Singh Sarabha" in Chand, monthly in Hindi (Allahabad), 'Phansi Ank', November 1928 pp. 266-71. For writing this article, Bhagat Singh used 'Balwant' as his pen-name. Besides, he wrote a number of articles on the other Ghadr and the Kuka heroes under the same pen-name. For corroboration see Lahore Conspiracy Case Tribunal Proceedings (NAI, New Delhi), p. 317-Evidence of Chattar Sen Shastri who edited the 'Phansi Ank' of the Chand.
3. Bhagat Singh, "Holi Ek Din Rakt Ke Chinte" in Virender Sandhu ed., Pattar aur Dastavez in Hindi (Delhi, 1977), pp.23-28. This article was originally published in the Pratap, daily in Urdu (Kanpur), 15 March, 1926.
4. Ibid.
5. n. 1, p. 6.
6. Bhagat Singh "Punjab Ki Bhasha Tatha Lipi Vishyak Samasaya" in Virender Sandhu, ed. n. 3. Terrorism in India 1917-1936 (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, New Delhi), Appendix III, p. 214. The Revolutionary, an organ of the Revolutionary Party of India, Vol. I, dated 1 February 1925, showed that the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army had also contemplated "hearty and organic union" of different parties in near future. But it did not specify the role of literature in promoting the national unity and awakening.
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9. Lahore Conspiracy Case Tribunal Proceedings 1930 (NAI New Delhi), Pt. I, p. 301. Also The Tribune, 30 November, 1929, p. 1 — Cross-examination of Hans Raj Vohra, one of the approvers in the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31.
10. A.K. Ghosh, Bhagat Singh and His Comrades (Bombay, 1945), p. 15.
11. Home Department, Political File No. 261 & K.W., 1924, pp. 25, 35 — Statement of Ghulam Hussain. Also G. Adhikari, ed. Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India 1917-22 (New Delhi, 1971), Vol. I, p. 2. Also Sachindra Nath Sanyal, n. 8, pp. 320 ff.
12. Sohan Singh Josh, My Meetings with Bhagat Singh and on other Early Revolutionaries (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 14-19. For corroboration see A.K. Ghosh, n. 10, p. 40.
13. J.N. Sanyal, n. 1, p. 103.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
15. Bhagat Singh, Why I am an Atheist? (New Delhi, 1979) pp. 12 ff. It has been edited by Professor Bipan Chander.
16. Mikhail Bakunin, "The Revolutionary Catcheism", quoted in Paul Wilkinson, Political Terrorism (London, 1976), p. 68. Also Sohan Singh Josh, n. 12, p. 7. Also Bhagat Singh "History of Anarchism" in the Kirti, monthly in Punjabi (Amritsar), July 1928, pp. 52-55.
17. Paul Wilkinson, n. 16, p. 69.
18. Bhagat Singh, "Krantikarion Ke Nam Antim Sandesh" in Abhudyā, weekly in Hindi (Allahabad), Vol. 25, No. 12, 8 May, 1931 pp. 31-32.
19. Manmath Nath Gupta, "Revolutionary Movement and Concept of Nationalism" in K.K. Gangadharan, ed. Indian National Consciousness Growth and Development (Delhi, 1972) p. 72.
20. J.N. Sanyal, n. 1, p. 105. Also Bhagat Singh, n. 15, pp. 12-13. Also Delhi Conspiracy Case Proceedings 1931-33 (Phool Chand Jain Collection), Vol. II, p. 542. In his evidence, Kailashpati, the chief approver in the case, acknowledged Bhagat Singh's impact upon the members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association who ceased believing in God and religion. He stated that there was no special form of oath for a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or a Sikh on joining the party.
21. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 1124(1), Exhibit No. P. 746. Also the Kirti, monthly in Punjabi (Amritsar), March 1929, pp. 48-55, Presidential Address of Sohan Singh Josh at the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Lahore.
22. Interview with Comrade Ram Chander, the first President of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, on 28 March, 1974.

23. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. P. 205 (T), pp. 897-8, Rules and Regulations of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Punjab.
24. For details regarding the organisation and network of youth sabhas, see Home Department, Political, File No. 130 and KW II, 1930, File No. 464, 1930 and File No. 45/17 and KW 1933.
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33. The HSRA, circulated the copies of the 'Red Leaflet' to explain its ideology and own responsibility for the action.
34. Delhi Court Papers: Assembly Bomb Case, Trial No. 9 of 1929, Vol. II, pp. 137-9, Joint Statement of Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt in the Sessions Court, dated 6 June 1929.
35. Lahore Conspiracy Case Tribunal Judgement, dated 7 October 1930, p. 1. In this case, fifteen accused were put on trial but twenty four persons were actually involved. Out of them six were absconders and three were discharged.
36. Bhagwan Das Mahour, no. 28, p. 25, Also B.K. Dutt, "Ek Krantikari Ki Diary" in Saptahik Hindustan, weekly in Hindi, 26 August 1973, p. 18.

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37. The Tribune, 24 December 1929, p. 2. It published Bhagat Singh and Dutt's Rejoinder to the caption 'Long Live Revolution' in the Modern Review (Calcutta).
38. Delhi Court Papers : Assembly Bomb Case, Trial No. 9 of 1929 (NAI, New Delhi), Vol. II, p. 141.
39. Terrorism in India 1917-36, Appendix III, p. 238.
40. Terrorism in India 1917-36, Appendix III, p. 240.
41. Home Department, Political, File No. 27/7, 1932, p. 14 — A red pamphlet in Hindi entitled Hindustan Socialist Prajatantra Sangh, issued by Prakasho Devi, Secretary, Publicity Department of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1932.
42. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers 1930-33 (D.R. Handa Collection), Exhibit No. 14 (a) — The Philosophy of the Bomb, p. 1.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 2. For a detailed discussion of the other parameters of revolution see Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Suffolk, 1967), pp. 36, 36, 74.
44. J.N. Sanyal, n. 1, p. 106.
45. Bhagat Singh "Krantikarion Ke Nam Antim Sandesh" in Abhudaya, weekly in Hindi (Allahabad), Vol. 25, No. 13, 8 May, 1931, pp. 31-32. Also The Tribune, 22 October 1929, p. 9 — Text of the wireless message of Bhagat Singh and Dutt to the 2nd All Punjab Students' Conference at Lahore.
46. Delhi Court Papers : Assembly Bomb Case Trial No. 9 of 1929 (NAI, New Delhi), Vol. II, p. 137 — Joint Statement of Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt, dated 6 June 1929, in the sessions Court, Delhi.
47. Shive Verma, Sansmritian in Hindi, Appendix VII, p. 172 — Text of Bhagat Singh's preface (dated 15.1.1931) to the Dreamland.
48. Delhi Court Papers, n. 46, pp. 133-35.
49. The Hindustan Times (Special edition), 10 April 1929, p. 2 — Text of the pink leaflet thrown by Shaheed Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt in the Assembly Hall on 8th April 1929. Also The Tribune, 13 April 1929, p. 2. While addressing both the Houses, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy pinpointed the nature of Assembly Bomb outrage. he conceded that the attack was directed against the political institution and not an individual.
50. Shiv Verma, n. 47.
51. The Tribune, 24 December 1929, p. 2 — Bhagat Singh and Dutt's rejoinder to the caption "Long Live Revolution" in the Modern Review. Also Terrorism in India, Appendix III, pp. 242-3. Manifesto of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (1929).

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52. Delhi Court Papers : Assembly Bomb Case, Trial No. 9 Vol. II, p. 145.
53. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers. 1930-33, Exhibit No. 14 (a), p. 2.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 1. Also in 52.
55. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers in Urdu 1930-33 (D.R. Handa Collection), Exhibit No. 9.14 (a) — The Philosophy of the Bomb, p. 2. Also Virender Sandhu, ed. n. 3., p. 53.
56. Delhi Court Papers : Assembly Bomb Case : Trial No. 9 of 1929, Vol. II, p. 145.
57. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, Exhibit No. P.L. — Text of pink leaflet. It was also published in the Hindustan Times, (Special Edition), 8 April, 1929. One of its enterprising correspondents had managed to smuggle away its copy.
58. For the text of the Manifesto of the HRA see The Revolutionary, see Terrorism in India 1917-36, Appendix II, p. 3.
59. Vishwanath Vaishampayan, Amar Shaheed Chander Shekhar Azad in Hindi, (Benaras, 1867), Pts. II and III, Appendix V, p. 306 — Text of Bhagat Singh's letter to the Governor, Punjab, dated 3 March 1931.
60. Quoted in Virender Sandhu, n. 2, p. 78.
61. Bejoy Kumar Sinha, "Crusader for Socialist cause" in The Tribune, 23 March 1967.
62. Delhi Court Papers : Assembly Bomb Case : Trial No. 9 of 1929, Vol. II, p. 141.
63. Vishwanath Vaishampayan, n. 59, p. 304 — Bhagat Singh's letter to the Governor, Punjab, dated 3 March 1931.
64. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers 1930-33 (D.R. Handa Collection), Exhibit No. P. 14 (a), The Philosophy of the Bomb, p. 2.
65. Terrorism in India 1917-1936, Appendix III, p. 241. Also Elan, Secretary Punjab Provincial Naujawan Bharat Sabha in Piam—i—Jung, 26 February 1930. (NAI, New Delhi), Proscribed leaflet No. 2588.
66. Home Department, Political, File No. 27/7, 1932, p. 14.
67. Quoted in Gopal Thakur, Bhagat Singh : The Man and His Ideas (Delhi, 1965), p. 39.
68. Home Department, Political, File No. 375, 1923, pp. 3-4, Constitution of the Hindustan Republican Association.
69. Quoted in Gopal Thakur, n. 67, p. 39.

70. Home Department, Political, File No. 130, K.W., 1930, pp. 1-2, Aims and Objectives of Naujawan Bharat Sabha. Also Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 167. Exhibit No. 205 (T), p. 797. Also exhibit No. p. 1403 (T), p. 807 — A Minute Book of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Amritsar Branch, In a meeting of the Sabha held on 1 August 1928, Bawa Hukam Singh moved the resolution that a list should be prepared of the labourers whose parties were to be made. Sohan Singh 'Josh' prepared the list and it was passed. The list included washerman, weavers, sweepers, postmen, motor-drivers, municipal employees, cart-drivers, katra load-carriers, munims, shoe-makers, ghasis, press-workers, pulse-grinders, silk-weavers, tile pounders, factory-workers, basket-carriers, brokers and others.
71. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers 1930-33 (D.R. Handa Collection), Exhibit No. P. 14(a), The Philosophy of the Bomb, p. 7.
72. Bhagat Singh, 'Karantikarion Ke Nam Antim Sandesh' in Abhudaya, weekly in Hindi (Allahabad), Vol. 25, No. 13.8 May 1931, p. 31.
73. Home Department, Political, File No. 130, & K.W., 1930, p. 38.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
75. Delhi Conspiracy Case Proceedings, 1931-33 (Phool-Chand Jain Collection), Vol. II, p. 518 — Evidence of Kailashpatti, the chief approver in the case. During my interview with Comrade Ram Chander, the first President of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, on 28th March 1974, he emphasised Bhagat Singh's awareness of his failure on this point.
76. Terrorism in India 1917-1936, Appendix III, p. 241.
77. For the text of An Appeal to the Young and the Revolution see Home Department, Political, File No. 31/x. 1931, Appendix to Notes, pp. 81-84.
78. Yashpal, Sinhavilokan in Hindi, (Lucknow, 1953), Pt. I, p. 22. Yashpal remarked that Bhagat Singh and Bhagwati Charan Vohra belonged to middle class families. Bhagwati Charan, of course, enjoyed economic security and stability but Bhagat Singh's family was always busy in finding new ways of earning livelihood. During my interview with Pandit Kishori Lal, one of the comrades of Bhagat Singh, on 29 February 1974, he confirmed this view about the social background of the revolutionaries in 1920s.
79. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. P. 497 (T), p. 813. It was a poster advertising the 2nd Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha Conference to be held on 22nd, 23rd and 24th February 1929. It exhorted youngmen: "Revolution !! O Revolution !! Revolution !! Youngmen get ready for practical life. The political and economic life of India depends upon the strength of arm of the youths of the nation and country".

80. The Tribune, 28 November 1929, p. 5 — Evidence of Hans Raj Vohra, one of the approvers in the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31.
81. The Tribune, 8 November 1929, p. 1 Evidence of J.C. Sharma, Principal, Diamond Jubilee Technical Institute in the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31. Also evidence of Daulat Ram, Clerk, D.A.V. College, Lahore.
82. The Tribune, 29 October 1929, p. 9 — Evidence of Jai Gopal, one of the approvers in the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31.
83. The Tribune, 27 November 1929, p. 10.
84. Interview with Principal Chabbil Dass, National College, Lahore on 20 January 1975.
85. The Tribune, 27 November 1929, p. 10 — Proceedings of the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31.
86. The Tribune, 26 November 1929, p. 2 — Proceedings of the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31.
87. For a detailed discussion of the forms of struggle adopted by Bhagat Singh and his associates see Kamlesh Mohan, Militant Nationalism in the Punjab 1919-1935 (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1985), pp. 219-25.
88. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers 1930-33, Exhibit No. 68, Rules and Regulations of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.
89. Bhagat Singh "Kranti Kariaon Ke Nam Antim Sandesh", in Abhudaya, weekly in Hindi (Allahabad), Vol. 25, No. 13, 8 May 1931, pp. 31-32.
90. In 1928, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi employed Bhagat Singh in the editorial section of Pratap, daily in Urdu (Kanpur), He wrote articles in the Pratap under the pen-name 'Balwant'. Later on, he wrote in the Daily Arjun (Delhi), under the same pen-name.
91. Bhagat Singh wrote many articles in the Kirti, monthly in Punjabi, an organ of the Punjab Kirti Kisan Party, under the pen-name 'Vidrohi'.
92. Virender Sandhu, Yugdrashta Bhagat Singh aur Unke Mritvuanjiv Purkhe (Varnasi, 1968), p. 237.
93. Yashpal, n. 78, Pt. II, p. 11.
94. *Ibid.*, Pt. I, pp. 155-6, 170. Yashpal has given a list of books, collected by Bhagat Singh and his associates at Agra Centre of the HSRA. Also The Tribune, 23 October 1919, p. 12. Chabbil Das, Principal of the National College, Lahore, published a 'Catalogue of Chosen Books' in order to give a further push to such intellectual renaissance as was going on among the Indian youth. He recommended writings of victor Hugo, Anatole France, Bernard Shaw, Tolstoy, Edward Carpenter, and several others.

95. Virender Sandhu, no. 92, p. 141. Also The Tribune, 27 November 1929, p. 5 -- Evidence of Hans Raj Vohra, an approver in Lahore conspiracy Case 1929-30. He deposed that Sukhdev enlisted him as a member by showing him the Yellow Leaflet in December, 1926. Also The Tribune, 26 December 1929, p. 9 -- Evidence of Lali Kumar Mukerjee, an approver in the Lahore Conspiracy Case 1929-31. He deposed that Phonindra Nath Ghosh, a second year student, aroused his interest in the revolutionary movement. It was Bhupinder Nath Sanyal who lent him Bandi Jiwan by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and the French Revolution by Carlyle in order to enlist his sympathy for the revolutionaries. Reading of Bharat-i-Jatiya Andolan-i-Itihaas enabled him to grasp the existing political situation.
96. For a detailed discussion of the tactics used by Bhagat Singh and his band see Kamlesh Mohan, n. 87.
97. J.N. Sanyal, n. 1, pp. 92-93.
98. W.S. Blunt, My Diaries (n.p., n.d.), Pt. II, p. 288.
99. M.K. Gandhi, My Non-violence (Ahmedabad, 1960), p. 11.
100. M.K. Gandhi, n. 99, p. 18.
101. Ainslie T. Embree, "The Function of Gandhi in Indian Nationalism" in Paul F. Power ed., The Meanings of Gandhi (University Press of Hawaii, 1971), p. 63.
102. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers, 1932-33, Exhibit No. P 14 (a).
103. Bhagat Singh, "Krantikarion Ke Nam Antim Sandesh", Abhudya, Vol. 25. No. 13, 8 May, 1931, pp. 31-32.
104. Mahatma Gandhi, "Shaheed Bhagat Singh" in *ibid.* p. 7. Also The Tribune, 13 April 1929, p. 9. Speaking on 11 April 1929 at Vijayawada and referring to the Assembly Bomb episode Gandhi said, "Crimes of any kind are the manifestation of a mind full of vice". He also described the episode as "the mad act of the two youngsters"
105. The Tribune 11 April, 1929, p. 2. Motilal Nehru made a harsh comment when he described them as a "few hare-brained" youth.
106. Quoted in J.N. Sanyal, n. 1, p. 106.
107. Punjab Conspiracy Case Papers, 1933-33, Exhibit No. 9/11-Peaceful and Legitimate, p. 3.

**From Chapekars
To
Bhagat Singh**

Shiv Verma

A reprint of the Preface and the Introductory Chapter of the book *Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh* Compiled and edited by Bhagat Singh's colleague, Shiv Verma. (National Book Centre, New Delhi—1986.)

Indian Revolutionary Struggles

We are grateful to Shri Shiv Verma, the veteran revolutionary and colleague of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, for his permission to reprint this material as a background to the militant national and revolutionary fervour that was witnessed in India from the turn of the century. If Chapekar Brothers stood at one end of the era of revolutionary struggles, Bhagat Singh and his colleagues in the Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Hindustan Socialist Republican Army saw the culmination of the era, perhaps its climax, in their life-time.

We hope that this tract/treatise will make a good backdrop to the scenario of the revolutionary ideals and new socialist goals which the young revolutionaries set before the nationalist movement.

Bhupendra Hooja
(Editor)

[Notes for pages that follow.]

† [In his Preface, Shiv Verma sets out his aim to project Bhagat Singh's views and writings in their proper revolutionary perspective.]

†† [His first introductory chapter spans the main trends and developments in the Indian revolutionary struggle from 1897 to 1931. —Eds.]

* [In addition to the captions given in the original text, we have taken the liberty to add some such sub-headings. —Eds.]

** [Captions as given in the original text. —Eds.]

Preface †

It was some time in 1980. I was travelling from Kanpur to Lucknow. A fellow traveller sitting in front of me picked up the small booklet I had just finished. It was "*Why I Am An Atheist*" by Bhagat Singh. After going through a few pages, he asked: 'Was he really capable of writing on such serious subjects?' A lecturer of philosophy in some college in Rajasthan, he had his own notions about a revolutionary — a tall and hefty fellow with little substance in his head, a man of bombs and revolvers who takes pleasure in killing persons, a blood-thirsty adventurer, though, of course, brave and self-sacrificing. He was a young man whose knowledge about things beyond his subject was limited. He knew the revolutionaries through stories narrated by persons who were equally ignorant on the subject.

IGNORANCE OR MISINTERPRETATION *

But what about those who distort the image of the martyrs deliberately?

Once I came across a Hindi book on elementary history prescribed for students of class VIII in schools of Uttar Pradesh during the fifties. The book contained a five or six line paragraph about Azad. Under the sub-heading, "Chandra Shekhar Azad", the author wrote that Azad was a man who believed in bloodshed and dacoities but, fortunately, the country did not adopt his line of struggle and took to Gandhiji's path. It is hard to believe that all that wretched lie from Mr. A. L. Shrivastava, the author, was the result of his ignorance. The author shot into prominence as a historian under the patronage of the British imperialists. The masters had left, but the slave mentality was still there, with all the hang-overs of the past. He was taught to paint the revolutionaries as blood-thirsty demons with no ideology, no aim, no set purpose in life.

† [In the preface, Shiv Verma sets out his aim to project the views and writings of Bhagat Singh in their proper revolutionary perspective. —Eds.]

* [We have taken the liberty to add such sub-headings. —Eds.]

Some of our old revolutionaries too are responsible for strengthening such notions. The people in general, and our youth in particular, like to listen to the stories of heroic deeds of our martyrs, their sufferings, their exploits, their death-defying courage, their will to sacrifice everything for the sake of the country and its people. To get popular applause, our old revolutionary friends exaggerate the events and concoct stories—at times to the levels of absurdity. They do it without connecting the events with the purpose and the ultimate aim. The net result, here too, is more or less the same.

There are others who try to fit in the revolutionaries in the framework of their own thinking. It pains them to know that the revolutionaries were dynamic and rational, and were always prepared to adapt themselves according to the requirements of the situation. They refuse to accept that the ideology of the revolutionary movements underwent an evolution and never remained static. For them, the revolutionaries started as and remained Hindu nationalists till the end. In order to prove their contention, they, first of all, equate religion with nationalism. Then they conveniently rob the revolutionary movement of its ideology and falsely assert that, throughout, the object of the movement was just to drive out the British and establish a Hindu Raj in India. These people are allergic to the idea of a basic change in the ideology of the revolutionary movement which came to adopt the ideas of class struggle and socialism. In order to conveniently exploit the rich heritage of the movement, they concentrate only on the heroic deeds of the martyrs, minus their ideas.

There are yet others who contend that Bhagat Singh, Bhagawati Charan and Azad were strictly national, having nothing to do with internationalism, and that they upheld only the socialistic ideals of the Soviet Russia, but not the dictatorship of the proletariat established in that country. Such remarks stem from the miserable ignorance of these people about the writings of Bhagat Singh and Bhagawati Charan Vohra. Such distortions of the ideas of our martyrs create more confusion when they come from the persons who were close to them, while actually misrepresenting them.

THREE SLOGANS OF REVOLUTION *

Bhagat Singh endowed the revolutionary movement with three slogans: (1) *Long Live Revolution*, (2) *Long Live*

Proletariat, and (3) *Down With Imperialism*. He very nicely summed up his entire programme through these slogans.

The first slogan represented the outlook—the revolutionary movement will not stop at the achievement of freedom. It will continue till the system which permits the exploitation of man by man and of a nation by another nation is abolished and a basic change in the socio-economic structure of the society is brought about.

The second slogan declares that the future belongs to the toiling millions and that the proletariat is the driving force of the revolution—a slogan that is being sought to be dropped today by the betrayers of socialism. What is unfortunate is that some of our old revolutionaries who profess by socialism have also fallen prey to this trend and emphasise the first and the third slogans, by-passing the second.

The third slogan indicated the immediate task at hand. A slave nation cannot establish a classless society, abolish exploitation and bring about equality amongst men. For such a nation, the first and foremost task is to break the chains of imperialist domination that bind it. In other words, revolution in a slave country has to be anti-imperialist and anti-colonial. That is why Bhagat Singh raised the slogan "Down With Imperialism". He did not say "Down with British imperialism". That would have been a distortion of the concept of revolution. Bhagat Singh stood for destruction of the entire system of colonialism, root and branch. In other words, he was no advocate of narrow nationalism as some would like us to believe. He was a man with a broad international outlook who wanted to liberate not only the people of India, but the entire humanity from the clutches of imperialist domination.

BHAGAT SINGH'S VIEWS & WRITINGS *

The general public do not know what Bhagat Singh really was. They only know that he was a brave man who avenged Lalaji's murder by killing Saunders and threw a bomb in the Central Assembly. That Bhagat Singh was an intellectual of a high calibre is not known to many. This makes it easy for interested persons to distort the ideological side of the revolutionary movement in general and that of Bhagat Singh in particular, and present the movement in their own biased ways. To counter

every such distortion, therefore, becomes imperative. That is why I strive to put all available writings of Bhagat Singh at one place and leave it to the reader to form his own opinion about the great martyr.

It is quite unfortunate that manuscripts of the four books written by Bhagat Singh in jail, have been destroyed. They were : (1) *The Ideal of Socialism* (2) *Autobiography* (3) *History of Revolutionary Movement in India* and (4) *At the Door of Death*.**

All the four manuscripts were smuggled out of jail and sent to Kumari Lajjavati at Jullunder †, who handed them over to Shri Vijay Kumar Sinha in 1938.†† After the War broke out in 1939, Sinha apprehended, and rightly of course, his arrest and a search of his house. In order to save the manuscripts from falling into the hands of the police, he passed them on to a friend for safe custody. In 1942, after the Quit India Movement, when the government machinery of repression was in full swing, that friend, however, became funky and destroyed the manuscripts.

Bhagat Singh also wrote short biographies of Ghadar Party and Babbar Akali martyrs. Most of them were in Punjabi and published in *Kirti* magazine. In Hindi, to my knowledge, he wrote *biographies* of four martyrs : *Baba Ram Singh* of Kooka movement, *Sufi Amba Prasad*, *Dr. Mathura Singh* and *Kartar Singh Sarabha*. The first two were published in *Mahorathi*, a Hindi monthly from Delhi (defunct now). Subsequently, with little variations they were again published in the "*Phansi Number*" of *Chand*, a Hindi monthly from Allahabad. The last two were written by him in *Chand* office, where he stayed with me for three or four days. These biographies are not included in this volume.

* * *

As an intellectual, Bhagat Singh was far superior to any of us. He had hardly touched the twenty-fourth spring of his

**[Perhaps Bhagat Singh's Notes (now being published in *A Martyr's Notebook*) helped him in writing these manuscripts. —Eds.]

†[Principal of the nationalist Kanya Mahavidyalaya for many years.—Eds.]

††[A surviving colleague of Bhagat Singh, who died last year.—Eds.]

life when the hangman deprived him of his right to life. However, by that time, he had written on various subjects, and written with confidence. He expressed himself on politics, God, religion, language, art, literature, culture, love, beauty, suicide, current affairs and several other themes. He had studied the history of the revolutionary movement, its ideological struggle and development, pondering over it and drawing proper conclusions. In order to properly understand and appreciate Bhagat Singh, we must, therefore, have some knowledge of his background. We must know, at least, an outline history of the ideological development of the revolutionary movement. I have, therefore, added to this volume a short history of this aspect of the movement. *†*

Towards the end of this volume are appended some documents which bear relevance, in one way or another, to the subject. A majority of these documents, just as those forming the main part of the volume, carry a history behind them. To acquaint the reader with necessary information, a short note has been added to every document. *†*

Regarding the nomenclature of the movement, revolutionaries have been referred to by different writers by various names—terrorists, revolutionary terrorists, terrorist revolutionaries, national revolutionaries, anarchists, etc. I do not think any of these adjectives suitable. The revolutionaries have been most widely referred to as 'terrorists', not only by those who wilfully wanted to paint them in black, but by their well-wishers and appreciators as well. A movement should be known by the ideals it cherishes and fights for, and not by the methods it adopts at a particular time and under particular circumstances. Methods change according to changes in situations, but the ideal remains the same. Moreover, terrorism was never the object of the revolutionaries, and they never believed that they will achieve independence through terrorism alone. They took to counter-terrorism as a passing phase.

Dr. G. Adhikari and some others have preferred the term 'national revolutionaries'. This adjective too is misleading. It may become an easy weapon in the hands of those who assert that the Indian revolutionaries were all along national (in the narrow sense) in their outlook, and that they had nothing to do

†[For these details, readers may refer to the book *Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh*. We cover only the introductory chapter. —Eds.]

with internationalism As for the anarchists, theirs is a creed which is against any sort of state. The revolutionaries did not subscribe to this view. The revolutionaries of the twenties, on the other hand, declared themselves in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat through their manifesto known as "*The Philosophy of the Bomb*". For all these reasons, therefore, for want of a suitable term, I have used the simple word 'revolutionaries', or the Indian revolutionaries. . . .

... ..

†††

SHIV VERMA

Editor's Note :

†††

Shri Shiv Verma has concluded his Preface with gratitude to a number of persons who helped him to pursue his "ambitious plan". Prominent among these were (late) Comrade P. Sundarayya, Durga Bhabhi, friend Kamal Hyder, Prof. Ashutosh Mishra (Deptt. of Pol. Sc. Lucknow University) Krishan Kumar Mishra, (ex-Editor, Navjeevan, Lucknow,) his nephew Yogendra, friends in the Nehru Museum Library and Bhagat Singh's younger brother, Sardar Kulvir Singh.

††† [Dr. G. Adhikari (see page Ann. II/7) and Comrade P. Sundarayya have both been prominent Indian communists. Durga Bhabhi, wife of the revolutionary martyr Bhagwati Charan herself played a steady and active role in support of the revolutionary movement. Young Kamal Hyder came to help Shiv Verma in this work, and won the latter's friendship. —Eds.]

Ideological Development of The Revolutionary Movement

FROM CHAPEKARS TO BHAGAT SINGH

The first shots that announced the entry of revolutionaries in the freedom struggle were fired by Chapekar brothers in Poona in 1897.

The city was facing devastation caused by a plague. One Mr. Rand was appointed as Plague Commissioner. He was a cruel and tyrannical sort of fellow. He ordered compulsory evacuation of the plague-infected houses in Poona. There was nothing wrong, insofar as the order was concerned. But the way Rand got it implemented, made him unpopular. People were literally driven out of their houses, and were not even allowed to collect their clothes and utensils.

On the 4th of May, 1897, Lokmanya Tilak wrote an article in his paper *Kesari* accusing not merely the subordinate officials but the government itself of deliberate oppression of the people. He described Rand as tyrannical, and accused the government of "practising oppression".

Then came the Shivaji festival. In a public meeting on that occasion, on the 12th of June, 1897, Tilak delivering his presidential address, said : "Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan? The answer to that question can be found in the Mahabharat itself. Srimat Krishna's advice in the Gita is to kill even our own teachers and kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being actuated by a desire to reap the fruits of his deeds. . . God has not conferred on the foreigners the grant, inscribed on a copper plate, of the Kingdom of Hindusthan . . . Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well; get out of the Penal Code and enter the extremely high atmosphere of the Srimat Bhagavad Gita and consider the actions of great men. . ." ¹

And, on the 22nd of June, Chapekar brothers killed Rand and Averst.

Thus, on the face of it, it appears as if the immediate inspiring factors for Chapekars' action were Rand's tyranny and Tilak's speech. But this will be only half-truth. As a matter of fact, Chapekars' ideas had begun taking shape much before the plague started or Rand came into the picture.

CHAPEKARS & THE HINDU SANRAKSHINI SAMITI *

They had formed a society in Poona, as early as in 1894, a society for physical and military training known as the "Society for the Removal of Obstacles to the Hindu Religion". It was also called "Society for the Protection of Hindu Religion" —(*Hindu Sanrakshini Samiti*). The Society regularly observed Shivaji and Ganapati festivals every year. The *shlokas* or verses recited by Chapekars at the time of these festivals clearly indicate the spirit they had imbibed. Asking the people to take up the sword, the *Shivaji shloka* said :

"Merely reciting Shivaji's story like a bard, does not secure independence. It is necessary to be prompt in engaging in desperate enterprises like Shivaji and Baji; knowing that good people should take up sword and shields, at all events now, we should risk our lives in the battlefield in a national war; we shall shed upon the earth the life blood of the enemies who destroy our religion. We shall die after killing only, while you will hear the story like a woman." 2

The *Ganapati shloka* was more outspoken than the *Shivaji shloka*. Calling upon the Hindus to rise in defence of cow and religion, it said :

"Alas, you are not ashamed to remain in servitude; try therefore to commit suicide. Alas, like butchers, the wicked in their monstrous atrocity kill calves and kine; free her (the cow) from the trouble; die, but kill the English; do not remain idle and thereby burden the earth. This is called Hindusthan, how is it that the English rule here?" 3

Thus, Chapekars and their associates were inspired in the main by strong religious sentiments and were ultra-orthodox in their outlook, and were, perhaps for this reason, anti-British as well as anti-Muslim.

Chapekars' patriotism was thus based on Hinduism. They strived to drive the British out, in order to protect the Hindu religion and the cow. Their action against Rand, too, was the

result of intense hatred against an individual who was hated by all the people for his oppressive and tyrannical acts.

As far as the other factors that inspired them into action are concerned, we do not find anything on record to prove that they were inspired by the 1857 War of Independence or the French and Italian revolutions.

Notwithstanding all these limitations, one cannot, in any way, minimise the courage, boldness and spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by the Chapekars during the course of trial and afterwards. The three brothers went to the gallows with their heads high.

This religious approach to the problems of slavery and independence was not confined to Chapekars only. "Savarkar brothers were also religious. . . Bengal revolutionaries also approached people in the name of religion. . . They were not using religion as a weapon just to rouse the people. . . they were staunch religious people. . . religious to the core." 4

ANUSHILAN SAMITI *

While describing the method of operation of the *Anushilan Samiti* which was formed in Calcutta in 1902, Tarini Shankar Chakravarty writes :

"Those persons who came forward to join this Samiti for revolutionary work were divided into two categories. Those who had faith in religion were placed in one class, and those who were not particular about religion and were joining the Samiti only for revolutionary work were grouped in another. Those having faith in religion lived in this garden (Manik Talla Bagan). . . only these boys were considered as first grade revolutionaries." 5

The majority of revolutionaries of Bengal at that time were very much influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Swami Vivekanand. "The members of Anushilan Samiti had to read carefully some Hindu scriptures, specially the *Geeta*." 6

"Reared in the intellectual traditions of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Swami Vivekanand, the revolutionaries of Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century, drew inspiration from religious rites and rituals, myths and symbols and songs and slogans of the ancient and classical Hinduism." 7

Thus, during the first phase of the revolutionary movement (1897-1913), the revolutionaries were generally inclined to and were drawing inspiration from the Hindu religion. This was not a chance phenomenon. There were historical reasons for it.

During the seventies of the last century, a new spirit was stirring the mind of young India. The educated youth had begun to think in terms of politics. A new type of nationalism was taking shape. This new nationalism was much more serious and open-eyed than the other old 'politicalism'. It was burdened with and driven forward by the conviction that the whole national life needs to be re-inspired and reborn. The depth to which the Indian mind had been stirred may be gauged from the fact that, in all the best minds, the new feelings and thoughts were fired with religion: a furious devotion to some divinity of hate and blood took the place of devotion to the older gods.

*THE ROLE OF RELIGION & SECULAR REVOLUTIONARIES **

To this extent, religion did play a positive role. But it had a negative aspect too. During the period under review, the radical nationalist leaders like B. G. Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Bramha Bandhav Upadhyaya and Arobindo Ghosh, all strived to taint politics with religion. They sowed, albeit unconsciously, the poisonous seeds of communal politics. Gandhi and his followers carried this tradition forward and stuck to it till the end, whereas revolutionaries discarded it and took to secularism by 1914, when the movement entered its second phase. This mixing up of religion with politics is playing havoc down to this day with public life and is threatening the very structure of our national unity.

Although Chapekars of Maharashtra and the revolutionaries of Bengal of the first decade of this century were equally inspired by the ancient Hindu culture, there is a marked and vital difference between the two.

On 30th April, 1908, a bomb was thrown on the carriage of Kingsford, resulting in the death of two ladies. Commenting on the event, Lokmanya Tilak wrote in the June 22 issue of his paper *Kesari*: "There is considerable difference between the murder of 1897 and the bomb outrage of Bengal. Considering the matter from the point of view of daring and skilled execution, the Chapekar brothers take a higher rank than members of the bomb party in Bengal. Considering the ends and the means, the Bengalis must be given greater commendation. . . In the year 1897,

the Poonaites were subjected to oppression at the time of the plague, and the exasperation produced by that oppression had not an exclusively political aspect. That the very system of administration is bad, and that unless the authorities are singled out and individually terrorised, they would not consent to change the system, this sort of important question was not before the eyes of the Chapekar brothers. Their aim was especially directed toward the oppression consequent upon the plague, that is to say, towards the particular act. The Bengal bombs had, of course, their eyes upon a more extensive plain brought into view by the partition of Bengal." 9

*ANUSHILAN MANIFESTO AIMS DEFINED **

Not only that. In spite of the fact that the Bengal revolutionaries gave much importance to religion, from the point of view of the ultimate aim of the movement, they made a very important declaration as early as in 1902. This was the year when the Bengal revolutionaries organised themselves into a party called *Anushilan Samiti*. The manifesto that was issued at the time of the formation of the Samiti declared:

".....In the society as dreamt by *Anushilan*, there will be no illiterates and poor, no cowards and no wicked people; persons with bad health will also not be there. In order to build up such a society, we shall have to abolish all sorts of inequalities. Humanity cannot progress under inequalities. We shall have to bring equality amongst all men by abolishing inequality of wealth, social inequality, communal inequality and regional inequality. This can be achieved only through a national government. The Society of *Anushilan*'s dream cannot be established under conditions of slavery. For that reason, *Anushilan* declares revolt against slavery. *Anushilan* wants complete independence for India." 10

This declaration of *Anushilan Samiti* was indeed a big step forward. It is here that the Bengal revolutionaries stand ahead of the Poona centre of 1897. The Chapekars hated the foreigners, but were not clear as to what they wanted. This was not the case with Bengal revolutionaries. The latter were not anti-Muslim either, though they were religious people and drew inspiration from Hindu scriptures.

The Punjab revolutionaries of this period were, however free from the weakness of communalism from the very beginning.

Sardar Ajit Singh, Lal Chand Falak, Shri Amba Prasad, Lala Hardayal and all their associates were secular. Religion for them was a private affair.

*1857—AN INSPIRATION **

Another source of inspiration for the revolutionaries of the first decade of this century was the history of 1857—India's First War of Independence. "Savarkar's book on the subject written in London around 1907 or 1908, despite its inadequacies, natural to the period and conditions prevailing then, did a great service inasmuch as it repudiated slanders and false historical writings on the subject by British imperialist authors. It put the record straight. It was immediately banned by the British rulers, but circulated among the contemporary revolutionaries in India in laboriously and clandestinely prepared manuscript." 11

As a matter of fact, the people's revolt of 1857 remained a source of inspiration for all the freedom fighters throughout the freedom struggle.

Yet another source of inspiration for the revolutionaries of the first decade of this century were the stories of the French, Italian and Russian revolutionaries.

*WEAKNESSES AND LIMITATIONS
IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT ***

The first weak point of the Poona and Bengal revolutionaries in the first phase of the movement, was their Hindu bias. This kept the Muslim masses away from the movement. The Bengal revolutionaries were not anti-Muslim, but they never made any serious efforts to recruit cadre from amongst Muslims. One can find some exceptions to this statement here and there. But exceptions do not make a rule.

The second weak point which limited the scope of the movement was its lack of living contact with the people. But for three or four years of Swadeshi period, when the Bengal revolutionaries went to the people and roused them into action, the revolutionaries generally relied on individual action, officially mis-designated terrorism. The people appreciated their self-sacrificing spirit, their boldness and courage, but were unable to link their actions with their own day-to-day problems. This made it all the easier for the imperialists to suppress the revolutionaries.

The third drawback was the class character of the participants. A majority of the cadre of the revolutionary movement came from lower middle class. This was quite natural at that stage. It was the period when the younger generation was asserting itself for complete independence from the alien rule. It regarded itself as a "full grown man". The youth was impatient, but the old leadership was not prepared to go beyond petitions and resolutions for Home Rule. The educated youth, however, was prepared to burn his boats for new heaven. The youth believed that they could liberate the country by militant armed struggle. For this they were prepared even to give up their lives.

The middle class, by its very nature, is individualistic. It can become a powerful ally. If it goes to the bourgeoisie, it becomes a vehicle of reaction. If it stands with the working class, it becomes a revolutionary force, though by itself, it is incapable of giving the lead. Its independent actions often take the form of individual actions. In the period under study, neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class were in a position to launch a mass movement for freedom. Naturally, the middle class youth who were prepared to sacrifice everything for the realisation of their dream, took up the challenge in their own way, which was bound to take the form of individual actions in the beginning. This limitation was the outcome of a historic process.

However, it is always better to strike and perish rather than submit to humiliating conditions of slavery. Someone has got to deliver the first blow. And the first blow, generally, does not yield fruit and those who strike first, most often perish. But the sacrifices never go in vain. A fountain becomes a mighty roaring river; a spark becomes a volcano; the individual merges with the mass; the old order is replaced by a new and the dream becomes a reality. That is how revolutions march. The revolutionary movement in India also marched the same way.

"The Indian revolutionaries not only dared to challenge with arms, against unimaginable odds, the formidable might of the biggest imperial colonial power of modern times; it was the self-immolation and martyrdom of the early revolutionary heroes of India like the Chapekar Brothers, Khudiram, Kanailal and Mandalal Dhingra that awakened their slumbering countrymen to the sublime ideas of national freedom and their inalienable democratic political rights. The revolutionary movement was also the first of its kind, historically, to project the goal of comp-

lete independence and of total severance of all political ties with the British Empire as the political objective of India's struggle for national freedom and sovereignty. It was with that aim in view that they called for organised armed resistance of the people against alien imperialist rule. . .

"They fought consistently from the very beginning for complete national sovereignty and democratic freedom for India's people and never budged from that aim. . .

"Their martyrdom served to evoke the admiration of the people to intensify their hatred against foreign imperialist rule and heighten their fighting morale." 12

FORMATION OF THE GHADAR PARTY

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During this period, many revolutionaries left India for Europe and America. Their main purpose was propaganda, collection of funds and building a team of bold, intelligent, self-sacrificing and dedicated young men to carry out revolutionary work in India. And they were successful in their work to no little extent. However, in the matter of ultimate objective, their vision was still confined to an emotional concept of India's independence. What will be the form of the government to be established after the revolution? What will be its relation with the revolutionary forces of other countries? What will be the place of religion in the new set-up? etc.—On all these questions, the majority of the revolutionaries of the time were not clear in their minds. This state of affair lasted more or less up to 1913. The credit to take a positive stand on all these issues goes to the leaders of the Ghadar Party.

The revolutionaries who left India for abroad, during the first decade of this century, had to flee from one country to another to avoid falling into the British hands. Many of them, in the end, decided to take shelter in America and make that country the base for their operations. Prominent among them were Tarak Nath Das, Sailendra Ghosh, Chandra Chakravarty, Nandlal Kar, Basant Kumar Roy, Sarangdhar Das, Sudhindra Nath Bose and G. D. Kumar. Lala Hhrdayal joined them towards the end of the decade. They contacted Indian settlers in America and Canada, collected funds, started newspapers and formed secret societies at various places.

Tarak Nath Das started a newspaper, *Free Hindustan*, and delivered lectures to Indian students and Indian settlers in

America. He also headed a secret society called Samiti. Other members of this society were Sailendra Nath Bose, Saranghar Das, G. D. Kumar, Luskar and an American known as Green.

Ram Nath Puri formed a society known as Hindustan Association at Oakland in 1908, and published a paper *Circular of Freedom*. Through this paper, he advocated the expulsion of the British from India. G. D. Kumar published a paper entitled *Swadeshi Sevak* from Vancouver. He was also a member of a secret society there. Rahim and Sunder Singh were also members of this society. Sunder Singh edited a paper called *Aryan*, through which he carried regular anti-British propaganda. Rahim and Atma Ram organised United India League in Vancouver.

Lala Hardayal arrived in America some time in 1911, and took a job in Stanford University as a lecturer. He organised a society in San Francisco named Hindustani Students' Association. In 1913, the Hindustani Association of Astoria was organised. Karim Bakhsh, Nawab Khan, Balwant Singh, Munshi Ram, Kesar Singh and Kartar Singh Sarabha were its members. Thakur Das and his friends formed an association of Indians living in St. John. In Chicago, the Hindustani Association of United States of America was formed in 1913. 13

Lala Hardayal felt the need to coordinate the activities of all these organisations functioning in various parts of the United States of America. He, therefore, convened a meeting of Indian revolutionaries living in Canada and the USA. It was decided in the meeting to set up an organisation to be called the Hindustani Association of the Pacific Coast, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and Lala Hardayal were elected president and secretary respectively. Lala Hardayal resigned from service and became whole-time worker of the Association.

In March 1913, the Association decided to start a paper from San Francisco with the title, *Ghadar*. Thereafter, the Association was re-named Ghadar Party.

A BIG STEP FORWARD

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With the formation of the Ghadar Party in 1913, the revolutionary movement took a big step forward. It freed its politics from religion and took to secularism. Religion was declared a private affair.

The *Ghadar* paper urged upon the Hindus and Muslims to give greater attention to economic matters as these affected all the people equally. Both were dying of plague. Both were deprived of food when famine struck. Both were forcibly taken for *begar* (forced, unpaid labour) and both had to pay exorbitant land revenues and water rates. The problem was not one of Hindus *versus* Muslims. It was one of Indians *versus* British enslavers. Hindu-Muslim unity should be so strengthened that none could dare break it. ¹⁴

The Ghadar Party "believed in secularism and stood for a stable Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity. They also did not accept the categories of touchables and untouchables. Unity of India and unity for the freedom struggle of India were the main principles which weighed within and guided them." ¹⁵ In this respect, the Ghadar Party was far ahead of India's leaders of that time. According to Sohan Singh Josh, the Ghadar revolutionaries were half a century ahead in political and social reform matters. ¹⁶

In an article in *Ghadar*, dated 14th of July, 1914, Lala Hardayal wrote: "The time for prayers is over. The time has come to take up the sword. We have no need for Pandits and Kazis. . ." ¹⁷ In 1913, while delivering a lecture in Portland, he said that the Ghadar revolutionaries should prepare themselves for the coming revolution. They should go to India, drive out the British from there and form a democratic government like the one in America, where all Indians will be equal and free, without any differentiation of religion, caste or colour."

Lala Hardayal, who used to call himself an anarchist, once declared that "there can be no equality between master and the servant though both may be Mohammedans, Sikhs or Vaishnavites. . . . The rich man will always rule the poor man. . . . Without economic equality, fraternity is only a dream." ¹⁸

The Ghadar Party made it a point to promote communal harmony among the Indians. In the Ghadar office, known as Jugantar Ashram, caste Hindus, untouchables, Muslims and Sikhs, all assembled and dined together.

Religion, when mixed with politics, becomes a deadly poison which slowly corrodes the very vitals of the nation, pitches brother against brother, demoralises the people, mars their vision, makes it difficult to recognise the real enemy, weakens the fighting morale of the people and makes the nation an easy prey to imperia-

list designs. The Ghadar revolutionaries were the first in India to realise this. They boldly declared their determination to keep this poison away from their politics. And they did what they said. This was their first great achievement in Indian politics.

The second big achievement of the Ghadar revolutionaries was their international outlook. "The Ghadar movement was an international movement. It had its branches in Malaya, Shanghai, Indonesia, East Indies, Philippines, Japan, Manila, New Zealand, Hongkong, Singapore, Fiji, Burma and other countries. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) had great sympathy for Ghadar Party aims. . . . They (the Ghadarites) stood for the freedom of all countries." ¹⁹

In *Ghadar di Goonj*, a collection of poems written by different persons, a poet has written: "O brothers, do not fight in the war against China. . . . The people of India, China and Turkey are real brothers. The enemy should not be allowed to besmirch their brotherhood." ²⁰

In 1911, an association was formed in Vancouver, whose aim was to establish liberty, equality and fraternity of the Hindustani nation in their relations with the rest of the world. Lala Hardayal had also declared in his speeches that he was for revolution not only in India but everywhere. ²¹

The Ghadar revolutionaries, in their propaganda, made passionate appeals to the labour unions of the world. They also appealed to the common people of the whole world to come together for overthrowing the imperialist system. ²²

IDEOLOGY & PROGRAMME

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The Ghadar Party was anti-British and its aim was to liberate India from British domination and set up, on the American model, a republic of India through armed struggle. They were convinced that resolutions, deputations and representations lead nowhere. They also did not like the moderate leaders dancing before the British rulers. The form of republic which they visualised carried the idea of an elected president as against any type of kingship.

To achieve the objective of India's liberation, the Ghadar Party relied not so much upon individual actions as on propaganda in the army, and called upon the soldiers to rise in revolt.

The Ghadar revolutionaries differed from their predecessors in their class character as well. Whereas the early revolutiona-

ries belonged in the main to the lower middle class intelligentsia, the overwhelming majority of the Ghadar ranks were peasants turned workers, and as such they appealed to the peasantry to rise in revolt.

TWO WEAKNESSES

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The Ghadar Party was formed in America where people enjoyed some civil liberties and freedom of expression, which at that time were practically unknown in India. The Ghadar leaders there openly discussed and wrote about their plans, intentions and programme. The British imperialists were thus fully informed about their plans and prepared to deal with any situation that may arise due to the activities of the Ghadarites. The Party had to pay a heavy price for this poor sense of secrecy on the part of the Ghadar leaders and ranks.

The second main weakness was the illusion that one imperialist power will sincerely help them in liberating their country from the clutches of another imperialist power. The fact that the nature of all imperialist powers—German or British, or anyone else—is basically the same, was not clear to them. When the First World War broke out in 1914, the Ghadar Party as well as other revolutionaries of that time, raised the slogan that “Britain’s difficulty is our opportunity”, and that “enemy’s enemy is our friend”. With this belief, they contacted the Kaiser of Germany for help. In their talks with the Kaiser’s representatives, they did try to lay down certain conditions regarding the future set-up of free India. But, on this point, the Kaiser was always elusive and equivocal. He was interested only in using the Ghadar revolutionaries against Britain during the War. He had his own war aims—to snatch as many colonies from Britain and France as possible. There was thus a total lack of understanding of the real nature of imperialism on the part of the Ghadarites. That, in order to achieve real and lasting freedom, the slave countries will have to fight against the imperialist system as such, became clear only when an epoch-making event took place in Russia in the October (new style, November) of 1917.

GREAT OCTOBER REVOLUTION & ITS IMPACT

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The October Socialist Revolution marks a turning point in the history of humanity. It not only inflicted a crushing defeat on the imperialist regime of Russia, but gave a terrific jerk to the imperialist system as a whole. In Russia, it brought to an end the

system that permitted the exploitation of man by man, and of nation by nation. The Soviet people became masters of their own destiny. They collectively became owners of fields, factories and workshops. The October Revolution not only liberated the Russian people from the slavery of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, but also created a new society and a new man altogether. It inspired the freedom fighters of enslaved countries and gave them confidence that ultimately their cause will win. It also provided new dimensions to the liberation struggles that were going on in different parts of the globe.

India’s struggle for freedom, being a part of the global anti-imperialist struggle, could not remain unaffected. It also broadened its vision and realised that, without social and economic equalities, freedom will remain meaningless.

The October Revolution and the anti-imperialist revolutionary upsurge in Europe and Asia, and the onward march of the people of India during the post-First World War years, put the British imperialists on the alert. In order to meet the unfavourable situation, the imperialists adopted a two-pronged policy. On the one hand, they tried to win over the moderate sections of the national leadership through Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which were nothing but a poor show of sharing of powers through elections on a very narrow and limited franchise. On the other hand, they appointed a Sedition Committee, headed by Justice Rowlatt, to investigate the revolutionary ferment and suggest measures for its suppression. The Committee’s recommendations were indeed atrocious, as they labelled even ordinary and normal political activities as sedition. It was at this juncture that Gandhiji called for a one-day general strike in protest to the Rowlatt Committee recommendations. The response was beyond all expectation. People rose like one man to demonstrate their anger against the proposed repressive measures. It was something new both for the government as well as the leaders. The British decided to teach the Indians a lesson, and that they did at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919. People took up the challenge and came out on the streets in almost all the cities in Punjab, which the government dubbed as an organised rebellion. But, as a matter of fact, Gandhiji too was not prepared for all this. He declared that it was a Himalayan blunder on his part to give a call for one-day general strike. He advised the people to stop the movement and work over the reforms.

In September 1920, Lala Lajpat Rai had clearly warned that the people were in a restive mood and out to do something.

He also told the Congress that if the anger of the people was not properly channelised, it would take its own course, which would not be in the interest of the country. "It is no use blinking the fact that we are passing through a revolutionary period", he declared, adding that "we are by instinct and tradition averse to revolutions".²³ The Congress discussed the warning at the Nagpur session and asked Gandhiji to start a non-cooperation movement. However, before starting the movement, the Mahatma visited Bengal and met some revolutionary leaders, asking them to give him one year's time, promising that in case he failed to achieve Swaraj in one year, the revolutionaries will be at liberty to follow their own path. To this, the revolutionaries agreed. Gandhiji started his non-cooperation movement which in no time engulfed the entire country, and the word Swaraj echoed in the remotest huts in the countryside. The peasantry plunged headlong into the movement, breaking all the restrictions laid down by Gandhiji. "The government was anxious and perplexed and began to lose its nerves. If the infection of universal defiance of the government spreads from the towns and begins to reach the millions of the peasantry, there was no salvation left for the British rule; all their guns and aeroplanes would not avail them in the seething cauldron of rebellion of three hundred millions".²⁴ Gandhiji too was equally nervous and unhappy. Waiting for an opportunity to withdraw the movement, he got it in Chauri Chaura in February 1922. Instead of welcoming the incident and asking for thousands more of Chauri Chauras, he quietly, and on his own, withdrew the movement and retired from politics. It was in this background that the revolutionaries, who had put down their arms at the Mahatma's request, decided to re-organise and take to arms again.

THE HINDUSTAN REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION **

The initiative to organise the revolutionaries into a single all-India party was taken by Shachindra Nath Sanyal. Towards the end of 1923, he founded Hindustan Republican Association. He also prepared a constitution of the party, which was printed on yellow paper and became for that reason known as the Yellow Paper. Another important document prepared by him was a manifesto of the HRA, titled "The Revolutionary". The latter document was widely circulated throughout north India on the night of January 1, 1925. Under the influence of the Great October Revolution of 1917, the manifesto described thus the objective of the Indian revolutionaries :

"The immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a federal republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution . . . The basic principle of this republic shall be universal suffrage and the abolition of all system which makes the exploitation of man by man possible . . . In this republic, the electors shall have the right to recall their representatives, if so desired, otherwise the democracy shall be a mockery . . ."

"The revolutionary party", the manifesto asserted, "is not national but international in the sense that its ultimate object is to bring harmony in the world . . . It aims not at competition but cooperation between two different nations and states, and in this respect, it follows the footsteps of the great Indian Rishis of the glorious past and of the Bolshevik Russia in the modern age . . ."²⁵

The manifesto also elucidated the viewpoint of the revolutionaries with regard to the communal question, the question of economic and social welfare of the people, and their approach towards the Congress and other parties.

On all these points, the manifesto registered a definite break from the past and showed a positive inclination towards socialism and Soviet Russia, hailing the latter as the first land of victorious socialism. It also displayed an understanding, though not very clear, of the international character of the national liberation movements. An effort was made to project a socio-economic order for the free and independent India of the future, with a realisation of the necessity of organising workers and peasants to achieve this goal. On all these points, the manifesto makes a departure, or an attempt to depart, from the revolutionaries of the earlier generations.

This, however, does not mean that the author of the manifesto was a Marxist or had grasped the meaning of scientific socialism. The author exhibits, in particular, strong inclination towards mysticism and God. "In the spiritual domain", says the manifesto, "the party aims at establishing the truth and preaching it, that the world is not 'Maya', an illusion to be ignored and despised at, but that it is the manifestation of the one indivisible soul, the supreme source of all power, all knowledge and all beauty." The author of the manifesto does accept the economic aspects of Marxism—certainly an advance over the pre-Kakori revolutionaries. But insofar as the philosophical aspects of Marxism are concerned, the author rejects materialism and sticks

to religion and God. Sanyal wrote later : "The materialist interpretation of history has got a special importance in communist philosophy, and in materialist interpretation of history, the concept of class struggle is present throughout like a running thread. . . I have not been able to accept these theories even today. . . ." 26

Another important point on which he differed from communism was the concept of proletarian leadership in revolution. According to him, the middle class youth alone were capable of giving the lead, while the workers and peasants would supply the soldiers for the revolutionary army. 27

The ideological stand of Shachindra Nath Sanyal and other revolutionaries of his time has been very nicely summed up by Satyendra Narayan Mazumdar in his book, *In Search of A Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme*. Referring to the two documents, namely "The Revolutionary" and the Constitution of the HRA, he writes : "The above two documents may be described as typical of the thinking of those revolutionaries who were then being attracted towards communism, yet could not completely overcome the influence of romantic revolutionism." 28 He then enumerates thus the strong points of the two documents : "The strong points are (a) a definite inclination towards communism and Bolshevik Russia as the first land of victorious socialism; (b) beginning of the understanding, though not yet very clear, of the international character of the national liberation revolution; (c) an attempt to outline the social and economic order of independent India; (d) the realisation of the necessity of organising the labourers and peasants and the determination to undertake these tasks; (e) introduction of the principles of democratic centralism in the party." 29

The weak points of the two documents, according to Mazumdar, are : (a) the inclination towards communism did not yet find a firm footing on the study of the theory of communism; (b) the real significance of the role of labourers and peasants in the struggle for national liberation was not yet clearly realised; (c) the influence of mysticism still lingered in the mind of the author of the manifesto; (d) it failed to envisage the impracticability of reconciling the campaign of counter-terrorism with the work of organising labourers and peasants; (e) it wrongly analysed the national situation in describing that "a spirit of utter helplessness pervades every strata of our society, and terrorism is an effective means of restoring the proper spirit in the society" etc. "By that time the toiling masses of India were already on the march.

Its advance guard, the working class, had already fought and was fighting heroic strike struggles in the teeth of severe police repression." 30

Similar developments were taking place in Bengal also, where several top leaders of Anushilan and Yugantar began to take interest in the Soviet Union and Comintern. But this interest was not based on the study of communism or a proper understanding of October Revolution and its significance. They only looked to the Soviet Union and Comintern as a "potential source for obtaining arms and other forms of assistance, such as training in the manufacture of explosives, etc. But when they found that neither the Soviet Government nor the Communist International encouraged armed action in isolation from the masses, their interest cooled down." 31

In this period, i.e. the second half of the twenties, communist ideas were gaining ground in India. Apart from the October Revolution and the defeat of imperialist intervention in Russia, there were several internal factors as well that were responsible for the shift. Some of these were : (a) Bolshevik Conspiracy Cases of Peshawar and Kanpur, (b) the militant kisan struggles in several parts of the country, (c) massive working class strikes throughout the country, (d) formation of the Workers & Peasants Party and (e) efforts to form a unified Communist Party by amalgamating various communist groups in the country. Under the impact of these national and international developments, a batch of the young workers of Anushilan broke away from the parent body and joined the communist movement. They commanded great respect among the Anushilan cadre and were, to a great extent, responsible for popularising communism among younger revolutionaries.

FORMATION OF THE HSRA

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In United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), almost the entire leadership was rounded up and thrown behind the bars in 1925 in connection with the Kakori Conspiracy Case. This meant a big set-back to the organisation of the Hindustan Republican Association. Only Chandra Shekhar Azad and Kundan Lal Gupta could escape arrest. All the others who remained out belonged to the second line. The responsibility to reorganise the party fell on these very second-liners. At that time, i.e. in 1926, one group was active at Lahore and another was trying to resume work at Kanpur. Ideologically, both the groups till that time were confused, though a search for the correct ideology had started. In

1930, became a mass phenomenon. A spirit of revolt had gripped the nation.

Bhagat Singh was correct. The spirit never dies. And it didn't die then either.

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21. L. P. Mathur, *op. cit.* p. 23.
22. *Ibid.* p. 29.
23. Presidential address to Special (Calcutta) Session of the Indian National Congress, September 1920. Quoted in R. P. Dutt, *India Today*, p. 280.

24. R. P. Dutt, *op. cit.* p. 284.
25. See Appendix I. [Shiv Verma : *Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh*].
26. Quoted from Sanyal's *Bandi Jeevan* (Hindi) by Vishwamitra Upadhya, *Shachindra Nath Sanyal aur Unka Yug*, p. 195.
27. *Ibid.* p. 156.
28. *Op. cit.*, 178.
29. *Ibid.* p. 177.
30. *Ibid.* p. 178.
31. *Ibid.* p. 154.
32. *Ibid.* pp. 181-2.
33. *Ibid.* p. 183.
34. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, Johan Lane the Bodley Head, London, 1936. pp. 364-5.
35. Quoted in Pratima Ghosh, *Meerut Conspiracy Case and the Left-Wing in India*, p. 47.
36. *Ibid.* p. 53.
37. The bill was to be discussed by the House on March 21, but the President postponed it for April 2, when he gave his ruling that the basis of the bill and the charges levelled against the Meerut Conspiracy Case accused were the same and, therefore, any discussion on the bill would prejudice the defence. He, therefore, disallowed the discussion. On April 4, the government placed the case before the House and pleaded for discussion. On April 11, the President over-ruled the government's plea and upheld his ruling. On April 13, the Viceroy promulgated the Ordinance.
38. Quoted by G. Adhikari in an article in *Mainstream*. April, 25, 1981.
39. G. Adhikari (ed.), *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, vol. II, p. 443.
40. *Ibid.* p. 442.
41. *Ibid.* p. 473.
42. S. N. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
43. G. S. Deol, *Sardar Bhagat Singh*, p. 112.
44. *Ibid.* p. 113.
45. Bipan Chandra, Introduction to *Why I am an Atheist ?*, Shahed Bhagat Singh Research Committee, New Delhi, 1979.
46. *Ibid.*

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He also told the Congress that if the anger of the people was not properly channelised, it would take its own course, which would not be in the interest of the country. "It is no use blinking the fact that we are passing through a revolutionary period", he declared, adding that "we are by instinct and tradition averse to revolutions".²³ The Congress discussed the warning at the Nagpur session and asked Gandhiji to start a non-cooperation movement. However, before starting the movement, the Mahatma visited Bengal and met some revolutionary leaders, asking them to give him one year's time, promising that in case he failed to achieve Swaraj in one year, the revolutionaries will be at liberty to follow their own path. To this, the revolutionaries agreed. Gandhiji started his non-cooperation movement which in no time engulfed the entire country, and the word Swaraj echoed in the remotest huts in the countryside. The peasantry plunged headlong into the movement, breaking all the restrictions laid down by Gandhiji. "The government was anxious and perplexed and began to lose its nerves. If the infection of universal defiance of the government spreads from the towns and begins to reach the millions of the peasantry, there was no salvation left for the British rule; all their guns and aeroplanes would not avail them in the seething cauldron of rebellion of three hundred millions".²⁴ Gandhiji too was equally nervous and unhappy. Waiting for an opportunity to withdraw the movement, he got it in Chauri Chaura in February 1922. Instead of welcoming the incident and asking for thousands more of Chauri Chauras, he quietly, and on his own, withdrew the movement and retired from politics. It was in this background that the revolutionaries, who had put down their arms at the Mahatma's request, decided to re-organise and take to arms again.

THE HINDUSTAN REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION **

The initiative to organise the revolutionaries into a single all-India party was taken by Shachindra Nath Sanyal. Towards the end of 1923, he founded Hindustan Republican Association. He also prepared a constitution of the party, which was printed on yellow paper and became for that reason known as the Yellow Paper. Another important document prepared by him was a manifesto of the HRA, titled "The Revolutionary". The latter document was widely circulated throughout north India on the night of January 1, 1925. Under the influence of the Great October Revolution of 1917, the manifesto described thus the objective of the Indian revolutionaries :

"The immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a federal republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution . . . The basic principle of this republic shall be universal suffrage and the abolition of all system which makes the exploitation of man by man possible . . . In this republic, the electors shall have the right to recall their representatives, if so desired, otherwise the democracy shall be a mockery . . ."

"The revolutionary party", the manifesto asserted, "is not national but international in the sense that its ultimate object is to bring harmony in the world . . . It aims not at competition but cooperation between two different nations and states, and in this respect, it follows the footsteps of the great Indian Rishis of the glorious past and of the Bolshevik Russia in the modern age . . ." ²⁵

The manifesto also elucidated the viewpoint of the revolutionaries with regard to the communal question, the question of economic and social welfare of the people, and their approach towards the Congress and other parties.

On all these points, the manifesto registered a definite break from the past and showed a positive inclination towards socialism and Soviet Russia, hailing the latter as the first land of victorious socialism. It also displayed an understanding, though not very clear, of the international character of the national liberation movements. An effort was made to project a socio-economic order for the free and independent India of the future, with a realisation of the necessity of organising workers and peasants to achieve this goal. On all these points, the manifesto makes a departure, or an attempt to depart, from the revolutionaries of the earlier generations.

This, however, does not mean that the author of the manifesto was a Marxist or had grasped the meaning of scientific socialism. The author exhibits, in particular, strong inclination towards mysticism and God. "In the spiritual domain", says the manifesto, "the party aims at establishing the truth and preaching it, that the world is not 'Maya', an illusion to be ignored and despised at, but that it is the manifestation of the one indivisible soul, the supreme source of all power, all knowledge and all beauty." The author of the manifesto does accept the economic aspects of Marxism—certainly an advance over the pre-Kakori revolutionaries. But insofar as the philosophical aspects of Marxism are concerned, the author rejects materialism and sticks

to religion and God. Sanyal wrote later : "The materialist interpretation of history has got a special importance in communist philosophy, and in materialist interpretation of history, the concept of class struggle is present throughout like a running thread. . . I have not been able to accept these theories even today. . . ." 26

Another important point on which he differed from communism was the concept of proletarian leadership in revolution. According to him, the middle class youth alone were capable of giving the lead, while the workers and peasants would supply the soldiers for the revolutionary army. 27

The ideological stand of Shachindra Nath Sanyal and other revolutionaries of his time has been very nicely summed up by Satyendra Narayan Mazamdar in his book, *In Search of A Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme*. Referring to the two documents, namely "The Revolutionary" and the Constitution of the HRA, he writes : "The above two documents may be described as typical of the thinking of those revolutionaries who were then being attracted towards communism, yet could not completely overcome the influence of romantic revolutionism." 28 He then enumerates thus the strong points of the two documents : "The strong points are (a) a definite inclination towards communism and Bolshevik Russia as the first land of victorious socialism; (b) beginning of the understanding, though not yet very clear, of the international character of the national liberation revolution; (c) an attempt to outline the social and economic order of independent India; (d) the realisation of the necessity of organising the labourers and peasants and the determination to undertake these tasks; (e) introduction of the principles of democratic centralism in the party." 29

The weak points of the two documents, according to Mazamdar, are : (a) the inclination towards communism did not yet find a firm footing on the study of the theory of communism; (b) the real significance of the role of labourers and peasants in the struggle for national liberation was not yet clearly realised; (c) the influence of mysticism still lingered in the mind of the author of the manifesto; (d) it failed to envisage the impracticability of reconciling the campaign of counter-terrorism with the work of organising labourers and peasants; (e) it wrongly analysed the national situation in describing that "a spirit of utter helplessness pervades every strata of our society, and terrorism is an effective means of restoring the proper spirit in the society" etc. "By that time the toiling masses of India were already on the march.

Its advance guard, the working class, had already fought and was fighting heroic strike struggles in the teeth of severe police repression." 30

Similar developments were taking place in Bengal also, where several top leaders of Anushilan and Yugantar began to take interest in the Soviet Union and Comintern. But this interest was not based on the study of communism or a proper understanding of October Revolution and its significance. They only looked to the Soviet Union and Comintern as a "potential source for obtaining arms and other forms of assistance, such as training in the manufacture of explosives, etc. But when they found that neither the Soviet Government nor the Communist International encouraged armed action in isolation from the masses, their interest cooled down." 31

In this period, i.e. the second half of the twenties, communist ideas were gaining ground in India. Apart from the October Revolution and the defeat of imperialist intervention in Russia, there were several internal factors as well that were responsible for the shift. Some of these were : (a) Bolshevik Conspiracy Cases of Peshawar and Kanpur, (b) the militant kisan struggles in several parts of the country, (c) massive working class strikes throughout the country, (d) formation of the Workers & Peasants Party and (e) efforts to form a unified Communist Party by amalgamating various communist groups in the country. Under the impact of these national and international developments, a batch of the young workers of Anushilan broke away from the parent body and joined the communist movement. They commanded great respect among the Anushilan cadre and were, to a great extent, responsible for popularising communism among younger revolutionaries.

FORMATION OF THE HSRA

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In United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), almost the entire leadership was rounded up and thrown behind the bars in 1925 in connection with the Kakori Conspiracy Case. This meant a big set-back to the organisation of the Hindustan Republican Association. Only Chandra Shekhar Azad and Kundan Lal Gupta could escape arrest. All the others who remained out belonged to the second line. The responsibility to reorganise the party fell on these very second-liners. At that time, i.e. in 1926, one group was active at Lahore and another was trying to resume work at Kanpur. Ideologically, both the groups till that time were confused, though a search for the correct ideology had started. In

one sense, both the centres were rather fortunate and found able guides to lead them

—LAHORE GROUP *

The Lahore Group, and Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev in particular, were more influenced by the Russian anarchist Bakunin. The credit to bring Bhagat Singh from anarchism to socialism goes to two persons—late Comrade Sohan Singh Josh and Lala Chhabil Das. Josh was a well-known communist leader and was editing a monthly magazine in Punjabi, known as *Kirti*. He discussed different subjects with Bhagat Singh and encouraged him to write in *Kirti*. Lala Chhabil Das was the principal of Tilak School of Politics, also known as National College, founded by Lala Lajpat Rai. Lala Chhabil Das was a well-read man and inclined towards socialism. He used to suggest to the young revolutionaries what to read and how to read. Bhagawati Charan Vohra, by the way, was inclined to socialism from the very beginning. But all guidance from Josh and all suggestions from Lala Chhabil Das would have been in vain without availability of books, the requirements whereof were partly fulfilled by Dwarkadas Library of Lala Lajpat Rai, which had a good collection of books on politics, including such books on Marxism and Soviet Russia as were not banned by the government. The Lahore revolutionaries had easy access to this library through its librarian, Raja Ram Shastri who was sympathetic to their activities. Another source of books was a bookseller called Rama Krishan, & Sons of Anarkali Bazar, which was also an expert in smuggling the banned books from England. The Punjab revolutionaries, especially Bhagat Singh and Bhagawati Charan, made full use of these facilities. (Raja Ram Shastri once told the author of these lines that Bhagat Singh literally used to devour books. His thirst for knowledge was ever unquenched. He would read books, make notes, discuss with his friends and self-critically examine his own understanding in the light of new knowledge, rectifying the mistakes that came to be discovered.) All these factors enabled the Lahore Group to develop fast. The result was that, by the beginning of 1928, they had discarded anarchism and accepted socialism as their creed. This, however, does not mean that they had understood Marxism in its totality. Hangovers of the past still remained.

—KANPUR GROUP *

The Kanpur Group was also moving along the same lines, though its pace was not as rapid as that of the Lahore Group. At Kanpur, there were Radha Mohan Gokulji, Satya Bhakta and Maulana Husrat Mohani who had already declared that they were

communists. Of these, the first deserves special mention. Radha Mohan Gokulji had a good collection of books, was studious and wielded a powerful pen. As early as 1927, he had penned *Communism Kya Hai* (What is Communism) which explained to the laity, in a lucid style and simple language, the salient points of the communist doctrine. (The author of these lines owes his first education in communism to Gokulji.) Radha Mohan Gokulji was a staunch atheist and wrote several articles in popular style against God, religion, superstition, etc., for which the great Hindi-Urdu writer Prem Chand had nicknamed him "modern *Charwak*".

Satya Bhakta's communism was tainted with spiritualism, while Maulana's ideas were a blend of communism and Islamic precepts. In spite of these traits, these three persons played, at that time, an important role in making Soviet Russia and communism popular. The Kanpur Group of young revolutionaries got its baptism in socialism through these very people. Shaukat Usmani was also in touch with the Kanpur Group through Vijay Kumar Sinha, though we did not receive theoretical guidance from him. Another prominent figure of Kanpur who helped revolutionaries in so many ways was Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. His main insistence was on political studies and work among the masses.

The net result of all this was that the Kanpur Group also got inclined towards socialism. However, this inclination was more emotional than rational. By this time, the Kanpur Group had established contacts with Chandra Shekhar Azad and Kundan Lal, both of whom were declared absconders in the Kakori Conspiracy Case.

—1928 & AFTER *

This was the background when, in the beginning of 1928, Bhagat Singh took initiative and floated the idea of forming an all-India organisation of revolutionaries by bringing different groups together. His proposals were: (a) that a time had come to boldly declare socialism as our ultimate goal, (b) that the name of the party should be changed accordingly so that our people might know what was our ultimate aim, (c) that we should undertake only such actions which might have direct relationship with the demands and sentiments of the people, and that we should not fritter our time and energy in killing petty police officials or informers, (d) that, for funds, we should lay our hands on government money and avoid, as far as possible, actions on private houses, and (e) that the principle of collective leadership should be strictly observed. He discussed all these

points with his comrades at Lahore and Kanpur, and also obtained approval from the two absconders, Azad and Kundan Lal. It was thereafter decided that a meeting of representatives from different provinces be convened at Delhi on 8th and 9th of September 1928. Representatives from five provinces were invited. Four provinces agreed to participate in Delhi discussions, while Bengal opted out. In this connection, S. N. Mazumdar writes that "Bengal representatives of the HRA did not attend the meeting as the party there was reported to be opposed to terrorism and violence." This version is not correct.

The writer of these lines himself was sent to Calcutta towards the third week of August 1928, to discuss the proposals with Bengal comrades and urge them to attend the Delhi meeting. The contact was established by one Tarapade of Varanasi. [At Calcutta, I was introduced to a man who, I was told, had just been released from jail. He was an elderly looking man with a fat and flabby body, with repulsive manners. From his manner of talking, I immediately understood that I was face to face with an arrogant and haughty man with dictatorial tendencies. Four or five young people who remained there throughout addressed him as Sushilda. As soon as I entered his room, he started reprimanding the U. P. group for the Kakori action. "Why did you do it without our permission? And now, after finishing the whole organisation, what is the use of your coming here and asking us for help?" I told him I was not there for seeking his help, but rather for discussing certain proposals and extending an invitation for the Delhi meeting. Then I explained to him our proposals point-by-point and requested him to attend the Delhi meeting. He said he would participate in the meeting on his own conditions and wanted an assurance from me that his conditions would be accepted. These conditions were: (a) that we shall have no trek with socialism or communism, (b) that the name of the party will not be changed, (c) that no Kakori type action, which may put us in confrontation with the government, would be attempted in future without his permission, (d) that no central committee business would be there, and that we would have to work in Bengal through him only, (e) that we would confine our activities to organisation, collection of arms and fund raising only, and (f) that, for funds, only non-political actions would be permitted. I tried to persuade him to participate in the meeting without imposing any preconditions, but that he flatly refused. Since all his conditions were a complete negation of our approach, I politely expressed my inability to oblige him. The Delhi meeting was, therefore, held without the participation of

Bengal representatives.] In all, ten comrades representing four provinces, assembled in Kotla Feroz Shah on September 8, 1928. The break-up was: two from Punjab, two from Bihar, one from Rajasthan and five from U. P., Out of the five from U.P. two, however, did not sit in the meeting as some of their conditions were not accepted by others. Thus only eight persons participated in the deliberations. Azad was not brought to Delhi for security reasons, but he had already given his approval to all the points. After a two-day long session, Bhagat Singh's proposals were accepted by a majority of six to two. Phanindra Nath Ghosh and Manmohan Banerji, both from Bihar, opposed the idea of socialism as well as a change in the name of the party. Subsequently, however, when Bhagat Singh went to Calcutta in December 1928, and met Trailokya Chakravarty and Pratul Ganguli, who had by that time come out of jail, he was informed that the man who had come to invite the Bengal revolutionaries for Delhi meeting, was unfortunately introduced to a wrong man. Bhagat Singh reported the Delhi decisions to both the leaders and obtained their assent on all the points. They also agreed to send Yatindra Nath Das to Agra to train some of us in manufacturing bombs.

By 1928, we had accepted socialism in theory; in practice, the hangover of the past was still there. However, it is wrong to assert that the murder of Saunders and dropping of bombs in the Central Assembly were the outcomes of some sense of frustration on the part of Bhagat Singh, as S. N. Mazumdar has tried to make out: "Trailokya Chakravarty advised him (Bhagat Singh) to build up a volunteer corps of five thousand young men on the pattern of the volunteer corps organised on the occasion of the Calcutta session of the Congress. Chakravarty has further written that Bhagat Singh tried to carry out his advice, but failed. This created a frustration in his mind and confirmed his belief in the imperative necessity of doing something sensational. Soon after that occurred the bomb throwing in the Central Assembly." 32

This whole statement is, however, contrary to the facts. Firstly, Bhagat Singh never took any major political step without taking the HSRA Central Committee into confidence. The question of organising a volunteer corps of five thousand youth never came up for discussion. Secondly, the very idea of a volunteer corps was utopian. It was one thing to organise a volunteer corps of five thousand with the help of money bags, and that too for four or five days, but to build up such a big army of politically conscious, trained and disciplined youth for secret revolutionary work was not possible in a few months. It may

be noted that Bhagat Singh returned from Calcutta in the first week of January 1929. Yatindra Nath Das came to Agra in February, when every one got occupied in one way or another in the setting up a bomb factory. The decision to throw bombs in the Central Assembly was taken at Agra in the last week of February, before the Meerut arrests took place. Thus the question of Bhagat Singh trying to carry out Trailokya Babu's advice, failing and getting frustrated, does not arise. This theory of failure and frustration robs the Assembly action of the entire political content and reduces it to a simple act of frustration.

Another equally damaging story has come from Manmath Nath Gupta. Relying on a totally concocted story floated by Sukhdevraj, who was nowhere in the picture in 1928 and the first half of 1929, Gupta has asserted that the party was in favour of sending Sukhdev and Batukeshwar Dutt to throw bombs in the Assembly. But due to his personal jealousies against Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev practically compelled Bhagat Singh to accompany Batukeshwar Dutt. Chandra Shekhar Azad and others were to escort them back to safety. But Bhagat Singh did not agree to the latter part of the decision and argued that his supreme sacrifice was called for to awaken the masses.³³

Here, the very thesis that Sukhdev was chosen for Assembly action is wrong. The two names which were finalised in the first day's meeting were those of Batukeshwar Dutt and Vijay Kumar Sinha. At no stage Sukhdev's name came up for consideration for this purpose. The whole consideration was that of politics and not of personal jealousies or rivalries which, fortunately, did not exist amongst us. There is no doubt that Sukhdev was fully responsible for sending Bhagat Singh in place of Vijay Kumar for throwing of the bombs in the Central Assembly. He did it because he earnestly believed that the political purpose of the action would not be achieved in case any other comrade goes in place of Bhagat Singh.

As for offering himself for the supreme sacrifice, there was no dearth of sacrifices in the revolutionary movement (and every sacrifice was supreme). The main question was not of sacrifice but of telling the people in clear terms the aims and objectives of the movement. It was not that Bhagat Singh was a frustrated and disappointed youth who found an easy way to finish his life through the Assembly action.

HOW & WHY THE DECISION WAS TAKEN

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The years of the twenties in general and those of 1928-1930 in particular were of great significance in the history of India's freedom struggle. It was during this period that the Left started asserting itself in an organised manner. Massive militant strikes of the working class were a countrywide phenomenon; and organised trade union activity was on the increase, enabling the workers to struggle more effectively for better working conditions and higher wages; communist influence was rapidly growing amongst the workers, youth and students. For the first time, an organised broad-based Left-wing political movement was coming up in the country. Describing the state of thinking of the younger generation of that period, Jawaharlal Nehru has written: "Vague communistic and socialistic ideas had spread among intelligentsia, even among government officials. The younger men and women of the Congress, who used to read Bryce on Democracy and Morley and Keith and Mazzini, were now reading, when they could get them, books on socialism and communism and Russia. The Meerut Conspiracy Case had helped greatly in directing people's minds to these new ideas, and the world crisis had compelled attention. Everywhere there was in evidence a new spirit of enquiry, a questioning and a challenge to existing institutions. The general direction of the mental wind was obvious, but still it was a gentle breeze, unsure of itself" ³⁴

The British imperialists felt concerned over all this, and they decided to crush the movement in the beginning itself. A single instance will be enough to show how panicky the officials were and how the government was moving. Sir David Patric, Director of Intelligence Bureau, in his report on communism in India, which he prepared in 1926, described the nature of the "Bolshevik menace" in the following terms:

"Sir Cecil Kaye rightly saw the germs of a definite plot against India in the 'Thesis' passed in the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, which stated that the "national-ist movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was objectively, fundamentally a revolutionary struggle, and as such it formed a part of the struggle for world revolution". There can be no doubt whatever... that Great Britain has drawn upon herself the main force of the Bolshevik attack... partly as one of the chief bulwark against the worldwide revolution which the Bolsheviks regard as the essential condition of their

ultimate success. The Bolsheviks are convinced that, in the British Empire, the most vulnerable point is India . . . and they cherish it as an article of faith that till India is liberated, Russia will not be rid of the menace of England." 35

Mr. J. Crerer, then Home Member of the Government of India, observed that there was nothing more destructive of an ordered society than the doctrine and practice of communism. 36

In order to crush communism, the Left and the working class movement, the government decided to introduce two bills in the Central Assembly—the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill. The first was directed against persons not being British Indian subjects or subjects of an Indian princely State. Through this measure, the Governor-General-in-Council was to be given powers to remove from India, British and foreign communists. The second bill was intended to be used to curtail the trade union rights of the workers.

Both the bills were opposed by the entire opposition in the Assembly, the people and the nationalist press. Ignoring the all-round opposition, the government introduced the Public Safety Bill in the Assembly on September 6, 1928. It was rejected by the House on September 24. In January 1929, the government resubmitted it before the Assembly in revised form. 37

Bhagat Singh was at Agra when the news flashed that the government had decided to reintroduce the bill in the Assembly. His reaction to the news was quite sharp and he declared that something must be done to protest against this high-handed attitude of the government. He went to Lahore, discussed his proposals with Sukhdev, came back, requisitioned a meeting of the Central Committee and placed his suggestions before it. His proposals, in brief, were : (1) the party should protest against the adamant attitude of the government by throwing bombs in the Assembly, (2) those selected for the action should not try to escape but surrender and, during the course of the trial, use the forum of the court to propagate the aims and objects of the party, and (3) he, along with one more comrade, should be permitted to carry out the decision. His first two suggestions were hailed by the entire CC, but the third was not acceptable to any. Sukhdev was not present in the first day's sitting. He came the next day. He presence in the second day's session gave additional support to Bhagat Singh and, after much discussion, the CC ultimately agreed to the third proposal as well.

The second bill (the Trade Disputes Bill) was first introduced in the Assembly on September 4, 1928. It was referred to the Select Committee and was, with certain modifications, taken up for discussion on April 2, 1929. The House passed the bill on April 8 by a majority of 56 to 38. As soon as the President rose to announce the result of the voting, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw a bomb each. They also shouted slogans and distributed leaflets. The full text of the leaflet, explaining the motive behind the action, was published by *The Hindustan Times* in its special evening supplement the same day. This brings us to an important, though short-lived, phase of the revolutionary movement, sometimes called terro-communism.

"TERRO-COMMUNISM"

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The Lahore and Kanpur groups of revolutionaries had started moving towards socialism in 1926-27. In the Delhi meeting of September 8, though socialism was accepted as the ideology and establishment of a socialist society as the ultimate aim of the party, in practice we stuck to our old individual style of actions. We talked of organising the workers, peasants, youth and middle class intelligentsia; yet, except for the formation of Naujawan Bharat Sabha in Punjab, no serious effort was made in that direction anywhere else. In this regard, our understanding of scientific socialism, i.e. Marxism, was faulty. We failed to understand that Marxism does not permit the separation of theory from practice and that there is no place for individual actions in it. We hoped to combine violent activities, which included murder of tyrannical government officials and sporadic insurrections, with the building up of mass organisations of workers, peasants, youth, students. But, in practice, our main emphasis remained on preparations for violent activities and armed actions. This, we thought, was necessary for rousing the people from their slumber and also for retaliation against mass repression resorted to by the government. While talking to Comrade Sohan Singh Josh at Calcutta in December 1928, at the time of the Calcutta Session of the Congress, Bhagat Singh had said: "We entirely agree with the programme and activities of your party, but there are times when the blow of the enemy has to be immediately counteracted by armed actions to inspire confidence among the masses." 38 That is how our minds were working then. The inherent contradiction in our approach had its own logic. Our decision to organise the workers and peasants remained only a pious wish. The major part of our resources went in organising retaliatory actions.

INTERNATIONAL APPEALS *

An effort was made to correct our faulty understanding by the Third International through the CPI, formed abroad, through an "Appeal to the Nationalists". It was published as a supplement to *Vanguard*, dated December 15, 1924. The Appeal contained the following about the revolutionaries :

"No less futile is sporadic terrorism carried on by secret societies. Those who resort to the futility of this extremism possess an equally wrong conception of revolution. Violence is not per se an essential attribute of revolution. Under the present state of society, political and social revolutions can hardly be expected to be bloodless and non-violent ; but everything bloody and violent is not revolutionary. A particular social system or political institution can never be overthrown by assassinating individuals upholding them. It is no more possible to win national independence by killing a number of officials than by a series of reforms acts passed by the British Parliament. One method is as impotent as the other, because none of them strikes at the root of the evil. Both are political blunders ; but it is preposterous to call the terrorists "revolutionary criminals", as the "constituationalists" are positively non-revolutionary, and will become counter-revolutionaries as soon as the fateful moment comes." 39

At another place in the same article, a proper definition of revolution was also provided :

"What is a revolution ? A very wrong notion about it obtains among Indian nationalist circles. Revolution is generally associated with bombs, revolvers and secret societies. Hence arises the expression "revolutionary crime" so current in Indian political terminology. Revolution, however, is a much greater affair. An important historical event which marks the close of a given historical period and opens up a new one, is called a revolution. Since the social factors, economic classes and political institutions that used to be benefited by the state of affairs obtaining in the closing period, would not permit a change which spells the end of their domination, often their total annihilation, without a fierce resistance, political violence and social convulsions are usually the features of the historical phenomenon which is called "revolution." 40

In 1925, the Young Communist International issued an appeal to the Bengal Revolutionary Organisation of the Youth. It was in the form of a Manifesto of the Young Communist

International and was published in *Masses*, (vol. I, on. 7.) The Manifesto acknowledged the fact that the revolutionary youths of the Orient were playing a most important part in the struggle for national liberation. Expressing profound respect for the heroism of "the hero-terrorist who sacrifices his life for the cause of the people", the Manifesto opined, however, that "a revolutionary who is fighting for the cause of the people has the moral right to remove the executioners and the garroters of the people." 41

STEP BY STEP TOWARDS SOCIALISM *

Unfortunately, none of these documents reached us in time, leaving us to learn from our own experience. It took three years for us to realise the limitations of individual actions. We moved towards socialism step by step, and it was only after our arrests that we got enough time and material to read, discuss, ponder over our past and come to correct conclusions.

This, however, does not mean that the period under review had nothing positive to its credit. There were weak points of course, but there were strong points as well. I have already explained the main defects in our understanding. To recount them in brief : firstly, our acceptance of communism was not based on a proper study of Marxism. Under the conditions prevailing in our country at the time, such a study of Marxism was not so easy either. Our second main weakness was our failure to realise the impracticability of reconciling counter-terrorism with the work of organising the workers and peasants.

With all these shortcomings and limitations, the short-lived phase under review had some very important positive achievements to its credit. The Manifesto of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. Lahore (1928), the Statement made by Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt during the Assembly Bomb Case trial (1929), the Manifesto of the HSRA distributed at the time of Lahore Session of the Congress (December 1929), and *The Philosophy of the Bomb* (January 1930) are the best representative documents of this period. On the basis of these documents, we can say that the first major step forward taken by the HSRA was the acceptance of Marxism as its ideology and socialism as the ultimate goal of the movement. In Bengal too, the direction of the movement was the same, though the march was comparatively slow. It may be noted that while the HSRA had publicly declared socialism as its goal, in Bengal almost all the major parties and groups were still undecided on the subject.

Besides accepting socialism as their goal, the revolutionaries of this period (i) stood for a classless society, free from exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation, (ii) declared that their battle was not only against British imperialism but against the imperialist system as a whole, (iii) had a profound respect for and a feeling of oneness with the Soviet Union, (iv) believed that the form of government that will come up after the revolution will be some sort of dictatorship of the proletariat, (v) gave a complete good-bye to God, religion and mysticism, (vi) believed in secularism and were strongly anti-communal in their outlook.

HSRA CONTRIBUTION *

After the Assembly action, most of the leading HSRA comrades were arrested and put behind the bars. They, as under-trials, made full use of the court as a platform to propagate their views, popularise the ideas of socialism, and put before the public the aims and objects of the revolutionary party.

The strategy worked. Writes S. N. Mazumdar: "In spite of mistakes and weaknesses, the contribution of HSRA both to the national movement as a whole and to the cause of attracting the younger generation of revolutionaries towards communism cannot be neglected." 42

According to G. S. Deol: "However limited may be the scope and extent of the movement . . . it did accelerate the pace of the Indian national movement through a different tributary . . . Indeed it can be said that their (Bhagat Singh and his comrades—ed.) activities paved the way for the Indian National Congress to demand complete independence and pass the resolution on Purna Swaraj, at the Lahore Session held on December 1929." 43

The activities and struggles of the revolutionaries according to Deol, had created a very explosive situation in the country, which forced the Congress to start the non-cooperation movement of 1930. "That movement was started as an alternative to the violent movement of Bhagat Singh and his comrades." This view is supported by an extract from a letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to the Viceroy of the 2nd of March, 1930. "The party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt," wrote Gandhiji. He further declared that the non-violent struggle he had decided to set in motion would "combat not only the violent force of the British rule but also the organised violent forces of the growing party of violence." 44

ONWARD TO SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM **

By the middle of 1929, a majority of the leading comrades of the HSRA were arrested and put in jail, where they got full opportunity to read and discuss. In the light of their new understanding, they subjected their entire past to renewed scrutiny, especially the idea of individual actions and heroism, and finally decided to abandon it in favour of the idea of a socialist revolution. After intensive studies and prolonged discussions with other comrades in Borstal Jail, Bhagat Singh came to the conclusion that individual killings of informers and officers here and there would not lead to realisation of the goal.

On October 19, 1929, Bhagat Singh sent a message to the Punjab Students' Conference, in which he said: "Today we cannot ask the youth to take to pistols and bombs. . . . They have to awaken the crores of slum-dwellers of the industrial areas and villagers living in worn-out cottages."

On February 2, 1931, he wrote an appeal *To The Young Political Workers*. In that Appeal too, Bhagat Singh had, again and again, emphasised on the importance of work among the masses. "The real revolutionary armies," he said, "are in the villages and in factories, the peasants and the labourers."

In the same Appeal, he emphatically denied that he was a terrorist, and said: "I have acted like a terrorist. But I am not a terrorist. I am a revolutionary who has got such definite ideas of a lengthy programme. . . . Let me announce with all the strength at my command that I am not a terrorist and I never was, except perhaps in the beginning of my revolutionary career. and I am convinced that we cannot gain anything through these methods" He advised young political workers to read Marx and Lenin, take their teachings as guide to action, go to the people, work among the workers, peasants and educated middle-class youth, educate them politically and make them class conscious, organise them in unions, etc. on class basis. He also told them that all this work will not be possible without a party of the people. Elucidating his idea of a party, he wrote: "We require—to use the word so dear to Lenin—the professional revolutionaries, the whole-time workers, who have no other ambitions or life work except the revolution. The greater the number of such workers organised into a party, the greater the chance of your success."

And further :

"To proceed systematically, what you need the most is a party with workers of the type discussed above, with clear-cut ideas and keen perception and ability of initiative and quick decision. The party shall have iron discipline and it need not necessarily be an 'underground party; rather the contrary. . . . The party should start with the work of mass propaganda. . . . It is very essential for gaining the active sympathy of and organising the peasants and workers. The name of the party or rather, a communist party. This party of political workers, bound by strict discipline, should handle all other movement. . . ."

Here Bhagat Singh comes out openly for Marxism, for communism and for a communist party.

REVOLUTION DEFINED

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Bhagat Singh's concept of revolution also was very clear. He was asked in the lower court what he meant by the word "revolution".

In answer to the question, he said: "Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and the pistol. By revolution, we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change." Elucidating his point further, he said: "By revolution we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such break-downs and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognised, and a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and misery of imperial wars."

Bhagat Singh's ideological march towards socialism was very rapid. He extensively studied various subjects during the period 1924 to 1928. According to late Raja Ram Shastri, during this period, Bhagat Singh used to "devour books". His favourite subjects were Russian revolution, the Soviet Union, revolutionary movements of Ireland, France and India, anarchism and Marxism. By the end of 1928, he and his comrades declared socialism as the ultimate goal of their movement and changed the name of their party accordingly. This march continued unabated till the date of his execution. "In this process, he brought under critical scrutiny all contemporary views, including his own, regarding nationalist movement, the character of the contemporary world-wide revolutionary process, anarchism,

socialism, violence and non-violence, revolutionary terrorism, religion, communalism, older revolutionaries and contemporary nationalists, etc." 45

ON GOD & RELIGION

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This 'Introduction' will remain incomplete without a few words regarding Bhagat Singh's ideas about God, religion and mysticism. It is necessary because, nowadays, all sorts of reactionaries, obscurantists and communalists are trying to utilise, for their own politics and ideologies, the name and fame of Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad.

While declaring himself an atheist, "Bhagat Singh shows full understanding for the approach and viewpoint of the early revolutionaries and traces the source of their religiosity. He points out that in the absence of a scientific understanding of their own political activity, they needed irrational beliefs and mysticism to sustain themselves spiritually. to struggle against personal temptations, to overcome depression, to be able to sacrifice their physical comforts, families and even life. When one is constantly willing to risk one's life and make all other sacrifices, a person requires deep source of inspiration. This necessary need was, in the case of early revolutionary terrorists, met by mysticism and religion. But these were no longer necessary as source of inspiration for those who understood the nature of their activities, who had advanced to a revolutionary ideology, who could struggle against oppression without artificial spiritual crutches, who could confidently and without fear mount the gallows without requiring the consolation and comfort of 'eternal' salvation, who fought for freedom and emancipation of the oppressed because they could not do otherwise." 46

In his statement before the Lahore High Court during the Assembly Bomb Case appeal, Bhagat Singh emphasised the importance of ideas, saying that "the sword of revolution is sharpened at the whet-stone of thoughts", and on the basis of that he laid down that "criticism and independent thinking are the two indispensable qualities of a revolutionary", and that "any man who stands for progress has to criticise, disbelieve and challenge every item of the old faith. Item by item he has to reason out every nook and corner of the prevailing faith "

"Mere faith and blind faith", he asserted, "is dangerous, it dulls the brain and makes a man reactionary."

While admitting that "in God, a weak man finds strong consolation and support and that belief softens hardships, even can make them pleasant", and knowing that "to stand upon one's own legs amid storms and hurricanes is not a child's play", he firmly rejected the idea of any artificial limb for support. "I don't want any intoxication to meet my fate", he said. "Any man", he declared, "who tries to stand on his own legs and become a realist shall have to throw the faith aside and face manfully all the distress and trouble in which the circumstances may throw him."

This rejection of God, faith and religion was neither fortitious nor a product of false ego or vanity on his part. He rejected God as early as 1926. "By the end of 1926", he writes, "I had been convinced as to the baselessness of the theory of existence of an Almighty supreme being who created, guided and controlled the universe."

* * *

THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES **

It was the last Sunday of July 1930. Bhagat Singh had come from Lahore Central Jail to see us all in the Borstal Jail. This was his regular practice. On the plea of discussing the line of defence with other accused, he had succeeded in extracting that facility from the government. We were discussing some political issue when the conversation shifted to the judgement we were keenly awaiting. By way of joke, we pronounced judgements against one another, excepting Raj Guru and Bhagat Singh. We knew they would be hanged.

"And what about Raj Guru and myself? Are you going to acquit us?" asked Bhagat Singh with a smile.

No one replied.

"Afraid to recognise the reality?" he asked in a whispering tone.

Silence.

He laughed over our silence and said: "To be hanged by the neck till we are dead. That is the reality, comrades. I know it. You also know it. Then, why shut eyes to it?"

Bhagat Singh was then in his form. He was speaking at a low pitch. That was his style. To a listener, it would appear

as if he was trying to persuade him. Shouting was not his habit. That was perhaps his strength also.

He continued in his usual style: "This is the highest award for patriotism, and I am proud that I am going to get it. They think that by destroying my terrestrial body, they will be safe in this country. They are wrong. They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas. They can crush my body, but they will not be able to crush my spirit. My ideas will haunt the British like a curse till they are forced to run away from here."

Bhagat Singh was speaking with full passion at his command, and for some time, we all forgot that the man sitting in front of us was a colleague of ours. He continued:

"But this is only one side of the picture. The other side is equally bright. Bhagat Singh dead will be more dangerous to the British enslavers than Bhagat Singh alive. After I am hanged, the fragrance of my revolutionary ideas will permeate the atmosphere of this beautiful land of ours. It will intoxicate the youth and make him mad for freedom and revolution, and that will bring the doom of the British imperialists nearer. This is my firm conviction. I am anxiously waiting for the day when I will receive the highest award for my services to the country and my love for my people."

* * *

Within a year Bhagat Singh's prophecy came true. His name became a symbol of the death-defying courage, sacrifice, patriotism and determination; his dreams of establishing a socialist society caught the imagination of the educated youth and his slogan of *Inqilab Zindabad* (Long Live Revolution) became the battle-cry of the entire nation. People rose like one man in 1930-32. Imprisonments, floggings and lathi-charges could not shake their morale. The same spirit, on a higher level, was witnessed during the Quit India days. With Bhagat Singh's name on their lips and his slogan on their banners, the teenagers and young urchins faced bullets as if they were made of butter. The whole nation had gone mad. And then came the period of 1945-46, when the world witnessed an entirely new India coming up. Workers, peasants, students, youth, the navy, army, air force, even the police—all were out to hit hard. The passive resistance yielded place to active retaliation. That spirit of sacrifice and suffering, which was displayed by only a few till

1930, became a mass phenomenon. A spirit of revolt had gripped the nation.

Bhagat Singh was correct. The spirit never dies. And it didn't die then either.

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During recent years, he has been actively associated in promoting environmental safety, protection of consumers' interests, social and cultural harmony and other development activities including Panchayati Raj and educational reforms. He is also editing *Indian Book Chronicle* since 1985-86.

→ *Bhagat Singh in Prison*

During this period, he was also being tried in the Lahore Conspiracy Case or the Saunders Murder Case, which resulted in the pronouncement of death sentence against Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev and prison sentences against several others.

It is indeed surprising that, involved as he was in these exacting activities, Bhagat Singh could concentrate on his reading. What is more important, he was also able to write 4 books (maybe short tracts). The manuscripts survived him for almost a decade, but were lost in the hectic days of the 1942 movement. One document which, however, survived was the exercise-book in which he was recording notes from his readings and planning a possible future study of revolutionary politics relating to state, society and revolution.

His notes are now available in this compilation. They carry in them, for the generations which follow, his message of revolutionary action. "Revolution is not a cult of the bomb..." he had emphasised. "It is aimed at a total transformation of the social order and building a new world... of freedom, equity and justice..."