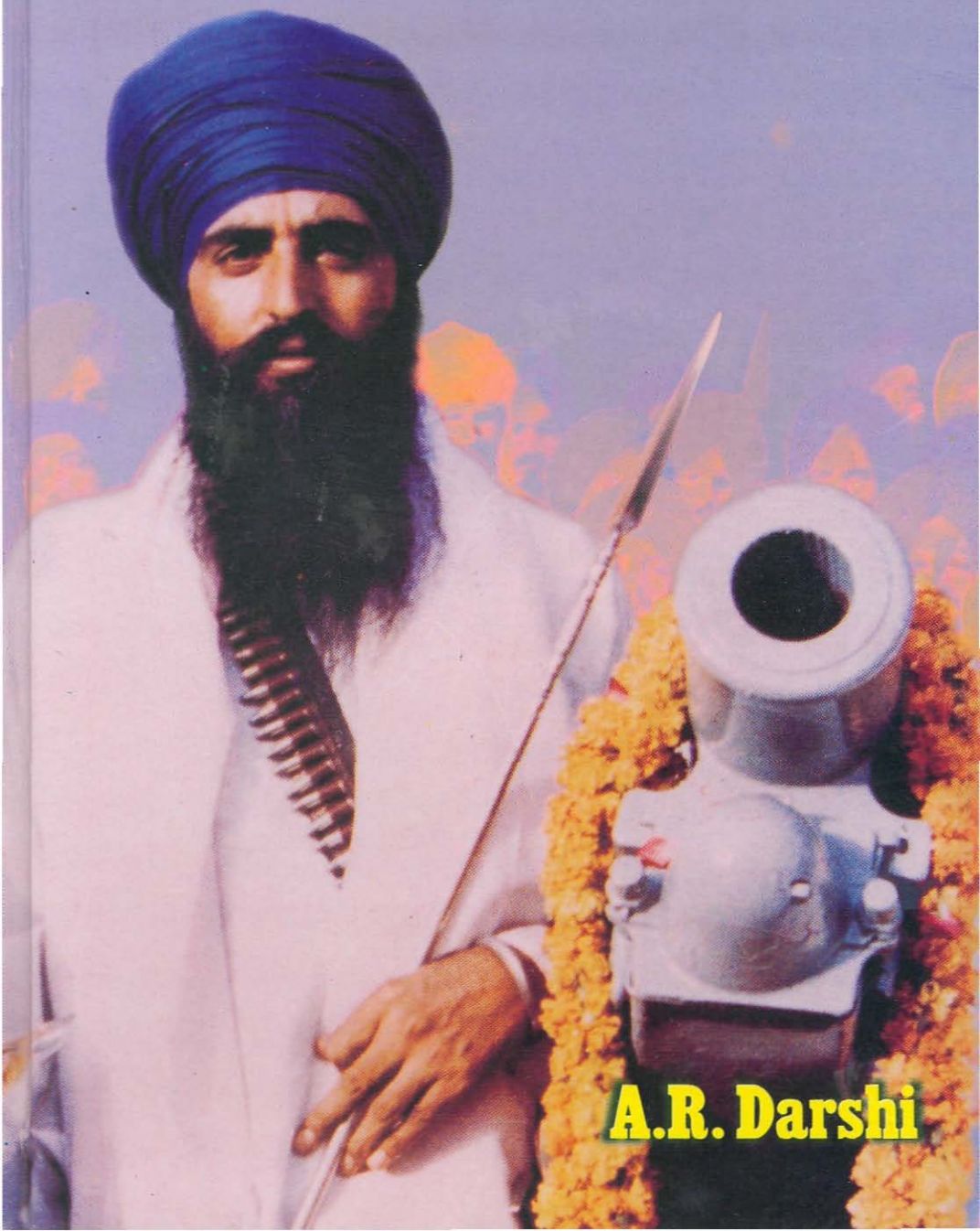
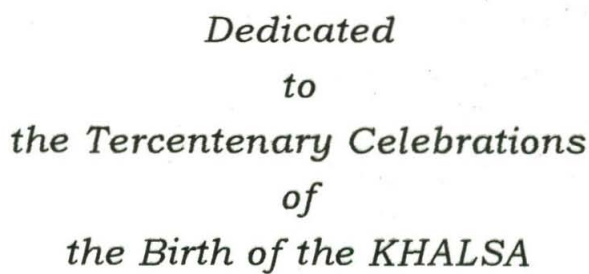


The Gallant Defender



A.R. Darshi



*Dedicated
to
the Tercentenary Celebrations
of
the Birth of the KHALSA*

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PROLOGUE

I have ventured to make a humble effort to write this book for some compulsive reasons and meaningful purpose. The first reason is that during my long service in Punjab in the capacity of Judicial Magistrate, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Joint Secretary to Government of Punjab, I have carefully watched and monitored all politico-religious agitations and consequent developments right from the reign of late Partap Singh Kairon to the present day government of Parkash Singh Badal which is still crumblingly lurking on till this last day of 1998. The second reason is that during the long stint of my service in Punjab I have developed very close and cordial relations with the top leaders of all the political parties especially with the leaders of the Shiromani Akali Dal. I have the privilege of having personal close relations with late Baba Joginder Singh, father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, who had been the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal from 1977 to 1980. He at present is the Senior Vice President of Shiromani Akali Dal. Thirdly, being a post graduate in Political Science and Psychology I have developed very keen interest in political affairs and day to day politics. And, therefore, I have been keenly observing all political developments for the last three decades. However, my service in the capacity of PCS officer in Punjab was simply incidental. Therefore, whatever matter I have included in this book is either based on my personal conversations held with the political leaders or my direct knowledge derived from political

and other events.

These events include intra-contradictions prevailing among the Akali leaders; their confrontation with the discriminatory Congress governments; their conflicts with Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale; and last but not the least, Sant Bhindranwale's struggle against the offensive launched by the *Nirankaris* headed by Gurbachan Singh, to subvert the Sikh religion.

Activities of the *Akalis* carried out behind the scene were confided to me by Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, late Balwant Singh and others while Congress leaders such as Darbara Singh and Beant Singh, both late Chief Ministers, leaked out their own strategies and tactical manoeuvres. Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjit, with whom I have had the oldest relations, kept me feeding with political wheel-deals and other developments that had been taking place at the national and the state levels. Comrade Surjit, who is a very shrewd politician and always keeps himself at the centre stage, has been maintaining close relations with Badal, Tohra, Talwandi, Surjit Singh Barnala till today. Late Balwant Singh and Longowai always sought his advice on all matters. Very often than not these leaders of all hues and shades discussed subjects of political interests among themselves collectively and severally. So I used to get continuous feedback on the latest political developments through all these leaders.

So when I touched a delicate and sensitive subject of the agreement that had been reached in 1977 between Badal, Tohra and Talwandi that Tohra would be the Chief Minister of Punjab, it is not in any way a hear say story. Both Tohra and Talwandi confidentially but separately revealed and confirmed this episode of trust and mistrust. Tohra was treacherously deceived and deprived of his just right to ride the chair of Chief Minister. Unfortunately he is still being kept at bay by Badal and his supporters. Similarly when I referred to the agreement

that had been reached in respect of Punjab in 1983 in the tripartite meeting held at Delhi, from which agreement Indira Gandhi had later resiled, is also not a newspaper story. It was confided to me personally by Comrade Surjit who had participated in that tripartite meeting.

The purpose of writing this book is twofold. Firstly, it is to recall and commemorate the outstanding contribution made by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who had raised the emaciated spirit of the *Khalsa*. Secondly, it is for the loving memory of Sant Bhindranwale who had made an unparalleled and unique sacrifice in defence of the faith and the philosophy of the *Khalsa* so fondly created and nourished by Guru Gobind Singh.

Although this book was written in 1985, after assassination of Longowal, yet it could not be published then. Now I am prompted to publish it so that it may precede or coincide with the tercentenary celebrations of birth of the *Khalsa*. I am deeply pained to observe that those leaders whose role during the Bhindranwale time was anti-panthic, have now come to the forefront to farcically celebrate this auspicious event. And none of these failed leaders has bothered to remember or even mention his name.

They have conveniently forgotten the outstanding services rendered by Sant Bhindranwale who has resuscitated the dead spirit of the *Khalsa* with his blood. Hence this book is being published on this auspicious occasion to refresh and revive the forgotten memory of the gallant defender.

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January 1, 1999

ਦੇਹਿ ਸ਼ਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ,
 ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੋਂ ॥
 ਨ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋਂ,
 ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰਿ ਆਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋਂ ॥
 ਅਰ ਸਿਖਹੋ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ,
 ਯਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋ ॥
 ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ,
 ਅਤ ਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ ॥

*Deh Shiva Bar Mohe Ehey
 Shubh Karman Te Kabhun Na Taron.
 Na Dron Ar So Jab Jaae Laron
 Nischai Kar Aapnee Jeet Karon.
 Ar Sikhho Aapne Hee Man Ko
 Yeh Laalach Hau Gun Tau Uchro.
 Jab Aav Kee Audh Nidaan Banai
 At Hee Ran Mai Tab Joojh Maron.*

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental law of nature is change and evolution. Dialectically it means that nature develops progressively irrespective of impediments coming in its way. As nature is omniscient it manifests itself in animate and inanimate bodies and all organisms. Man incidentally is the most refined and intelligent manifestation of nature. In conformity with fundamental law of nature man develops progressively and so develop his ideas, ideologies, culture and religious beliefs, economic and social systems. When old ideologies and social values wear out they give way to new orders which are revolutionised and developed by great men. Thus when Brahmanism or in common parlance, Hinduism (primarily based on *Varna* system and caste system) which spread untouchability and hatred in mankind, became unbearable and irrelevant for the neglected part of society great redeemer in Guru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 who tried to salvage the downtrodden, neglected and despised people by bringing about revolutionary reforms in the rotten system of the country. Guru Nanak Dev was the first great seer who seriously took note of the peculiar but despicable caste system of Hindu Society. He out-rightly rejected discriminatory *Varna* and caste systems and declared that all persons are equal irrespective of their caste, colour and creed. In order to give practical shape to his philosophy he opened the doors of his new faith to the members of all castes, colour, and creed.

The Hindus believed and professed that the *Vedas* are divine though these so called revealed scriptures are evil sources of despicable *Varna* system and artificial and irrational

division of mankind. Guru Nanak Dev Ji discarded the worship of idols, and gave up all unnatural rituals professed and followed by the Hindus. He also spurned mysticism and superstitions prevailing in the Hindu Society. In short he renounced Hindu religion in unequivocal terms. Had he condemned Hindu religion and denounced the *Vedas*, *Dharma Shashtras* and *Puranas* in the days of *Hindu Raj* or *Ram Raj*, he would have been branded as blasphemous and crucified. It would have been so because the so called high Caste Hindus are arrogant and intolerant although they claim to be otherwise. The Guru had a remarkable intuitive power and deep vision. That is why he did not install his son, Siri Chand, as his successor, for, he knew that Siri Chand had leanings towards mystic Hinduism which the Guru had already renounced. Instead he installed Bhai Lehna, who was renamed as Angad, to the *Guru Gaddi*. If Siri Chand had succeeded his father Sikh religion would have relapsed in to Hinduism long ago. This presumption was found to be true because Siri Chand founded a Hindu Sect known as *Udasi* whose followers are recluse ascetics and passivists. It is evident that Siri Chand's *Udasi* Sect was a negation of Guru Nanak's faith and philosophy.

Guru Angad Dev ji born on 31st March, 1504 at village Mata Di Sarai in Mukatsar Sub Division of Faridkot district, Guru Amar Das born on 5th May 1479 at village Basarke of Amritsar district; and Guru Ram Das born on 24th September, 1534 carried forward the light kindled by the first Guru with verve and zeal. It was Guru Ram Das who laid the foundation of holy *Sarovar* in Amritsar in 1579 on a piece of land purchased from the residents of villages Gilwali, Sultanwind and Gumtala by paying Rs.700.

The fifth Guru Arjan Dev, born at Goindwal on 15th April, 1563 made a remarkable and historic contribution to the development of Sikh religion by laying down his life on 30th

May, 1606 in defence of his faith. He compiled the *Adi-Granth* but emperor Jehangir, a religious bigot and zealot, asked Guru Arjan Dev to delete some matter considered by him as objectionable from the holy *Granth* but he refused to oblige him. His curt refusal offended the emperor who was further incited by Chandu Shah, a Brahmin Minister in the service of *Subedar* of Lahore saying that the Guru had a rebellious proclivity. Therefore the emperor declared Guru Arjan Dev a rebel and accused him of sedition. Jehangir ordered Guru Arjan Dev to pay a heavy fine but he refused to submit to him. The infuriated emperor ordered Chandu Shah to arrest the *Guru* and compel him to delete the "objectionable" material from *Adi-Granth* and also realise the fine from him. On refusal of Guru Arjan Dev to meet unwarranted demands of Jehangir, Chandu Shah arrested the *Guru* and dipped him into a cauldron of boiling water and then lay him on the red hot iron pan. The *Guru* was thus brutally tortured by Chandu Shah the traitor, till he attained martyrdom on 30th May, 1606.

It is of great significance to note that Guru Arjan Dev was the first Sikh Guru who was charged with sedition by the Delhi Darbar and was also brutally tortured to death. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev was a turning point in the development of Sikh religion. The weapon of non violence and patience so heroically practised by him as well his predecessors totally failed to move the hearts of the Mughal rulers. Now there was a dire need for his successor to devise some effective ways to protect the faith of Nanak. Before attaining martyrdom he had already instructed his son and the successor Guru Hargobind to raise an army to protect himself and his faith from the enemy. He also instructed him that it was virtuous to lay down life fighting than to be captured alive and tortured by the enemy. By that time Guru Hargobind had fully realised that no religion could be protected without political power. Therefore he raised

a contingent of armed Sikhs at Amritsar. His army included 800 horsemen and 300 armed followers who were in constant attendance on him. In order to strengthen the Sikh army he instructed his followers to henceforth present him arms and horses instead of offering him other costly gifts at the *Akal Takht*.

To give a permanent shape to his new philosophy Guru Hargobind created the concept of *Miri-Piri* and to signify this dual authority, he adorned two swords and founded *Akal Takht* opposite the Golden Temple where he installed two *Nishan Sahibs* as a symbol of that dual authority. The concept of *Miri-Piri* conveys the sense that religion could not flourish without exercising temporal power and the temporal power could not be exercised in right direction without religious guidance. Henceforth temporal and spiritual powers became integral parts and pillars of Sikh religion. It is for this reason that Guru Hargobind is remembered as a saint-soldier.

Alarmed by this new development Jehangir, the Mughal emperor, asked Guru Hargobind to disband his army and desist from military exercises but he refused to obey him. As a result he was arrested in a surprise raid by the Mughal army and imprisoned in the Gwalior Jail. When he was released from jail Guru Hargobind became more alert and vigilant and never fell in the hands of Mughals again though he had fought several battles with them. It is a proof of his military genius that each time he fought and each time he defeated the Mughal army. By his successful military activities he had virtually created a separate state within the Mughal empire. This achievement enhanced his status and reputation among the Sikhs. He commanded such a tremendous reverence among his followers that when he passed away in peace on 19th February, 1645 a number of his disciples threw themselves into the flames of funeral pyre and perished.

Before Guru Hargobind passed away he had raised and maintained a formidable army which helped him to protect himself as well as his faith. Thus the concept of *Miri-Piri* was fully established. However his two successors namely, Guru Har Rai and Harkrishan reverted to the old practice of nonviolence and patience.

Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeded Guru Harkrishan in 1664 and adorned the swords of his father. He was a combination of *Bhakti* and *Shakti*. He was the first Guru after Guru Nanak Dev ji who travelled throughout India and inspired people to fight oppression, tyranny and discrimination at all levels. His message was : "Do not fear anyone nor strike fear in anyone." The persecution of the Hindus at the hands of the bigoted king Aurangzeb created panic among the Brahmins, and in their search for a saviour a deputation of the Kashmiri Pundits under the leadership of Kirpa Ram approached Guru Teg Bahadur to seek his protection. On hearing their vowful wails he decided to take up the cause of the Hindus to protect their sacred thread (*Janeyu*) and frontal mark (*Tilak*). It was for the first and the last time that a prophet of a different religion fought for the religious cause of another religion. This was a fight for *Dharma*, righteousness, in a unique manner. And it was for this cause that Guru Teg Bahadur suffered martyrdom on November 11, 1675 A.D. alongwith his disciples, Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Dass and Bhai Dayala under the orders of Aurangzeb. It is, however, an irony that whereas Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed his life for the cause of Kashmiri Pundits, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, the descendant of the same Pundits, rewarded the Sikhs by launching military attack on the Golden Temple Complex and demolished the Akal Takht.

Guru Gobind Singh succeeded his father in November 1675 when the Sikh religion was almost vanquished by the repressive forces let loose by the fanatic and tyrant Mughal

emperor Aurangzeb. It was now an uphill task for Guru Gobind Singh to remould and re-inspire the vanquished Sikh army and the faith of Nanak as he was still in teenage when he assumed *Guru Gaddi*.

The martyrdom of his father, caused by brutal torture, made a deep and indelible impression on the young mind of Guru Gobind Singh. His condition of mind coupled with the fallen condition of his community and country made him the irreconcilable foe of the perpetrators of atrocities. For years together he studied, meditated and analysed in retrospection the condition of *Sikh Panth*. Ultimately he conceived a new and noble idea of raising and remoulding the vanquished religion and community into a militant faith. He assembled his followers at Anandpur Sahib on the Baisakhi day of 1699 and announced the great object of his mission. He declared, "Henceforth the *Khalsa* alone shall prevail. All must become one; the lowest were equal with the highest; caste must be destroyed; they must accept "*Pahul*"; and the four castes must eat at one place out of one vessel. The cruel oppressors must be destroyed and the idol worship must be stopped. The ways of the Hindus must be abandoned. The Brahmin's thread (*Janeyu*) should be discarded and by means of *Khalsa* alone salvation be attained."

Five Principles for Internal Elevation

Guru Gobind Singh enunciated five principles for internal elevation of the *Khalsa*. He declared, "They surrender themselves wholly to the faith and treat him as their guide. Their words must be *Kirt Nash*, *Kul Nash*, *Karm Nash*, *Dharm Nash*, and *Sarv Nash*; the forsaking of one's occupation and family; of belief and ceremonies and of all worldly things." "Do this" said Guru Gobind Singh, "and the world is yours." At this many *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* murmured but the despised and condemned races rejoiced. The downtrodden

castes assured Guru Gobind Singh of their complete devotion and services. But the murmuring of the twice born (himself a Kshatriya) (*Dwijias*) increased and many of them departed but the Guru exclaimed, "The fallen should be raised and that hereafter the despised should dwell next to himself." Many people belonging to depressed castes embraced Sikhism and became members of the *Khalsa Panth*.

Five External Symbols

Guru Gobind then poured water into a steel vessel, stirred it with *Khanda*, mixed sugar in it and sprinkled over Five Beloved Ones (*Panj Piaras*). This ritual was called *Pahul*, that is, initiation or baptising of Sikhs. The Guru then accepted *Pahul* from the *Panj Piaras*. Thus the *Khalsa* was created and Sikhs were transformed into *Singhs* (Lions). Then he declared that hereafter the watchword of the *Khalsa* should be "*Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh*. They should revere and bow to none but one," that is "*Guru Granth Sahib*" besides God. He further declared that every member of the *Khalsa* should adorn five *Kakars* (external symbols) namely, *Kesh*, *Kangha*, *Kachh*, *Kara* and *Kirpan*; that is, un-shorn hair, comb, underwear, iron bangle and sword. They should name themselves *Singhs* and should devote their infinite energies to stand alone. Arms should dignify their person; they should be ever waging war; their merit should be to slay an enemy and they should not be despaired even if they are overcome." Thus he gave a distinct identity to the *Khalsa*.

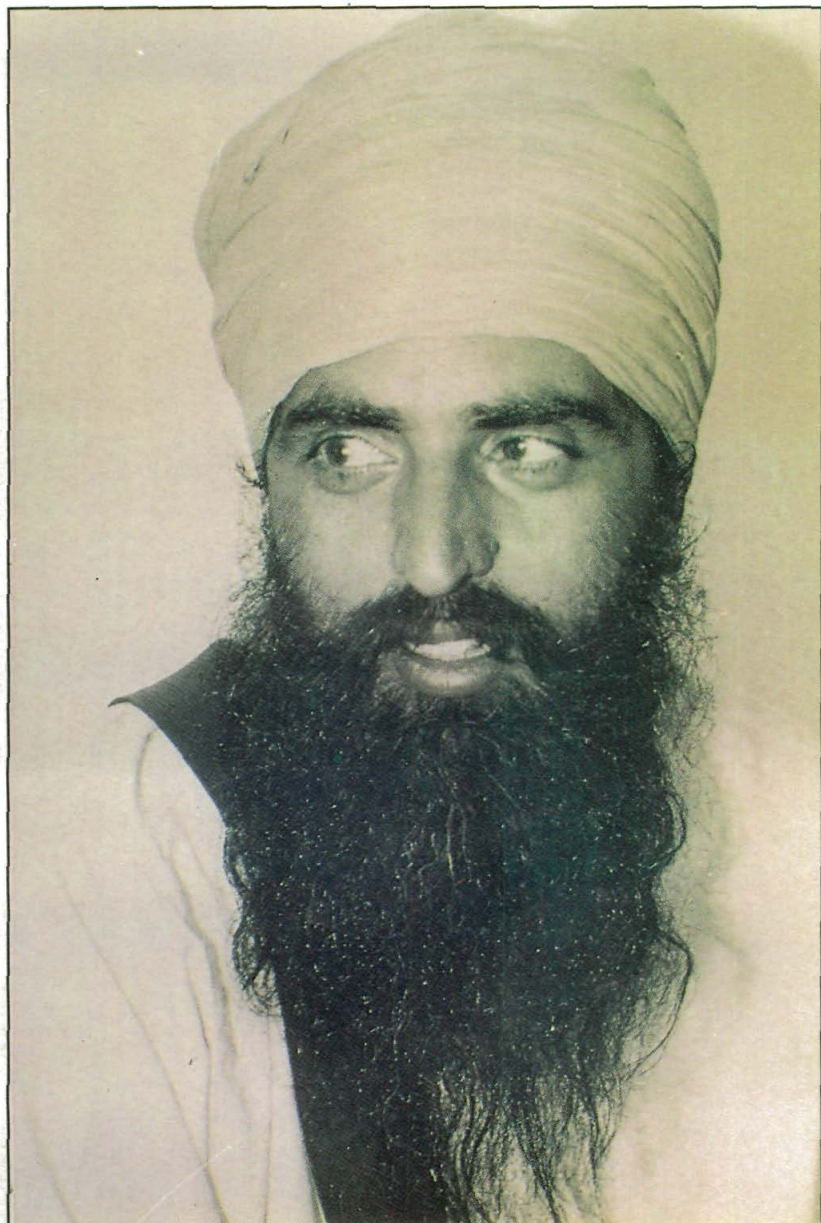
In order to maintain purity of the *Khalsa* Guru Gobind Singh excommunicated the sects of traitors and dissenters who were the *Dhiru Malis* (who had conspired to deceive and destroy Guru Arjan Dev); and the *Massands* who had challenged his own authority.

When the fort of Guru Gobind Singh was besieged at

Anandpur Sahib by imperial forces of Aurangzeb and the treacherous *Hindu Rajas* of the hill states in 1704 A.D. many of his cowardly followers deserted him and only forty faithful *Singhs* remained with him. But he did not lose heart. He fought gallantly with the overwhelmingly superior forces of Aurangzeb and the *Hindu Rajas* and braved the attack boldly. At last the Guru left the fort as a result of compromise reached with the Mughal forces. But he was treacherously surrounded at Chamkaur Sahib. There his two brave young sons, Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Jhujar Singh, laid down their lives fighting the Mughal army within the sight of the Guru. His two younger sons, Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh, were bricked alive under the walls by the *Nawab* of Sirhind by the deceit of Gangu Brahmin, the crook cook of the Guru.

When Guru Gobind Singh escaped from Chamkaur Sahib, Pir Mohammad, with whom the Guru had studied the *Quran*, gave him shelter in Behlolpur in Samrala Tehsil of Ludhiana district. The Guru took food with the *Pir* and instructed the *Khalsa* not to shun the pious Muslims and share food with them. The Guru adorned blue dress of Muslim *Darvesh* and proceeded to Dam Dama Sahib where he was sent for by Aurangzeb but he declined his offer. He conveyed to the emperor that he did not trust him and that the *Khalsa* shall fight the oppressors. He sent a famous "*Zafar Nama*" to Aurangzeb challenging him to fight a duel with him and cursed him for his deceit and atrocities.

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 Bahadur Shāh succeeded him with the help of Guru Gobind Singh. The new emperor honoured the Guru who then went to Nander Sahib where he journeyed to his heavenly abode in 1708. Before that he told his followers, "He delivered the *Khalsa* to *Akal Purkh* (God), the never dying one. He who wishes to behold the *Guru* let him search *Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Guru* will dwell with



ਸੰਤ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਿੰਡਰਾਂਵਾਲੇ ਇੱਕ ਮੁਸਕਰਾਹਟ ਭਰੇ ਦਿਲਕਸ਼ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਵਿੱਚ।

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale— a blissful attractive pose.



**Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale with his nearest companions
Shaheed Baba Thara Singh and Shaheed Baba Amrik Singh.**



**Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale addressing the volunteers of
Dharm Yudh Morcha at Dewan Hall, Manji Sahib.**

the *Khalsa*; be firm and be faithful. Wherever five *Singhs* (*Panj Piaras*) are gathered together there will I also be present.”

Diversion of the *Khalsa* by Banda Singh Bahadur

Guru Gobind Singh organised *Khalsa Panth* on military lines and created conditions conducive to bringing about a revolution and founding a *Khalsa* rule in at least Punjab. He rallied round him the stout Sikh peasants and the downtrodden people who formed a core of his spirited army. However, he could not accomplish his mission as he passed away in the prime of his life. None -the-less he paved a way for the future and assured establishment of the *Khalsa* rule.

After him Banda Singh Bahadur came forward to provide leadership to the *Khalsa* who gathered it under the “*Kesari*” flag apparently in quest of fulfilling the cherished mission of the tenth Guru. The *Khalsa* army ransacked Sirhind, then a province in Mughal empire, and razed it to the ground, killed Subedar Wazir Khan who had bricked alive the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh, and slew Gangu Brahmin, the traitor and Jallad who had beheaded Guru Teg Bahadur. Thus the *Khalsa* avenged the martyrdom of the two young innocent *Sahibzadas* and the Ninth Guru.

The *Khalsa* army headed by Banda Bahadur fought and won many battles between 1709 and 1716 but the Banda failed to establish *Khalsa* rule in any tract of land owing to his reckless and direction-less leadership. His gloomy nature and ascetic leanings were mainly responsible for his failure to consolidate the position and establish *Khalsa* rule any where in the Punjab.

Above all, Banda Bahadur was intoxicated by his short-lived victories and tried to change the basic structure of the *Khalsa* as well as the watch words enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh. The Banda in accordance with his Hindu notions substituted “*Fateh Dharm, Fateh Darshan*” for “*Wah Guru Ji*

Ka Khalsa, Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh.” He arrogantly said that the *Guru* could not sustain the *Khalsa* and thus he tried to change the concept and course of the *Khalsa* created by the Tenth *Guru* from the edge of the *Khanda*. It is evident from his paranoiac conduct that the Banda himself wanted to become a *Guru* and intended to declare himself so but the faithful *Khalsa* resisted his subvertive and negative approach with all his might and renounced Banda's leadership. The faithful and devoted *Khalsa* of *Guru Gobind Singh* in order to defend the *Khalsa Panth* formed “*Tat Khalsa*” and vowed to follow *Guru's* commandments. The Banda, who surreptitiously tried to subvert the *Khalsa Panth*, founded a sect known as *Bandai* which in the long run relapsed into Hinduism.

Due to directionless leadership and reckless campaigns of Banda Bahadur the *Khalsa* army suffered enormous loss of life and property and its strength was depleted considerably. Taking advantage of this situation Zakarya Khan, Yahya Khan and Mir Mannu, tyrants acting under the direction of Mughal emperor, one after another, ruthlessly repressed the Sikhs for a quarter of century. They put price on the heads of the Sikhs. The cowards shorn off their heads and beards to escape death but the brave retreated to the jungles and hills to continue guerrilla warfare against the perpetrators of atrocities.

To set a spectacular example in those dark days Bhai Taru Singh, old companion and disciple of *Guru Gobind Singh*, laid down his life in defence of the *Khalsa* and his faith. Thereafter Jassa Singh Ahluwalia took the command who formed “*Dal Khalsa*” in 1746. Charsa Singh, Tuka Singh, Kirwar Singh and other prominent Sikh leaders joined him and supported *Dal Khalsa*. When Mir Mannu, Subedar of Lahore, along with his Brahmin Minister, Kaura Mal, demolished Harimandir Sahib and desecrated the sacred *Sarovar* of Amritsar by filling it with debris, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia stormed Lahore and ransacked

it. The Subedar and the Brahmin traitor fled and saved their lives but nevertheless the *Khalsa* avenged sacrilege of holy shrine and the *Sarovar*. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia captured Lahore, proclaimed *Khalsa Raj* and minted one rupee coin in the loving memory of Guru Gobind Singh with the inscription of "Gobind by the grace of the Khalsa." The Khalsa rebuilt the holy shrine and cleaned the sacred *Sarovar*.

In 1762 Ahmed Shah Abadali invaded India and Punjab, destroyed Harimandir Sahib, filled the sacred *Sarovar* with the pyramids of decapitated heads of the Sikhs. Before leaving for Iran he appointed a traitor Hindu, Kabuli Mal, as the Subedar of Lahore. This ignoble Hindu Governor further appointed Massa Rangar as the administrator of *Harimandir Sahib* who sacriledged the holy shrine by smoking and drinking intoxicants there. Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh beheaded Massa Rangar in the very premises of Harimandir Sahib and thus the Sikhs again avenged the desecration of the holy shrine.

By this time about a score of Misals, big and small, had entrenched themselves in various parts of Punjab and beyond. They had their sway from Avadh, in Uttar Pradesh, to Sindh in Pakistan. The *Misal* chiefs, despite occasionally fighting among themselves, assembled at Amritsar in 1764 and pronounced sovereignty of the *Khalsa Raj*. They struck a new coin with the inscription "Degh, Tegh, Fateh," in the memory of Guru Gobind Singh. The chiefs also decided to hold "*Sarbat Khalsa*" (Congregation) once a year at Amritsar to resolve their differences through *Guru Mata*. Their concerted efforts and relentless war against the Mughals and their agents ultimately paved the way for the Sikh empire to be established by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1799.

It is however unfortunate that the Sikh empire established by the *Khalsa* army with their sweat and blood, decayed in 1839 after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death and vanquished in 1849 by

the betrayal of his Hindu confidants such as Dhian Singh, Gulab Singh Dogras, Lal Singh and Teja Singh. The latter two were Misar by caste and were Hindus. There are many other causes which had brought about decline and decay of the Sikh empire. Main causes were : the Maharaja's loose morality; his extravagance; his life style like the Mughal emperors; his desire to prove himself secular though at the cost of the Sikh tenets; his overt appeasement of the British; and above all, his distrust of the *Khalsa* army and the *Khalsa* generals, such as Akali Phoola Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa. These factors proved disastrous.

Like Banda Bahadur the Maharaja, too, failed to understand the tenets of Sikh religion and the philosophy of the *Khalsa* enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh. Had he faithfully adhered to the *Khalsa* philosophy; had he trusted the *Khalsa* army and the patriot and faithful Sikh general such as Akali Phoola Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa; and had he given them important positions as he had bestowed on Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh Dogras and Lala Sawan Mal and the Misars, who were hidden enemies of the *Khalsa*, he would have left behind him some capable successors to sustain the Sikh empire.

It is pertinent to note that Akali Phoola Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa, in whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not have trust, sacrificed their lives in the battle field to defend the Sikh empire and the *Khalsa Panth*, whereas both the *Dogras* and Lal Singh and Teja Singh in whom he had reposed confidence, betrayed the Sikh empire as well as the *Khalsa Panth*. They had covertly conspired against the Sikh empire and the *Khalsa*. They secretly acted in league with the British which fact was later on proved when the British gifted Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh Dogra after the fall of Sikh rule in 1949. Lal Singh and Teja Singh Misar were also suitably rewarded for their acts of infidelity.

Resurgence of Sikh religion

Decline of Sikhism began under the regime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who could neither understand the philosophy enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh nor did he follow the concept of *Miri Piri* defined by Guru Hargobind. Instead, he followed the imperial life style of the Mughal emperors and indulged in extravagance and loose morality. In this way he neglected the Sikh tenets and allowed evils and vices to be crept in the religion. Instead of paying obeisance to Harimandir Sahib and bathing in the *Sarovar* regularly he paid visits to Haridwar and bathed in the Ganga river. When he died some of his wives became "*Satis*" which rite was repugnant to Sikh religion.

When the British conquered and annexed Punjab in 1849 they were aware of the power and glory of the Sikhs. They also knew that Sikh power emerges from the *Gurdwaras*. Therefore they conceived a sinister plan to scuttle Sikhism by taking control of these institutions of religious power through their agents. In pursuit of their aim they installed *Hindu Mahants* as managers of historic and important *Gurdwaras*. For instance Mahant Narain Das and Mahant Sadhu Ram, both anti Sikh elements, were respectively made in-charge of Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and Harimandir Sahib. The fanatic and corrupt Hindu Mahants installed idols in the *Gurdwaras* and introduced Hindu rites and rituals which practices were denounced and renounced by the *Sikh Gurus*. In this way the *Mahants* again brought Sikh religion under the evil influence of Hinduism and muddled it greatly.

At the same time Daya Nand Sarswati, founder of Arya Samaj, aggressively launched a campaign against Sikh religion. He criticised Guru Nanak Dev ji and Guru Gobind Singh and denounced *Guru Granth Sahib*. His tirade against Sikhism was effectively checked by the devout Sikhs who formed *Singh Sabhas*, Shiromani Akali Dal, and Chief Khalsa Diwan. These

institutions countered the ill-designed campaign launched by the *Arya Samajis*. These Sikh organisations, with a view to regaining the control of the historic *Gurdwaras*, launched a vigorous struggle. They also founded Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee for the management of historic *Gurdwaras*. The British rulers were forced to give legal sanctity to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and for that purpose they passed the Gurdwara Act in 1925 and recognised the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee as the sole authority to control and manage the historic *Gurdwaras* in the united Punjab. Thus an ill-conceived designs of the Hindus with collaboration of the British to assimilate Sikhism in Hinduism was successfully foiled. The control of historic *Gurdwaras*, including Nankana Sahib and Sanctum sanctorum, *Harimandir Sahib*, was taken over from the corrupt and immoral *Mahants* at heavy loss of lives of the devout Sikhs.

When the British granted freedom in 1947 they gave Pakistan to Muslims and gifted the rest of India to the Hindus. The Sikhs were left in the lurch because of deceit by Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru and other Hindu leaders. Master Tara Singh could be equally blamed for this act of deceit. These Hindu leaders promised the Sikh leaders that after attaining freedom the Sikhs would be assigned a specific area in the north west India where they could feel a glow of freedom and advocate their religion and culture. When the deceptive Hindus got freedom in 1947 and consolidated their power they conveniently forgot the promises made to the Sikhs. Not only that they were not given the promised land but they were constitutionally made a part and parcel of Hinduism which the Sikh Gurus had denounced and renounced more than four and half centuries ago. Article 25(2) was incorporated in the Constitution of India which defines the Sikhs as Hindus. This was a clever move of the Hindus to assimilate Sikhism by

dubious means.

When the Indian government decided to reorganise states on linguistic basis and census was held in 1951 the Hindus living in Punjab recorded Hindi as their mother tongue though they spoke pure Punjabi at homes and in conversation with others. This was another attempt on their part to deprive the Sikhs of their Constitutional and fundamental right to claim a Punjabi speaking state. Such Hindus who can betray their mother tongue can also be supposed to betray their mother land for their selfish and vested interests.

Thus the fanatic Hindus by their deliberate acts have sowed the seeds of blatant communalism and then they blather, to blame others for its emergence.

In 1956 all Hindu dominated states were reorganised on language basis but Punjab under the preconceived scheme was declared as a bilingual state. The Sikhs felt further betrayed. To get justice from the communal forces, the Sikhs launched a *Morcha* for formation of a Punjabi speaking state. The communal Hindus of united Punjab started a counter agitation opposing the creation of Punjabi speaking state. This counter agitation was started at the behest of the Indian Government which was overwhelmingly dominated by the Hindus. Nevertheless after a protracted struggle carried out by the *Akali Dal* for a decade and sacrificing costly lives, they achieved their partial aim in the form of a truncated Punjab on 1st November, 1966 minus Haryana and Chandigarh, the capital of the state. Not only this a large area of Punjab including Shimla, Dalhousie, Kulu-Manali, Lahaul Spiti and Dharmshala were merged with Himachal Pradesh. Besides this gross injustice the Indian Government retained with it the control of Bhakra Management Board and river waters distribution. The Shiromani Akali Dal again launched a *Morcha* demanding *inter alia* restoration of Punjabi speaking areas given to Himachal Pradesh and Haryana,

Union Territory of Chandigarh, control over river waters and enactment of All India Gurdwara Act, with a view to encompassing the control of Nander Sahib, Patna Sahib and other historic *Gurdwaras* situated in other states, But the Indian Government was not to yield so easily. When the *Morcha* reached its climax Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, announced an award in 1970 proposing to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab provided Fazilka and Abohar, which are Punjabi speaking areas, but Hindu majority areas are given to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh. This was out and out a communal approach. When the Sikhs were consistently discriminated and betrayed by the Indian government, the *Akali Dal* was forced to recast their demands. In pursuit of this the *Akali Dal* drafted a resolution and passed it at Anandpur Sahib in October 1973. This resolution is known as Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The main features of this Resolution are : the Union government should keep four portfolios viz; Defence, Foreign Affairs, Currency and Communication, with it and rest of the powers should vest in the states so that a true federal system of government is given a practical shape. It also says that the people should be permitted to keep arms ranging from shot gun to carbine of 30 calibre subject to the condition that the person should not be a convict and that he/she shall get the arms registered with the authorities. This Resolution in a modified form was passed in the annual conference of *Akali Dal* held at Ludhiana in October, 1978.

II

With a view to subverting Sikh religion the Indian government encouraged and aided the anti Sikh sects such as *Nirankaris*, *Radha Soamis* and the like to confront the Sikhs and their faith. While the *Radha Soamis* remained passive subversives, the *Nirankari Mandal* headed by Gurbachan Singh, exhibited extraordinary enthusiasm to oppose Sikh

religion with all its might. Being a sect of heretics and sensual pleasure seekers the *Nirankari Mandal* attracted to its fold men and women of loose morality of all hues. In spite of perverse notions of life held by the *Nirankaris* the Indian government, especially that led by Indira Gandhi, provided all sorts of help for its expansion because they had come in the open to challenge Sikhism. And this is what the *Nirankaris* wanted. To boost the morale of Nirankari Chief Gurbachan Singh Indira Gandhi accorded very important status to him. All Indian Embassies based in foreign countries were instructed to accord special treatment to Gurbachan Singh. States ruled by the Indian National Congress were also given similar instructions. This patronage granted to him inflated his ego further.

As overwhelming majority of the Sikhs live in Punjab the main thrust of Nirankari Chief was in this state of plenty.

To achieve their objective the *Nirankaris* led by Gurbachan Singh, a prophet of sensual pleasures, launched a tirade against the Sikh Gurus and Sikh religion. He criticised Guru Nanak Dev and equated him with a beggar, he denounced Guru Gobind Singh calling him simply a hunter and wanderer. Thus he ridiculed the Sikh Gurus and openly challenged their noble teachings and their faith. Besides this, the *Nirankaris* published books titled "Avtar Bani" and "Yug Pursh" eulogising Avtar Singh, predecessor of Gurbachan Singh, as the real and greatest *Avtar* (incarnation of God) ever born on the earth. These rubbish books slighted all the Sikh Gurus, the prophets and the great seers of all religions and advocated that Avtar Singh was the true Guru who is unparalleled in the history of mankind. This was a big challenge to Sikhism as its very foundation was being shaken.

Gurbachan Singh actively aided by the government, launched his Anti-Sikh movement with a main thrust in Punjab. Giani Zail Singh who too, was a man of questionable morality,

covertly supported the Nirankari Chief. The Giani, then Chief Minister of Punjab, appointed Hardev Singh Chhina an I.A.S. officer as the Chief Secretary of Punjab. Chhina was a staunch supporter of Gurbachan Singh Nirankari and he converted many high and low ranked officers into Nirankaris by showering undue favours on them. All such government employees of shady character and reputation were elevated and given important assignments in the state administration.

The sinister *Nirankari* movement actively aided by the government was scuttling the faith of Nanak and Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh. It is surprising that neither the Akali Dal nor the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee bothered to counter this nefarious anti-Sikh onslaught. It was only *Dam Dami Taksal*, founded by Guru Gobind Singh and then headed by Baba Deep Singh Shaheed, which decided to blot out the anti Sikh campaign. The *Taksal* under the youthful leadership of Sant Kartar Singh challenged and countered the anti Sikh activities of Nirankari Chief. When battle lines between the *Nirankaris* and the *Taksal* were drawn, Sant Kartar Singh, unfortunately met with an accident in the prime of his life and passed away on 16th August, 1977. It was now left to Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who succeeded Sant Kartar Singh, to continue the fight against the *Nirankaris* who were indulging in blasphemous activities. His struggle was also targeted at the Indian Government which had been discriminating against the Sikhs and treating them as second rate citizens.

When Sant Jarnail Singh was installed as the head of *Dam Dami Taksal* he was hardly 30 years. Therefore, the ageing Akali leaders, considering him a novice, brushed him aside as a nonentity but when he emerged from the horizon he overshadowed them all. In a few years he dominated the religious and political affairs of the Sikh Panth in spite of the

hostility of the leadership of Akali Dal as well as the government led by Parkash Singh Badal with the support of the erstwhile Bhartiya Jana Sangh. Thus Sant Jarnail Singh, like a brave general, had to face hostility of *Nirankari* sect, the *Akali Dal*, the state and the union governments. Under such hostile and mired circumstances it was not a job for a man of an ordinary stature to face formidable hostile forces and launch a movement single handedly. His main aim was not simply to bulldoze the *Nirankari* offensive but also to strive for implementation of Anandpur Sahib Resolution adopted by the *Akali Dal* in October 1973. And if the union government refused to concede that demand then to aspire for independent state as was promised by the Indian National Congress before attainment of independence in August 1947. The Akali Dal had long ago dumped these demands in the dustbin and conveniently forgot to revive them, for the sake of Akali rule in Punjab.

The *Akali Dal* is in the habit of the reopening of the issue of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution only when they are out of power. Otherwise they wrap it under the carpet and sleep over it.

Chapter 1

EMERGENCE OF SANT JARNAIL SINGH

It was a providential coincidence that Jarnail Singh was born in 1947 with the advent of independence of India in the Brar Sikh family of Baba Joginder Singh in village Rode, situated near-Mukatsar, the heart land of Punjab. Mukatsar is a historic town where Guru Gobind Singh had successfully fought the last battle with the Mughal army. This was the region of the brave Brar- Sidhu Sikh tribes whom Guru Gobind Singh had paid tributes for their bravery. Village Rode is not very far away from another historic village, Dina, where Guru Gobind Singh stayed for some time and wrote famous *Zafar Nama* to Aurangzeb challenging him to fight him there if he dared and cursed him for his treachery and atrocities committed on the *Khalsa*.

Baba Joginder Singh, a follower of *Dam Dami Taksal*, was blessed with seven sons, the youngest being Jarnail Singh whose actual date of birth was not known to him.

Jarnail Singh studied up to fifth grade in the Government Primary School, Rode and was admitted in the Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa High School in the same village in the sixth grade but he gave up scholastic studies because of his immense leanings towards religion and therefore he engaged himself in meditation and farming. Sant Gurbachan Singh, 12th Jathedar of *Dam Dami Taksal*, used to visit Rode off and on. One day he caught sight of young boy, Jarnail Singh, who he perceived had possessed extraordinary spiritual and martial qualities. He was so much impressed with Jarnail Singh's captivating personality that he asked Baba Joginder Singh to place his son's

services at the disposal of *Dam Dami Taksal*. The Baba, who himself was a devout Singh, readily agreed and Sant Gurbachan Singh took Jarnail Singh to village Bhinder Kalan in Ferozepur district-which was the headquarters of *Dam Dami Taksal*. There he was initiated and administered *Pahul* (baptised) by Sant Gurbachan Singh. Jarnail Singh since then became *Amritdhari* and *Shasterdhari*, a disciple and an immortal soldier of Guru Gobind Singh. Even before initiation, Jarnail Singh used to recite *Nit-Nem* (daily prayers) and *Japuji Sahib* besides carrying out his agricultural activities. After his initiation he learnt by heart both *Japuji* and *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Jarnail Singh was barely 19 when he was married to Bibi Pritam Kaur, daughter of Sucha Singh of village Balaspur, not very far away from village Rode. He was blessed with two sons, Ishar Singh and Inderjit Singh.

When Sant Kartar Singh, head of *Dam Dami Taksal*, met with a fatal accident near Ludhiana city and ultimately passed away in August 1977, Jarnail Singh, in spite of opposition of *Akali Dal* and the Akali government was anointed as *Jathedar* of the *Taksal*. Jarnail Singh at that time was hardly 30 years but he had possessed all the qualities of a visionary leader and a guide. However the Akali leadership and the Akali government underestimated his latent qualities and inexhaustible hidden energy. They considered him merely a novice in the mired and manipulative field of religio-political affairs. They conveniently forgot that great leaders are born and not made. And Sant Jarnail Singh was a born leader.

The Akali leadership in state of self delusion did not take even a casual notice of the struggle launched by Sant Jarnail Singh against the onslaught of the *Nirankaris* who were maligning the Sikh religion and the Sikh Gurus nor did they try to counter that offensive. On the contrary they created several hurdles in his movement and tried to side line him. They even

failed to take notice of the Union government's covert support given to the *Nirankari* Chief for his anti-Sikh and slanderous activities. In spite of all these hostile forces working against him Sant Jarnail Singh stuck to his guns and remained a lone fighter against the offensive of the *Nirankaris* and valiantly defended the faith of Nanak.

II

The Indian government led by Brahmanical Hindus knew well that the Sikhs were the only martial race in India which has inexhaustible energy, determination and courage to fight for their just rights. The Hindu polity also knew that the Sikhs cannot be subdued by force for ever. Therefore, the government cleverly planned to subvert the Sikh religion and deplete its numerical strength by employing "*Kutil Niti*" (wicked strategy) enunciated by Kautilya in the *Arth Shastra*. To achieve their ill-conceived objectives the Indian government *inter alia*, patronised, encouraged and aided Gurbachan Singh, Chief of *Nirankari Mandal*, to launch onslaught against Sikh religion and their Gurus. The *Nirankari* chief, a surrogate of the Indian government, readily acted upon this ill-conceived plan in order to fulfil the wishes of the government as well as to seek self aggrandizement by expanding his sphere of influence among the susceptible Sikhs.

Thus pampered and prompted by the government he stepped up pernicious activities against Sikh religion with the main thrust in Punjab it being the home land of the Sikhs. Gurbachan Singh purposely held convention of his followers at Hoshiarpur on 13th April, 1973 and passed extremely derogatory remarks against the Sikh Gurus and their religion. No Sikh organisation or the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee took any notice of this slanderous outburst. This callous attitude of the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee further encouraged

Gurbachan Singh to carry on his tirade against Sikhism. Mustering courage the Nirankari Chief gathered his crowd at Chowk Mehta on 13th September, 1973 right under the nose of the newly built headquarters of *Dam Dami Taksal* and delivered a highly provocative speech maligning the Sikhs and denigrating their Gurus. This was a big challenge thrown by the Nirankaris as the very citadel of Sikhism was attacked. Sant Kartar Singh, predecessor of Jarnail Singh, took serious note of this provocative offensive. He, therefore, organised a massive demonstration against the lewd Nirankaris and their irreligious activities. Hundreds of devout Sikhs were arrested under the inequitable orders of a wily Sikh Chief Minister, Giani Zail Singh who was a stooge of Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India. But Sant Kartar Singh continued his struggle fearlessly which resulted in several violent clashes between the Sikhs and the Nirankaris. Due to the callousness of the government these clashes culminated in a traumatic incident that took place at Amritsar on 13th April, 1978 which is the day celebrated by the Sikhs in commemoration of raising of the *Khalsa*. And this tragic incident proved a turning point in the history of the Sikhs.

The Baisakhi day is celebrated by the Sikhs every year with great zeal in commemoration of founding of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh. The Nirankaris, in a calculated move decided to hold their annual convention at Amritsar on 13th April, 1978 which coincided with the Baisakhi day celebrations. The convention was granted permission by D.M. Amritsar. Sant Jarnail Singh opposed their ill-conceived plan and lodged protest with the Akali government led by Parkash Singh Badal asking it not to allow Nirankaris to hold convention at Amritsar on the Baisakhi day, but Badal partially under the pressure of Morar Ji Desai, a Gujrati Brahmin, Prime Minister, and partially to please the *Jan Sangh*, a political party of the

fundamentalist Hindus, allowed Nirankaris to hold their proposed gathering. A self styled Sikh and mischievous Akali Minister Jeewan Singh Umranangal, was directed to be present at Amritsar on 13th April, 1978. Sant Jarnail Singh personally requested him to ban the Nirankari gathering to avoid confrontation with the devout Sikhs but he put off the Sant with a lame excuse that the District Magistrate had already granted permission to the Nirankaris to hold convention. Had the Akali government wished it could have very well directed the District Magistrate to withdraw the permission but that was not to happen as the government was hostile to the Sant. Therefore it intentionally played this mischief so as to let down Sant Jarnail Singh.

Feeling disgusted at the dubious role of the Akali government Sant Jarnail Singh consulted his followers and supporters and decided to send a *Jatha* (squad) of devout Sikhs to the venue of the Nirankari convention to lodge a peaceful protest against their anti-Sikhs activities and utterances. No sooner did the small *Jatha* consisting members of Damdami Taksal & Akhand Kirtni Jatha, reached near the venue than the blood thirsty Nirankaris opened fire on the *Jatha* killing 13 Sikhs and injuring about two score. When this unprovoked firing took place, Hardev Singh Chhina, the Chief Secretary, and Niranjana Singh an I.A.S. officer were present at the Nirankari stage. Both these officers are diehard Nirankaris. It is a matter of shame that the Akali Government did not take any action against both these officers for their ignoble complicity in the ghastly crime. Surprisingly the police had witnessed the brutal occurrence as a silent spectator. The presence of Umranangal at Amritsar and that of Hardev Singh Chhina at the *Nirankari* stage, proves beyond slightest doubt that these hostile forces had conspired to lower down the image of Sant Jarnail Singh as well as of *Dam Dami Taksal* un-mindful of the



After the Military operation, Darbar Sahib under the shade of Indian armies guns.



In December 1983 during the Gurmat Training Camp of Federation, Sant Ji addressing the Sikh youths.

fact that Sikhism was under attack and that it would entail serious and disastrous consequences.

When the tragic news of ghastly murder of defenceless Sikhs reached Sant Jarnail Singh he was anguished and vowed that he would not allow the blood of 13 devout Sikhs go waste. To assuage the injured feelings of agitated Sikhs the Akali government registered a criminal case of murder and other offences against the Nirankari criminals including Gurbachan Singh, their Chief, but none of the accused was arrested. Sant Jarnail Singh's anguish and anger did not cool down. He condemned the passive action of the Akali government and invigorated the *Morcha* against the Nirankaris. When the *Morcha* gathered momentum the Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee were ultimately compelled to persuade Jathedar of Akal Takht, Gurdial Singh Ajnoha, to issue a *Hukamnama* (edict) against the Nirankaris. The *Akal Takht* issued *Hukamnama* on 10th June, 1978, which was the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, and was read out by the *Jathedar* to the Sikh congregation from *Manji Sahib* and *Akal Takht*. The *Hukamnama* in brief declared, "That the *Nirankaris* headed by Gurbachan Singh have launched a pernicious offensive against the Sikhs and their Gurus, It is aimed at denigrating the Sikhs religion. The Nirankari chief who poses himself as *Avtar*, (God-incarnate) has massacred 13 Sikhs on the Baisakhi day. This had posed a serious challenge to the survival of the Sikh religion. Therefore, every Sikh is required to oppose by all means the vicious Sect of the Nirankaris which is the enemy of the Sikh faith. Every Sikh is further directed to sever all relations with the Nirankaris and with those Sikhs who have joined or still supported the immoral sect of Nirankaris."

Issuance of this *Hukamnama* was a big victory for Sant Jarnail Singh but he was not yet fully satisfied. He demanded

closure of all *Nirankari Bhawans*, which according to him are the evil dens spewing venom against Sikhism, in Punjab. To achieve this aim he continued his agitation till the Akali government was compelled to close down all *Nirankari Bhawans* in Punjab with effect from 20th August 1978. The Sikhs felt jubilant but their rejoice was short lived as Akali government again yielded to the pressure exerted by the Brahmin Prime Minister Morar Ji Desai and the Jan Sangh and allowed the *Nirankaris* to open *Bhawans* on 27th August, 1978, just after a week. But the Sant resisted this move saying that he will not allow them to open the *Nirankari Bhawans*.

In retaliation to the statement of Sant Bhindranwale that he will not allow to open the *Nirankari Bhawans*, Harbans Lal Khanna, a leader of Jan Sangh Party's Amritsar unit declared that he would lead the Hindus and *Nirankaris* to reopen the *Nirankaris Bhawans* on 27th August. This was an open challenge to the Sikhs in general and *Bhindranwale Taksal* in particular. Apprehending confrontation between these waring groups Badal requested Talwandi and Tohra, respectively Presidents of Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, to persuade Sant Bhindranwale that he should drop the plan to go to Amritsar on that day. Both the Akali leaders accordingly pleaded with him to drop his plan and they succeeded in their mission only on the assurance that they shall not allow reopening of the *Nirankari Bhawans* on 27th August. Nevertheless the *Bhawans* were unlocked and reopened with the help of the security forces. Talwandi and Tohra later apologised to Sant Bhindranwale accusing Badal that he did not agree to keep the *Bhawans* locked. The Sant was thus betrayed and duped. When he was let down by the government Sant Bhindranwale intensified anti-Nirankari movement which yielded fruit. Now Badal himself declared that he would close down the *Nirankari Bhawans*. He also gave assurance that the

objectionable portions from "*Avtar Bani*" and "*Yug Purush*" both Nirankari's heretic books, shall be deleted. But actually no steps were taken to fulfil this promise. As a result anti Nirankari movement continued unabated.

Meanwhile Gurbachan Singh, encouraged by the Hindus and the Indian government, carried on his activities now not in Punjab but in other parts of the Country. He announced to hold Nirankari convention in Allahabad on 25th September 1978 but the devout Sikhs chased him out of the city. He then gathered his followers in Nirankari Bhawan, Kanpur, on 26th September and under the shadow of the Security Forces held another convention there. The devout Sikhs again converged there in large numbers but the Nirankaris attacked them with the support of the Hindu Police. The Police resorted to lathi charge and also opened fire on the Sikhs. The brutal use of police force left a trail of blood. Twelve Sikhs were killed and nearly eighty were seriously injured. This time ghastly crime was committed by the Hindu police in connivance with the Nirankaris and the government. The Kanpur tragedy clearly showed that the Hindus were openly siding with the Nirankaris and were poised against the Sikhs.

However undaunted by the unholy alliance of the Hindus and the Nirankaris Sant Bhindranwale continued his struggle for restoring lost glory of the Khalsa. Whenever and wherever Akali leaders deviated from the path of Sikhism he remonstrated them publicly and advised them to mend their ways. Most important instance of deviation by the Akali Dal from tenets of Sikh religion was the historic Akali Conference held at Ludhiana from 26th October to 28th October 1978.

Sant Bhindranwale was a genius and a born leader unlike spineless Harchand Singh Longowal upon whom leadership was thrust. Longowal looked pigmy not only in physical stature but also intellectually compared with Sant Bhindranwale. Sant

Bhindranwale has had far greater vision and foresight. He had a remarkable inquisitive insight and intuitive power. He was a symbol of indomitable courage, valour and spiritual power. His more than six-feet tall, stature piercing and fiery eyes, animated the dormant energy of Sikh peasantry, Sikh intellectuals and the Sikh youths. These extraordinary qualities raised him from the state of an ordinary farmer preacher to the status of a great leader and a gallant defender of the Sikh faith. He could be treated little short of a prophet or a Messiah. Is there any other leader born in the Sikh history in the twentieth century who had infused such a new life into the *Khalsa Panth* the World over and galvanised it into un-defeatable and unbreakable body. It was due to his charismatic and captivating personality that he had risen like the sun and eclipsed all other Akali leaders in a short span of a few years. Such a leader is born once a while. Therefore to compare him with Longowal is to compare the Sun with a candle. A candle could be blown out by a whistle but it is senseless to think of blowing the sun out. A candle gives light when it is ignited but the sun shines eternally of its own energy and gives light wherever it goes. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale would continue to shine in the annals of history of the Sikhs.

The year 1983 was a very crucial year for Dharm Yudh Morcha and the Akalis. Whenever the Morcha reached the stage of success Indira Gandhi invited the Akali leaders for talks, not with the intention of settling the issues but to dampen their spirit and frustrate the Morcha. She thus completely outwitted the Akali leaders and demolished their image in the eyes of the Sikh Panth. They were badly let down by her superior craftsmanship and so was let down and humiliated Longowal. It was only Sant Bhindranwale who saw through the sinister game of Indira Gandhi. He therefore repeatedly warned the Akali leaders to beware of Indira Gandhi's tricks but

none of them took his advice seriously.

Longowal, Barnala, Balwant Singh, Badal, Tohra and others were hankering after power in the name of the Panth but the great hero Sant Jarnail Singh was fighting for the defence of the faith of Nanak and Gobind Singh as well as for Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

When Sant Bhindranwale captured the hearts and souls of the Sikhs, old and young alike, it was almost impossible for a pigmy like Longowal to dislodge him from their hearts. Feeling that his leadership has been eclipsed Longowal frantically hobbled with Indira Gandhi in order to eliminate Sant Bhindranwale. Longowal gave green signal to Indira Gandhi to arrest Sant Bhindranwale from Guru Nanak Niwas. She therefore secretly planned to arrest Bhindranwale in December 1983. To facilitate Bhindranwale's arrest Longowal and Kirpal Singh, who was a selfish and meek head priest of Akal Takht, conveyed indirectly to the Centre that Guru Nanak Niwas was not a part of Golden Temple Complex and therefore the Central government could well send the commandoes there to arrest Sant Bhindranwale. It was not unpious for treacherous Longowal to stoop so low to facilitate arrest of Sant Bhindranwale simply to keep his leadership alive. In this sordid conspiracy were actively involved some of the traitors of the Sikh Panth who are called Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh Ex Finance Minister besides a clown named Balwant Singh Ramuwalia. These three crooks and faithless creatures formed the nexus upon whose advice Longowal always acted willingly. It should not however be misunderstood that Longowal was totally misled by them. In fact he, too, played his treacherous role wilfully.

Sensing the evil design of Longowal and Indira Gandhi Sant Bhindranwale, the Hero of the *Khalsa Panth*, shifted to the *Akal Takht* on 15th December 1983 and made it his headquarters

to carry on the fight for the cause of the Sikhs.

Before rift between Sant Bhindranwale and Longowal brewed up the latter called a convention at Amritsar in January 1983 to find out the ways and means for getting the Sikhs, demands accepted. The response was remarkably encouraging as more than three thousand Sikhs including ex-servicemen attended the convention held in the Golden Temple Complex. Among the participants were about two hundred Sikh officers who were above the rank of Colonel Generals like Jaswant Singh Bullar, Narinder Singh were the few of them who latter rose to prominence. But the most shining star among them was Major General Shahbeg Singh, an organiser of the Mukati Bahni and a hero of Bangla Desh war of 1971. Shahbeg Singh's performance in that war was excellent and for that role he was praised and applauded by the whole nation. He became a legendary hero. But Indira Gandhi, an overambitious and megalomaniac lady was not made of a stuff who could allow any body else to share the credit of victory of 1971 war. She wanted to be the sole hero herself.

In this back ground she framed up Major General Shahbeg Singh in a frivolous case when he was posted at Jabalpur as G.O.C. of the Southern Command and was cashiered on flimsy grounds of corruption. The only charge against him was that he had auctioned an unserviceable 'Jonga' a military jeep, to his relation. Inquiry held by the government into this flimsy charge revealed that the Major General had purchased Jonga for himself by proxy! Did this frivolous allegation warranted removal of such a brave general from his high post just a day before his retirement without pensionary benefits?

All this mischief was done at the instance of Indira Gandhi who wanted to discredit him. She conveniently forgot his outstanding performance in the war of 1971. It was not the first time that she had denigrated an outstanding Army Generals.

Some what similar indignity was heaped on Field Marshal Manek Shah for his outstanding performance in earlier India Pakistan war.

Ex-servicemen discussed the problems faced by the Sikhs and tried to find out ways and means to get them resolved by the Central government. A few of them supported Longowal's soft and peaceful line of action but the majority sided with Sant Bhindranwale who suggested to adopt hard line. Sant Bhindranwale declared emphatically that the Centre would never accept their just demands if they continued prostrating before Indira Gandhi. He exhorted them to rise, unite and snatch their just rights. The Ex-Sikh soldiers and officers overwhelmingly supported Sant Bhindranwale. Upon this Longowal felt belittled and humiliated.

Major General Shahbeg Singh was greatly influenced by the ideology followed by Sant Bhindranwale. He became his Chief martial advisor though General Narinder Singh was also there to render help to the militant organisations. Simranjit Singh Mann an IPS officer of the rank of DIGP was his strong political supporter. Bhai Amrik Singh President of AISSF and son of Sant Kartar Singh, predecessor of Sant Bhindranwale, was his ideologue. Surinder Singh Sodhi, a devoted Sikh, was his Security Officer. Sant Bhindranwale's other militant body guards were Sewa Singh, Rachpal Singh, Amarjit Singh and Surinder Singh Gill. Bhai S. S Sodhi was not only a superb marksman but he could also drive anything ranging from a bicycle to an aeroplane. Harmandar Singh Sandhu, General Secretary of AISFF, was the interpreter of the Sant. It is however intriguing why he surrendered to the Army along with Longowal and G.S. Tohra. Bhai Ranjit Singh who alleged to have killed Gurbachan Singh Nirankari Chief was close confidante of Sant Bhindranwale but he was subsequently weaned away by Longowal who arranged his surrender to

Delhi police through Surjit Singh Barnala. Barnala took him in his car from Amritsar to Delhi and handed him over to the Delhi police. This clearly shows that Barnala was a secret agent of the government. By secretly surrendering Bhai Ranjit Singh to Delhi police he pleased both the Nirankaris and the Central government. For this service he was later on rewarded with Chief Ministership of Punjab and then the Governorship of Tamil Nadu.

By winning the hearts of the Ex-servicemen Sant Bhindranwale expanded his influence further. Then he gave a new dimension to his movement. Now it looked as though the whole *Khalsa Panth* was standing by his side waiting for his guidance and direction. He became undisputed leader of the *Khalsa Panth*.

Although a criminal case of murder and keeping unlicensed arms was registered against Nirankari Chief Gurbachan Singh and sixty three others yet they were at large. Hardev Singh Chhina, a staunch Nirankari Chief Secretary of Punjab had escorted Gurbachan Singh safely out of Amritsar and Punjab immediately after the murder of Sikhs on 13th April 1978. Yet no action was taken against the abetter of the offences, who had also harboured the main accused Gurbachan Singh. Surprisingly he was not even transferred. As has been said earlier that the Nirankari chief had a clout with the Indian government he manipulated transfer of the criminal case from Punjab to the state of Haryana. The Supreme Court of India readily ordered transfer of the case to the court of R.S. Gupta, additional Session Judge of Karnal District, who was a pliable and notoriously corrupt judicial officer. The Judge startled the Sikh Panth on 4th January, 1980 by acquitting the Nirankari chief and all other sixty and odd accused who had committed murder of 13 Sikhs. It was a perversion of justice and for this ignoble act the Indian government was responsible, for, it had wielded

all influence on the depraved judicial officer to give verdict in favour of Nirankaris.

Sant Jarnail Singh was dismayed and disgusted at this gross injustice done to the Sikhs. But the Nirankaris were jubilant and rejoiced at their manipulated judicial victory. Nevertheless this ominous development gave a new and dangerous dimension to the struggle against the Nirankaris.

R.S. Gupta, a freak of nature, by delivering perverse judgement not only debased norms of justice but he also gravely injured the feelings of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were reminded of their past history and the teachings of the Gurus, such as Hargobind and Gobind Singh, who had explained the Khalsa the necessity and the merit of taking revenge from the evil enemy. Faithfully following the teachings of the Gurus, Bhai Ranjit Singh a brave and courageous Sikh youth, justifiably shot dead the Nirankari Chief Gurbachan Singh, right in his fortified den in Delhi on 24th April, 1980 and thus avenged the martyrdom of 13 devout Sikhs. His brave act glorified the faith of the Khalsa and he virtually became a hero of Sikh Panth overnight.

The government registered a case of murder in Delhi court and implicated Jagir Singh, elder brother of Sant Jarnail Singh along with Bhai Ranjit Singh. The Sant was also accused of hatching conspiracy. Undeterred by such arm twisting and pressure tactics used by the Indian Government, Sant Bhindranwale continued his struggle against the Nirankaris. He moved from village to village and revived the glory of the Khalsa created by Guru Gobind Singh from the edge of the "Khanda" a double edged sword. The Sikhs, especially the youth, were greatly influenced by the discourses given by the Sant. His rhetorical speeches infused a new life and instilled a fresh spirit in the Khalsa Panth. His relentless struggle roused the dormant energy of the Sikhs and the Sikh peasantry. In a short span of five years, from 1978 to 1983, he resurrected the

Khalsa which thus far was in deep slumber.

The historic movement launched by Sant Jarnail Singh effectively checked the onslaught of the Nirankaris and other adversaries which was aimed at the Sikh religion. The Sikhs again imbued the true spirit of the Khalsa which was overshadowed under the influence of Hinduism, Communism, and the Nirankaris, *et al.*

Thenceforth Sant Jarnail Singh did not allow the Nirankaris to hold conferences and take out processions on the soil of Punjab. This was his great victory which gave a further fillip to his unique movement of purifying the Khalsa.

Whereas Guru Gobind Singh had created the Khalsa, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a true disciple of the former, resurrected it. For this achievement he will be remembered by the Khalsa Panth for ever, only the heretics would frown.

Besides the Nirankaris Lala Jagat Narain, a staunch Arya Samaji and the chief Editor of the Hind Samachar Newspapers Group based at Jalandhar was spitting fire through his newspapers by making derogatory speeches against Sant Bhindranwale as well as against the Sikh Gurus. He vehemently supported the vicious Nirankari movement launched against the Sikhs and went to the extent of writing editorials defending the outrageous acts of the Nirankari Chief. Not only that, he appeared as a star defence witness and gave a false statement in favour of Gurbachan Singh in the murder case. His preposterous propaganda and outrageous actions against Sikhism provoked and angered the Sikh youth to such an extent that two of them gunned him down in broad day light, on 9th September 1981 while he was travelling in his car from Ludhiana to Jalandhar. Sant Jarnail Singh was again accused by the government of conspiring to murder the Lala and a criminal case was registered against him as well as Swarn Singh his nephew and one Nachhatar Singh.

The warrants for the arrest of Sant Bhindranwale were issued on 12th September 1981 by the Punjab Government headed by a wily Congress Chief Minister, Darbara Singh. The Sant used to compare Darbara Singh with infamous Zakarya Khan who was the Subedar of Lahore during the Mughal empire and who had committed enormous atrocities on the Sikhs. Unmindful of his contemplated arrest or physical liquidation by the government the Sant had gone to village Chando Kalan, in the Haryana state, to pursue his religious activities there.

In the mean while Darbara, the wicked chief Minister of Punjab, and the Indian government hatched a conspiracy to physically liquidate Sant Bhindranwale in village Chando Kalan and then to declare that he was killed is a fake encounter. To accomplish this foul task Darbara Singh secretly despatched a strong contingent of police force consisting of nearly three hundred armed personnel under the overall command of D.S. Mangat, Deputy Inspector General of police of Patiala range, The heavily armed police force included armed contingents of Central Reserve Police Force and the Haryana Armed Police. This large force was equipped with Sub Machine guns, Self loading Rifles, and other sophisticated weapons. The secret mission of the Armed Forces was to physically exterminate Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in a stage-managed encounter as their aim was not simply to arrest him. Had it been the intention of the government to simply arrest the Sant, there would have been absolutely no necessity of despatching such a heavily armed and large Police Force when the Sant had barely a dozen armed bodyguards with him.

Sant Bhindranwale was gifted with a remarkable intuitive power and vision. He therefore, sensed the impending danger. As he was not at that time prepared to meet the challenge of the state machinery he left Chando Kalan late in the evening on

12th September and arrived at his headquarters at Chowk Mehta in Amritsar District. His departure from Chando Kalan was not yet known to Darbara Singh and his hatchet men headed by D.S. Mangat.

The Armed Paramilitary Forces laid siege of village Chando Kalan soon after the Sant had left for Chouk Mehta. The armed forces searched the Gurdwara and all houses of the Sikhs. Not finding the Sant there the paramilitary forces went berserk and looted and plundered the houses of the Sikhs. They gave severe beatings to them all, old and young alike, and also molested their women. In a fit of frenzy they set ablaze two mini buses of Dam Dami Taksal and burnt to ashes two Birs (copies of holy Guru Granth Sahib) besides some other holy scriptures. Sant Bhindranwale, when informed of this diabolic act of sacrilege was deeply hurt. He vowed to avenge the perpetrators of atrocities and sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib.

Failing in his foul mission in complicity with the Indian government, Darbara Singh now despatched a bigger number of paramilitary forces to Chouk Mehta to arrest Sant Bhindranwale but the latter refused to surrender. Here the Sant was fully prepared to effectively meet the challenge of the government forces. Sensing gravity of the situation and observing that the Sant was fully determined to resist the forcible arrest the government relented and negotiated with him the terms of his arrest. The Sant after consulting his followers and supporters announced that he would offer arrest on 20th September 1981 on the condition that only baptised Sikh officer would effect his arrest. To meet this condition Jarnail Singh Chehal, Senior Superintendent of Police of Gurdaspur district, was entrusted with that job.

When Sant Bhindranwale's impending arrest was made public by the government on 15th September lacs of devout Sikhs, young and old and women, gathered in and around

Gurdwara Gurdarshan Parkash at Chauk Mehta. Before offering arrest on the stipulated date the Sant adorned a Kesari (saffron) turban in place of blue which he usually supported on his head. The Kesari colour is considered as a symbol of martyrdom by the Khalsa. He then said that he was going to embrace death as he had apprehended foul play by the government. Before offering his arrest he delivered thrilling speech to his audience pleading with them to unite under the Kesari flag in order to meet the challenge of the government and to defend the Khalsa Panth from on slaught of the enemies. Then bidding farewell to the congregation he boarded the waiting car and accompanied his namesake police officer to Ludhiana.

Soon after Sant Bhindranwale departed there was a great commotion in the audience numbering more than two lac Sikhs. The paramilitary forces at the behest of the Central Government Intelligence Agencies opened fire without any provocation and killed a dozen innocent Sikhs and seriously wounded many more. This provocative act was committed by the Secret Agencies to incite the congregation to retaliate so that the Paramilitary Forces could mow them down under the pretext of self defence. But the government failed in its sinister design as the Sant before his arrest, had advised the congregation to keep their cool despite provocation.

The police officers who interrogated Sant Bhindranwale in the district of Ludhiana failed to extract any evidence against him; even then he was detained in the Jail till 15th October 1981. In protest against his unwarranted detention some Sikh youths led by Gajinder Singh of Dal Khalsa hijacked an Indian Airlines plane on 29th September and landed it at Lahore in Pakistan. At last the government fearing further retaliation relented and unconditionally released the Sant from the jail on 15th October 1981. He came out with flying colours. His name and fame was greatly enhanced and he was now well on his way

to rise to the sky.

The false case registered against Sant Bhindranwale deserved to be contrasted with fool proof murder case registered against Nirankaris and their chief. Whereas Nirankari chief was present at the stage when his followers massacred 13 Sikhs, Sant Bhindranwale had gone to Chando Kalan in Haryana state when Lala Jagat Narain was assassinated near Ludhiana city in Punjab. Nirankari chief was not arrested whereas Bhindranwale was jailed without any justification for a month. It was shameful for the government to be biased against the Sant and favourable to Nirankari Chief.

This disgraceful and discriminatory act of the government cast a dark shadow on its secular credentials and sense of justice. As the portent events would show the government had deliberately played a wicked role in this sombre scenario with a view to aggravating the conflict between the Sikhs and Nirankaris on the one hand, and between the Sikhs and the government on the other. No body, who believes in administration of true justice, could define such an evil government as the true representative of the people. At best such a government could be called a sectarian and communal in nature.

The Congress government played a dirty game in aggravating the crisis in Punjab. At first it pampered Gurbachan Singh Nirankari to open a bloody front against the Sikhs, especially the Dam Dami Taksal led by Sant Kartar Singh and then by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, and the Akali Dal headed by Longowal. Further it inducted many actors and directors to create abnormal circumstances leading to the point of explosion. Last but not the least then it inducted various Intelligence Agencies to foment the crisis so that a critical situation arises which could farcically warrant military action in the burning Punjab. And ultimately Punjab was turned into a battle field by the Central Government.

Chapter 2

CONFLICT BETWEEN SANT BHINDRANWALE AND THE SHIROMANI AKALI DAL

Dam Dami Taksal was founded by Guru Gobind Singh in 1704-1705 when he had temporarily settled at Talwandi Sabo, District Bhatinda after his last battle fought with the Mughal troops at Mukatsar. Baba Deep Singh was installed as the first Jathedar of the Taksal. The Baba sacrificed his life near Amritsar while fighting Ahmed Shah Abdali's, troops in order to free Harimandir Sahib from their occupation. Thus the first Jathedar of the Taksal laid down his life defending the holy shrine.

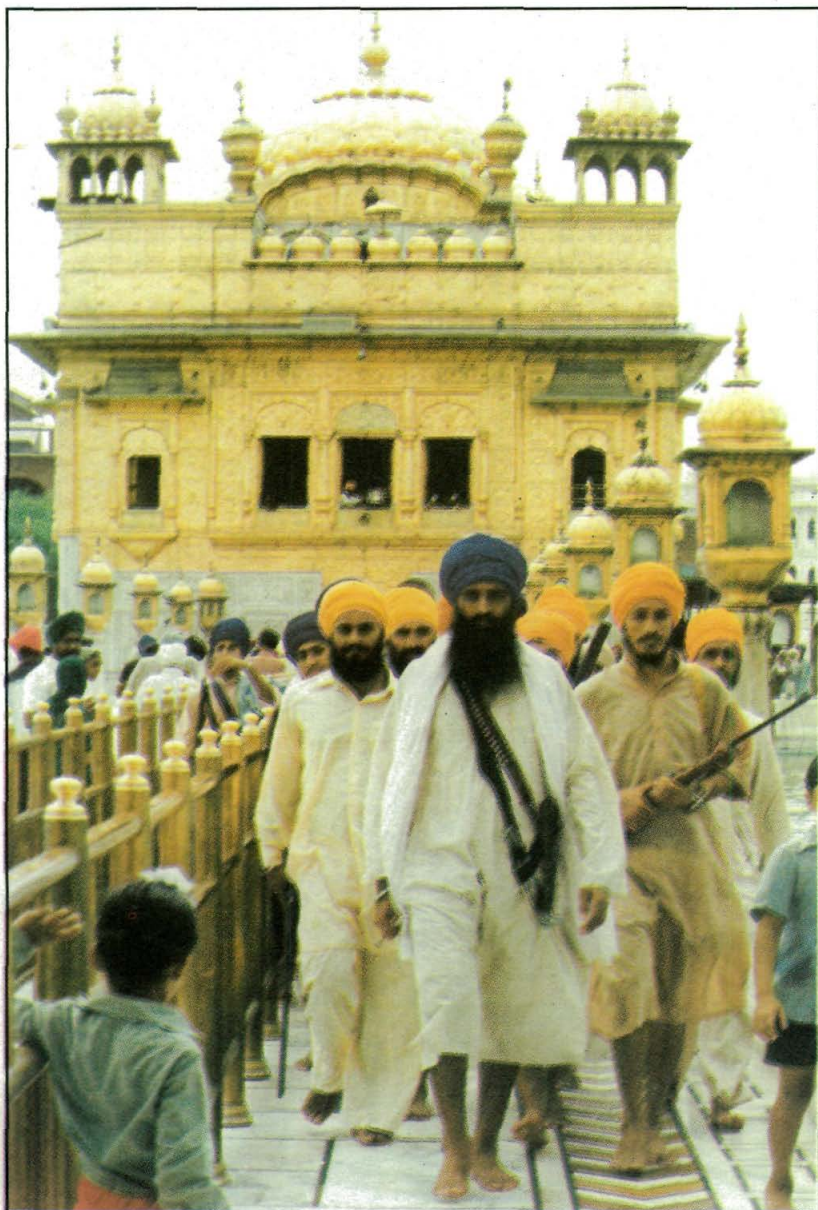
Sant Gurbachan Singh, who had baptised Jarnail Singh and accepted him as his disciple, was the twelfth Jathedar of the Taksal in succession. When Sant Gurbachan Singh passed away in 1969 Jarnail Singh was barely twenty two; and before his demise he had appointed Kartar Singh as his successor but the Akali government, led by Justice Gurnam Singh, wanted to plant their own man, Mohan Singh, as the Jathedar of the Taksal. Because of this conflict Sant Kartar Singh was not allowed to attend the last rites of the deceased Sant held in village Bhinder Kalan, the headquarters of the Taksal. In spite of hurdles created by the Akali government the Taksal installed Sant Kartar Singh as its thirteenth Jathedar in accordance with the wishes of Sant Gurbachan Singh. This obstructive attitude of the Akali government created bitter feelings in the mind of youthful Jarnail Singh who had witnessed the unpleasant incident.

When Sant Kartar Singh met with a fatal accident near Ludhiana city in July 1977, in the prime of his life, and succumbed to his injuries in the Christian Medical Hospital

there, a question of his successor again tantalized the Akali Dal who were incidentally again reigning in the Punjab at that time. This time, too, they wished to have their own trusted man at the helms of affairs of the Taksal but they did not create much of the fuss about it perhaps remembering the last bitter experience. The Taksal, therefore, according to the wishes of Sant Kartar Singh, installed Jarnail Singh as the Head who was then hardly thirty years old. This was the second futile attempt made by the Akali leadership to meddle with succession of the Taksal. It further embittered the feelings of Sant Jarnail Singh and therefore he lost all trust in the Akalis. The Akalis too did not trust him and thus this mutual distrust created a cleavage between them which ultimately resulted in a conflict.

Intra contradictions among Akali leaders

Beside a simmering conflict between the Akali leadership and Sant Bhindranwale the former too, was afflicted with intra contradictions. Immediately after emergency was lifted in January 1977, Parkash Singh Badal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jagdev Singh Talwandi had emerged as the main pillars of the Akali Dal. They held a conclave and reached an agreement that after the elections to constitute Lok Sabha and Punjab Legislative Assembly, Badal would join the Central government, Talwandi would be elevated to the post of President of Akali Dal and Tohra would become Chief Minister of Punjab. The trio successfully contested elections to the Lok Sabha and became Members of Parliament in March 1977. Hurriedly formed Janata Party, which included political organisations professing divergent ideologies, won the majority seats and formed the Central government. The Akali Dal being one of the constituents of Janata Party was a part of the coalition government. According to the agreement reached between the triumvirate Badal joined the government at Delhi and Talwandi was elevated to the post of President of Akali Dal in place of



After paying obeisance, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala coming out of Golden Temple.

S.S.F.I's famous pair under whose guidance and under patronship of Sant Jarnail Singh, the federation emerged as real political forum of Sikh Youths.



Bhai Amrik Singh, alongwith Bhai Harmindér Singh Sandhu sitting on the stage after being felicitated by Sant Jarnail Singh being elected as President of the federation.



Sant Jarnail Singh Ji honouring Bhai Sandhu after being re-elected as General Secretary of the federation.

Mohan Singh Tur. Only Tohra, who was President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, was left to be raised to the office of the Chief Minister of Punjab.

But Parkash Singh Badal was not sincere to implement the agreement mentioned above. In fact he longed for the chair of the Chief Minister and that he could achieve only at the cost of Gurcharan Singh Tohra. Not bothering about the breach of trust he secretly conspired to fulfil his cherished desire by hook or by crook. In order to succeed in his selfish plan he feigned illness and expressed his inability to continue as the Union Minister. He pretended that climate of Delhi did not suit him. He gave wide publicity to his feigned illness through his courter as well as the media. But he could not accomplish his task without the support of Talwandi, the third party to the agreement. Talwandi, who did not see eye to eye with Tohra at the time, in fact was close to Badal, and therefore he readily agreed to render him support. Tohra was totally unaware of that secret plan.

Badal, while at Delhi, played a trick. He requested Talwandi to contact Tohra and inform him of his feigned illness and that he should call upon him to enquire about his deteriorating health. In good faith Tohra visited Badal's residence where Talwandi was already present. There he was coned and tricked in and was thus prevailed upon to meet Badal's request. Tohra willingly or unwillingly sacrificed the chair of Chief Minister mainly for sake of unity of the Akali Dal. It was greatness on the part of Tohra as he had shown magnanimity in not insisting upon implementing the unanimous agreement reached between the triumvirate. However such type of unity, based on insincerity on the part of one party, could not be expected to be maintained for long. True unity required mutual trust but that trust was violated by Parkash Singh Badal.

As the luck would have it, cordial relations between Badal and Talwandi did not last long. They were badly strained in

about two years of Badal's come back. The latter also failed to befriend Tohra, rather his wrong policies and arbitrary decisions annoyed him further. Thus both Tohra and Talwandi joined hands together and launched a concerted offensive against Badal in order to seek his ouster. With this aim in view they submitted a joint memorandum to the Jathedar of Akal Takht levelling serious charges against Badal for his destructive actions which could wreck the unity of the Akali Dal. Besides, Prem Singh Lalpura, General Secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and lieutenant of Tohra, also presented a similar charge sheet against Badal to the Governor of Punjab. Jaswinder Singh Brar and Randhir Singh Cheema, both cabinet ministers and supporters of Talwandi, also resigned in protest. They too charged Badal of corruption and nepotism. When this cut throat struggle reached climax Badal weaned away Tohra and Talwandi was left in the lurch. He nevertheless continued his struggle against Badal and fought it to the bitter end till he was outnumbered and dislodged from the presidentship of the Akali Dal in 1980. He was replaced by Harchand Singh Longowal a spineless man, who had been brought from obscurity to the center stage during the emergency. Such a pliable man and a novice in politics, suited Badal and his supporters the most.

Jagdev Singh Talwandi, known for his determination and steadfastness, formed Akali Dal after his own name and started agitation on the Baisakhi day of 1981 in Delhi with one demand, that is, realisation of Anandpur Sahib Resolution which was so fondly adopted by the Akali Dal in October 1973 but was conveniently forgotten by them after forming their government in Punjab. Talwandi flouted the prohibitory law and courted arrest along with his supporters in Delhi and remained confined in Tihar Jail there till Sant Bhindranwale met him and persuaded him to join the mainstream. Jathedar of

Akal Takht also issued Hukamnama (edict) directing all Akali factions to merge. Thus Talwandi was left with no alternative but to disband his Akali Dal and merge it with the main Party. This was the politico-religious scenario that was emerging in Punjab in the late 1970s. In spite of intra contradictions prevailing among the Akali leaders they were confronting Sant Bhindranwale on all fronts and the latter did not take the challenge lying down. Indira Gandhi and Darbara Singh, President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, were both out of power and therefore they were using all wicked tactics to regain power. Their deliberate acts of omission and commission especially in relation to Punjab, worsened the situation and complicated it further. It is in this perspective that the future ominous developments in Punjab are to be viewed and reviewed. In the proceeding pages effort would be made to depict the future assessment of the politico-religious developments in Punjab.

But one more factor fraught with danger is to be taken into account. That factor was acute rivalry between Darbara Singh and Giani Zail Singh, both wily Sikh Congress leaders of Punjab. In order to grind their own axe and dominate Punjab scenario they tried to outwit each other in playing dirty politics. Indira Gandhi made Giani Zail Singh the Union Home Minister and Darbara Singh was appointed as the Chief Minister of Punjab in June 1980. Although she knew that fierce rivalry existed between these two stalwarts of the Punjab Congress yet she deliberately pitched them against each other. Giani Zail Singh, as Home Minister, employed all tricks to de-stabilise Darbara Singh which ultimately led to his dismissal. None the less their mutual fierce enmity further aggravated the already complex political situation in Punjab. It was but natural therefore to expect that such a grave complexity of political scenario would one day implode and explode with full force.

Chapter 3

SANT BHINDRANWALE'S IDEOLOGY AND MISSION

Ideology professed and advocated by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was not entirely new. It was exactly the same as enunciated by Guru Nanak and developed by Guru Har Gobind and Guru Gobind Singh. However under the influence of Hinduism Sikh ideology was diluted. This diversion happened during the British rule in India. Nevertheless it did not lose its distinct identity as it floated like a lotus in the pool of turbid water. The Sikh religion and the Sikh ideology still looked like a lotus floating in the pool of muddy water. What Sant Bhindranwale did was that he had picked up the lotus from a pool of muddy water and transplanted it in the pool of purity. In other words Sant Bhindranwale revived the true tenets of the Khalsa and gave it a new dimension. This dimension stands in conformity with fundamental law of nature which explains that nature develops progressively and so does the ideology. If any ideology is not allowed to flow and flourish it would become like a stagnant water. Therefore he persistently exhorted the Sikhs to follow the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh and accordingly motivated and inspired them to become *Amritdhari* and *Shasterdhari*. Without undergoing that process Sikh could not be transformed into true Khalsa and without keeping arms he could neither defend himself nor the *Khalsa Panth*. The tradition of arming the Sikhs was introduced by Guru Hargobind after bitter experience of non violence and patience experienced by Guru Arjan Dev who gave a supreme sacrifice for the cause of his faith but his sacrifice failed to change the hearts of the

tyrant Mughals. When the policy of patience and sacrifice failed only then Guru Hargobind had to take to arms. He then instructed the Sikhs to offer him weapons and horses instead of money. He accepted weapons and horses at the Akal Takht from his followers. He himself wore two swords as manifestation of Miri Piri. He raised and maintained a Jatha of 800 horsemen, and 60 Sikhs armed with match-locks who always remained present around him to ensure his personal security. Guru Gobind Singh further developed the concept of *Miri Piri* by creation of the *Khalsa*.

Sant Bhindranwale simply revived this tradition in letter and spirit and gave it a new dimension by substituting revolvers and guns with swords and spears, and motor cycle with horse. He therefore did not commit any offence by following the Gurus. The cynics may criticise him for revival of the age old tradition of the *Khalsa*.

When Sant Jarnail Singh felt that the Hindus are manipulating to assimilate Sikhism by following manifold devices he waged a relentless war against this drive and cautioned the Sikhs of the impending danger. In the Constitution of India the Hindus have already incorporated Article 25 (2) (b) which has clubbed the Sikhs with the Hindus. So the campaign launched by Bhindranwale to save Sikhism was justified by all means. For this reason the Hindus dubbed him as anti national. Not only that, the chauvinist Hindus branded him anti national, extremist, secessionist and disruptionist. It is however not a new trick of the orthodox Hindus. For that matter minority religion which fights for its honourable survival is branded by them as anti-national.

Sant Bhindranwale had always been drawing attention of the Sikhs to the way they were treated as second rate citizens, rather as slaves. He cited numerous instances in support of his arguments. Some of the recent instances he

quoted are given below :

- i) "When Indira Gandhi was defeated in the general elections held in January 1977, she was convicted by the Parliament for breach of privilege and was sentenced to undergo imprisonment for seven days. She was detained in Tihar jail in Delhi. In protest against her arrest two Pandey (Brahman) brothers from Uttar Pradesh hijacked an aeroplane of the Indian Air Lines. They were not convicted and sentenced at all. Instead Indira Gandhi, when regained power in 1980, got them elected Members of the Legislature as the Congress (I) nominees. On the other hand when Sikh youths hijacked a plane on 29th September, 1981 in protest against arrest of Bhindranwale the hijackers were arrested, tortured and prosecuted. They are still languishing in jail. When again Musibat Singh (real name Manjit Singh) and his companions hijacked another plane of Indian Air Lines in protest against the burning of Guru Granth Sahib and two busses of *Dam Dami Taksal* in village Chando Kalan in Haryana State the main hijacker was persuaded to surrender but was shot dead by the police at Raja Sansi Air Port near Amritsar. The Sant's grievance was that if a plane is hijacked in protest against arrest of a Brahman's daughter (Indira Gandhi), the hijackers are rewarded with membership of the state Assembly and the Parliament, and if the plane is hijacked by Sikh youths in protest against desecration of their "*Isht*" the hijackers are shot dead. Is it not discrimination against the Sikhs? Is a person like Indira Gandhi more sacred than the "*Isht*" of the Sikhs?"
- ii) "One Ashok Kumar, a criminal and a Brahman by caste, was shot dead by the Patiala police while he was indulging in hooliganism and arsening in 1983. P.C.

Sethi, the then Union Home Minister and Chaturvedi Secretary Home Department of India, rushed to Patiala to find out the facts. But when more than two hundred Sikhs were shot dead by the Police during the Dharm Yudh Morcha, not even a peon of the Central government bothered about them."

- iii) "As many as eight Sikh volunteers were shot dead and many more were injured by the Police on the day of "Rasta Roko Call". Under pressure of Akali Dal one man Enquiry Commission headed by Justice Dubey (a Brahman) was constituted by the Central Government to hold inquiry into the death of 8 Sikhs besides a Brahmin Ashok Kumar. The Commission shamelessly concluded that killing of eight Sikhs was justified but death of one Brahmin Ashok Kumar was a murder. Is it not a gross discrimination against the Sikhs?"
- iv) "One Pawan Kumar Sharma, a notorious criminal (again a Brahmin) of Patiala was found having in his possession 230 high explosive hand grenades. He was let off without registering any case against him. On the other hand a Sikh soldier, Piara Singh, of Ferozepur was accused of stealing a sten gun. Later the sten gun was recovered from the residence of a Hindu soldier but Piara Singh was tortured to death by a Hindu-military officer. Is it not a discrimination against the Sikhs?"
- v) "Harbans Lal Khanna, a prominent Jan Sangh leader of Amritsar, published provocative posters and displayed them on the walls of the city. The poster said "*Duki Tiki Khain Nahin Deni- Sir Te Pagri Rehan Nahin Deni*" *Katchh Kara Kirpan Jhnu Ghallo Pakistan*. (We shall not allow any rank of the Sikhs to raise their voice, if they do, we shall remove their turbans and eliminate them. If any Sikh who wears Five Ks he should be

pushed into Pakistan". Evidently such provocative and slanderous slogans which were publicly displayed and also shouted in the streets constituted an offence under the Indian Penal Code, for the offenders had criminally intimidated the Sikhs. The language used in the slogan was derogatory and also anti national, but no criminal case was registered against Khanna. Why? Because he was a Hindu. But if the Sikh youths gave a befitting reply to such a provocative slogan criminal cases are registered against them."

- vi) "P.C. Sethi Union Home Minister threatened that he would get Bhindranwale dragged out of Guru Nanak Niwas forcibly within a week. Sant Bhindranwale said that the statement amounted to a criminal intimidation. However he challenged let Sethi himself dare come to lay hand at him. On this account a criminal case was registered against him whereas no action was taken against P.C. Sethi."
- vii) "Indira Gandhi declared several times that the Sikhs living in Punjab should think of the fate of those living outside. This statement too amounted to a threat given to the Sikhs. In reply Bhindranwale said that the Sikhs are not cowards. They were ready to meet that threat as twenty Hindus could be taken care of by one Sikh. Bhindranwale's retaliatory reply was taken serious notice of and a criminal case was registered against him. But no case was registered against Indira Gandhi who openly and publicly threatened the Sikhs to be ready to face the consequences. Eventually Indira Gandhi's threat was put into practice in Haryana from 17th February 1984 to 24th February when some Sikhs were killed, dozens of Gurdwaras were burned and hundreds of shops owned by them were looted and

plundered by the Hindus at the behest of Bhajan Lal, Chief Minister of Haryana. No action against the murders, arsonists and lumpens was taken. What all this lead us to believe?"

Sant Bhindranwale commented that Hindus have unfolded their ugly plans by killing Sikhs and molesting their women under the very nose of the biased police. When the Sikhs were mercilessly massacred, their women molested, their Gurdwaras and Guru Granth Sahib burnt, their shops looted and plundered in an organised manner by the Hindus in Haryana from February 17th to 24th 1984 abetted by the Haryana police and instigated by Bhajan Lal, Sant Bhindranwale was convinced that the threats given by Indira Gandhi were not empty and hollow. It proved that she meant what she said. It was a very serious development. If the Prime Minister of the country openly and publicly incites the Hindus to commit atrocities on the Sikhs and the Hindus readily obeyed her who would save the minorities in India? Does it behove the Prime Minister of a secular India to act like a communal leader?

Seeing all this fury and frenzy Bhindranwale was convinced that the fate of Sikhs in India was in peril. He, therefore, devised some means and ways to defend themselves from the future onslaught of the Hindu Government. It was due to the criminal policy followed by Indira Gandhi that had compelled Bhindranwale to exhort the Sikh youths to form squads of three in each village and Mahallas and purchase motorcycles and revolvers to defend themselves if they were again attacked by the enemies. He pleaded with the Sikhs to become Amritdhari and Shasterdhari if they want to live in India with honour. He reminded them of the glory of the Khalsa who fought the tyrant Mughals and in the long run won the war.

In the second half of 1983 Indira Gandhi was actively supporting Longowal who had betrayed the cause of the Sikh

Panth and was secretly collaborating with the Centre in order to isolate and eliminate Sant Bhindranwale. Longowal gave a green signal to the Centre to arrest Sant Bhindranwale from room no. 47 of Guru Nanak Niwas. That is why the Sant shifted to the Akal Takht so that he may carry on his struggle to fulfil his mission. Longowal and his courterie raised objections that no person could live in the Akal Takht but Sant Bhindranwale countered this by citing numerous instances when Akali leaders including Master Tara Singh had been living there. When Longowal and the company failed in their nefarious design to oust Bhindranwale the Longowal clique pressurised Jathedar of Akal Takht to issue Hukamnama against Bhindranwale but by that time the Sant had become so powerful with the unstinted support of Sikh masses that Giani Kirpal Singh could not dare to oblige Longowal. Longowal felt frustrated on his failure to push out Sant Bhindranwale. Nevertheless he continued his vicious onslaught on the gallant Sant. He engaged Gurcharan Singh, an ex-Naxalite, Office Secretary of his Akali Dal to eliminate Sant Bhindranwale at any cost. This villain employed one Surinder Singh Chhinda and an immoral young woman Baljit Kaur and assigned them the job to exterminate the Sant. Some how or the other they could not succeed in harming the Sant. However both these hired assassins treacherously killed on 14th April, 1984 Surinder Singh Sodhi the trusted right hand man of Sant Bhindranwale. This outrageous crime was committed in the Sindhi Hotel situated just outside the Golden Temple Complex. Malak Singh Bhatia helped Chhinda to escape after the treacherous murder of Sodhi. But within 24 hours Sodhi's death was avenged by killing all the conspirators including the assassin and his mistress Baljit Kaur. This conspiracy was apparently hatched at the behest of Longowal. Now Longowal feared that he, too, would be punished by the Khalsa for his

unpardonable and heinous crime. He, therefore, doubled his efforts to seek help from the Central Government to eliminate Bhindranwale lest he himself should perish. He talked to Indira Gandhi on telephone and gave her clear signal to take any action which she deemed fit to eliminate Sant Bhindranwale. Indira Gandhi and her son, Rajiv Gandhi, had already decided to take military action against Bhindranwale and for that purpose commandos were being trained at Chakrata, a secret Centre setup for imparting guerilla training to the selected soldiers. The commandos were being trained there since March 1984 who were later to be sent to attack the Golden Temple Complex. A special large model of the Golden Temple Complex was prepared at Chakrata to enable the commandos to make themselves familiar with the exit and entry routes of the Complex so that they may not experience any difficulty at the time of actual military action to achieve their set goal.

As has been explained earlier Sant Bhindranwale was under persistent attacks from Longowal and his clique. Longowal launched a tirade against Sant Bhindranwale branding him as a Congress Agent and, therefore, he did not allow the Sant to address the Sikh congregations from Manji Sahib. The Sant voluntarily refrained from going to Manji Sahib not because he feared Longowal but because he still wanted to keep unity in the Akali workers which he had brought about with great efforts. He, however, continued addressing the Sikh audience from the roof of Guru Ram Das Langar building. This reduced the number of audience to be addressed by Longowal at Manji Sahib whereas the Langar building hummed with enthusiastic Sikhs. The result was that Longowal was deserted by the Sikh masses and it was he who stood isolated not Sant Bhindranwale. It was his charismatic personality and devotion to the Sikh cause that Sant Bhindranwale captivated the hearts of the

Khalsa Panth. He sarcastically questioned as to who actually was the agent of the Centre, he or Longowal? The Sant cited many instances which proved to the hilt that Longowal and his clique were the real agents of the Centre. He disclosed that the Government had cancelled fire arms licences of all of his followers whereas Gurcharan Singh, the villain, and Jiwan Singh Umranangal, a freak of nature, were issued licences for keeping sten carbines. Almost all Akali Members of Legislative Assembly dined with Darbara Singh, whom Bhindranwale compared with Zakarya Khan, and whose hands were stained with the blood of the Sikh youths. Parkash Singh Badal married his daughter to a grandson of Partap Singh Kairon, the late Congress Chief Minister of Punjab, who had tortured and persecuted late Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur, the former President of SAD. Balwant Singh Ex-Finance Minister obtained licences from the Congress government for setting up industries and Surjit Singh Barnala handed over Bhai Ranjit Singh, alleged killer of the Nirankari Chief, to the Centre. All these supporters of Longowal were hobnobbing with the Centre with a view to forming a coalition government with the Congress by throwing the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to winds. Sant Bhindranwale said, in spite of all this, they claimed to be Akalis and he is dubbed as a Congress Agent. The truth is clear as to who were the Congress Agents.

Sant Bhindranwale disclosed publicly that Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi expressed their wish to hold secret negotiations with him but he declined the offer. He however expressed his willingness to hold talks openly in any Gurdwara or some public place but the mother and the son were reluctant to meet him in the open. This is in contrast to the secret negotiations being held by the Longowal clique with the Congress.

To the allegations levelled against him by the Government

that he was an extremist and separatist he explained "I exhort the Sikhs to become Amritdhari; I advise them to give up all kinds of intoxicants and narcotics; I tell them not to harm any innocent person; I tell them to follow the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh and take revenge from the sinners. In short I exhort them to become true Sikhs. And similarly I advise every Hindu to become true Hindu and a Muslim a true Muslim. If in spite of all this I am branded an extremist then I am proud to be called an extremist."

Another charge levelled against Bhindranwale was that he was a Khalistani and, therefore, he is a separatist. He explained when asked by the Press reporters, "I never demanded Khalistan, but if the Centre willingly gives us Khalistan I would not decline the offer." But on 3rd June, 1984 when the Golden Temple Complex was under the siege of the Indian Army and the zero hour of brutal attack on it was imminent, Sant Bhindranwale did say unequivocally "now we cannot live in India; we need a separate home." Earlier, too, he expressly and repeatedly said that the day the Indian Army attacked the Golden Temple and Akal Takht, foundation of Khalistan would be laid. Unfortunately his warnings have had no effect on the arrogant Indira Gandhi and other Hindu leaders. It is a tragedy that all Opposition Parties formed and led by the Hindus unanimously supported and exhorted Indira Gandhi to take military action against the Sikhs led by Bhindranwale.

Longowal bragged that the Akali Dal is an organisation of the martyrs and as such he boasted that he was President of that glorious organisation. It is true that the Akali Dal has been founded and nourished with the blood of martyrs but it is most unfortunate that a coward and cunning person like Longowal happened to be its president. In response to his boastful utterances Bhindranwale retorted that Longowal is the 14th

President of SAD and questioned him whether any of the 14 Presidents ever sacrificed their life for the sake of Sikhism? Evidently none of the fourteen Presidents attained martyrdom. And when such an opportunity came their way they turned their face and fled. The Sant declared that he, too, was the 14th Jathedar of Dam Dami Taksal and that its very first Jathedar Baba Deep Singh Shaheed laid down his life in defence of Akal Takht. He therefore, proudly declared that the very founder of the Taksal attained martyrdom but what the Akali Presidents have done. Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh and others undertook fast unto death in order to compel the Centre to accede to Akali Dal's demands. When the Centre did not yield they broke the fast as well as the Ardas. None of them dared to sacrifice life for the sake of the Sikh Panth. Sant Chanan Singh, Jiwan Singh Umranangal and some other Akali leaders vowed to burn themselves alive if their demands were not met. They even constructed "*Kunds*" for burning themselves but they shamelessly came out of the Kunds when the Centre refused to oblige them.

And this was boastful claim of Longowal that he had presided the organisation of the martyrs. Humiliated by the taunts of Sant Bhindranwale, Longowal thought upon a plan to raise an "*Army of Marjiwarhe*" (those who were ready to lay down their lives) during the Akali Morcha. Even then Sant Bhindranwale was the first who took the oath at Manji Sahib near the Akal Takht. Longowal, Balwant Singh, Barnala and other Akali leaders and more than one lakh workers took similar oath there from 13th April 1983 to May 1983. They pledged and vowed to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Sikh Panth and to defend the Golden Temple Complex if it was attacked by the army. It is pertinent to note that Longowal, Surjit Singh Barnala, Balwant Singh Ex Minister, Balwant Singh Ramuwalia and others repeatedly declared from the

stage of Manji Sahib that if the Centre ever sent army to attack the Golden Temple Complex the army shall have to walk over their dead bodies, "tanks would roll over our dead bodies." They took this oath at Manji Sahib before Guru Granth Sahib in the precincts of Golden Temple and Akal Takht.

But when the army actually attacked the Golden Temple Complex in June 1984 the imposters and cowards like Surjit Singh Barnala, Ravi Inder Singh, Balwant Singh and others had confined themselves in their air-conditioned homes. Longowal, Tohra, Ramuwalia and some others, who were present in the Complex, huddled themselves in the office of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee to save their lives and surrendered to the Army by raising their hands above the heads. Even Harminder Singh Sandhu, Gen. Secretary of AISSF meekly surrendered. It was only the "gallant defender" Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who along with his faithful companions fought the Indian army with dauntless courage and unprecedented valour in defence of their faith and holiest shrines. Longowal, the cowardly and the shameless traitor, who had once boasted that the army would walk over their dead bodies, ironically himself walked over the dead bodies of the brave Sikhs.

II

Sant Bhindranwale's aspiration for Sikh Homeland

Concept of Miri Piri and creation of the Khalsa essentially carry with it the element of sovereignty of Sikh religion and the Sikh nation. This is the essence of the Khalsa philosophy.

Guru Gobind Singh relentlessly fought for achieving this mission and ultimately paved the way for establishing the Missal rule which eventually culminated in the Sikh empire under the Khalsa army led by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other

Sikh Princely states like Kapurthala, Patiala, Faridkot, Nabha, Jind etc. Thus the essential features of the Khalsa philosophy enjoins upon them to fight for sovereignty. So long as true spirit of the Khalsa is alive these essential features will also live alive.

Keeping these essential principles of the Khalsa philosophy alive the Khalsa Panth took active and spirited part in the freedom movement started by the Indian National Congress and surpassed all communities in giving sacrifices. It is however a tragedy that when India achieved freedom the Congress betrayed the Khalsa Panth as they were not given the rightful place in the country as was promised to them before independence. They forgot that like the Hindus and the Muslims the Sikhs, too, had, ruled north west India and that like them they too had aspired for their home land.

Why the Sikhs failed to achieve their sweet homeland? It was mainly for two reasons. One, the Sikh leaders, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, and Madhusudan Singh, lacked vision and wisdom. They failed to see through the wickedness of the Hindu Congress leaders. M. K. Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru who continued feeding them on false promises. Two, the aforementioned Congress leaders deceived and betrayed them under a well considered secret plan but the hazy minded Sikh leaders failed to get wind of their scheme although the British government repeatedly reminded them of the foul game being played against them by the Congress leaders.

To keep the stymie minded Sikh leaders completely befuddled the Congress first passed a resolution in 1929 in the annual conference held at Lahore assuring them that after India achieved freedom no Constitution would be framed by the majority community unless it was freely acceptable to the Sikhs. But when the Constitution was actually framed and passed in 1950 the Congress government threw their promise to the wind. They showed scant respect to the Sikh

No one bestows kingdom to others, it could only be attained through personnel might.



*Sri mukh bhanio greb niwaaaj, shashtran ke adheen hai raaj.
Raaj bina neh dharm chalai hain. Dharm bina sabh dalai malai hain.*



Prestigious warrior General Subeg Singh who encountered the Indian armies attack on Darbar Sahib and Akal Takhat with great valour, in his two different forms of his life.



Two brave warriors : Shaheed Bhai Satwant Singh and Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh, who took the revenge of the sacrilege and disgrace of Golden Temple and Akal Takhat.

representatives like Hukam Singh and Bhupinder Singh Mann, who had refused to append their signatures to the Constitution of India.

Again in March 1931 M.K. Gandhi, on behalf of the Congress, assured the Sikh leaders that Congress would do nothing that might alienate sympathies of the Sikhs from the Congress. Let God be the witness to that bond that binds Gandhi and the Congress with the Sikhs. Jawahar Lal Nehru went a step further to assure the Sikhs. On the eve of meeting of all India Congress Working Committee he reaffirmed and reassured the Sikhs saying that the brave Sikhs of the Punjab were entitled to special consideration and that he saw nothing wrong in an area set up in the North wherein the Sikhs could also experience the glow of freedom. But when India actually achieved freedom in 1947 Jawahar Lal Nehru eschewed his words and brushed aside demand of the Sikhs saying that now the circumstances have changed. In this way the wily Congress leaders befuddled and befooled the feckless Sikh leaders.

It is pertinent to note that British government knew the actual intention of the Congress leaders. They knew well that the Congress leaders were playing with the sentiments of the simple minded Sikhs. They knew well that after transfer of power to the Congress the latter would back out and leave the Sikhs in the lurch. Hence the British government made an informal proposal to the Sikhs in 1932 that if they disassociated finally with the Congress movement they would be given a decisive political weightage in the Punjab, such as would lead to their emerging as a third independent entity in India. Unfortunately Master Tara Singh, fed on the false promises of the Congress, spurned this golden offer and thus doomed the fate of the Sikhs. *

The British were keenly interested to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs. Therefore, once again the British Cabinet conveyed

to Baldev Singh that their government was ready to make arrangements so as to enable the Sikhs to have political feet of their own on which they might walk into the current of world history. But Baldev Singh also fell under the spell of the ruthless Congress leaders and shunned the offer for a separate home land for the Sikhs. Thus both, Master Tara Singh and Baldev Singh, plunged the Sikh community into the fathomless sea of miseries and perdition where they have been languishing since independence. It is their misfortune that their visionless leaders failed to take a lesson from the life of Mohammad Ali Jinnah who, too, had been shown much more green pastures and sunshine by the Congress leaders but he had rebuffed them with scorn. He frankly expressed his views that he did not trust the Congress leaders. He, therefore, stubbornly stuck to his guns and ultimately created Pakistan, a home land for the Muslims.

Now the traditional Akali leaders should learn a lesson from the past, study the present and plan for the future. This was what Sant Bhindranwale had expected from the Akali leaders to do. He was of the view that it was useless to remind the government of the broken promises made to them before independence. What was the worth of verbal promises compared to the written promises made by the Central government to the United Nations Organisation and the Security Council in 1948 with regard to the disputed case of Jammu and Kashmir? Jawahar Lal Nehru had referred the Kashmir case to the World Body and sought cease fire with Pakistan. He also agreed in 1948 to hold plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir in order to know the wishes of the Kashmiris as to whether they wanted to merge with Pakistan or India but he backed out in 1956 saying that now the circumstances had changed. If Indian government could back out from their written commitment made to the UNO where lies the question of fulfilling verbal promises made

to the Sikhs.

It is an irony that instead of giving the Sikhs their rightful place the Indian government, immediately after attaining freedom, branded them as criminals and lawless people. The Indian government issued a secret circular in 1947 to all Deputy Commissioners of Punjab giving them clear direction that :

“The Sikhs as a community are a lawless people and are a menace to the law abiding Hindus of the province. The DCs should take special measures against them.”

This was the reward the Congress government gave to the brave Sikhs for the sacrifices they had made during the freedom struggle. Paradoxically the Mughal emperors also branded the Sikhs as a lawless community and therefore they had taken repressive measures against them. And it was against these atrocities that the militant Sikh Gurus had taken to arms and met that challenge bravely. It is an age old tradition of the Khalsa to fight the tyrants and not to submit themselves to tyranny. If thus the Congress government contemptuously branded them as a lawless people and oppressed them they are justified to meet arms with arms.

In this regard Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi also exhorted the Sikhs to take swords if their just demands were not conceded by the government. When Madhusudan Singh asked M.K. Gandhi what the Sikhs should do in the event of betrayal by the Congress, Gandhi firmly replied that in that case the brave Sikhs should take their swords in their hands with perfect justification and safeguard their rights by use of the arms. If Gandhi, a great leader of the Congress, justified armed struggle by the Sikhs to safeguard their interests, why Sant Bhindranwale was blamed for his militant struggle.

The principles of Miri Piri and the philosophy of the Khalsa enjoins upon the brave Sikhs to fight for their rights and safeguard their interests. Thus if Sant Bhindranwale had

followed the philosophy of Miri Piri and the Khalsa clearly endorsed by M.K. Gandhi for achievement of Anandpur Sahib Resolution what wrong he had done? He had been inspired by the promises the Congress had made to the Sikhs for their separate home land and therefore he had aspired for fulfilment of those forgotten promises. This was his only mission of life and he bravely fought for it.

Chapter 4

SANT BHINDRANWALE AND DHARM YUDH MORCHA

The Akali Dal under the feeble leadership of Harchand Singh Longowal half heartedly launched agitation in January and February 1981 simply demanding remunerative prices for food grains and withdrawal of hike in bus fares enhanced by Darbara Singh government which had come to power in June 1980 after defeating the Akalis in mid term poll. Both Communist Parties, CPI and CPI (M), also joined the agitation. This agitation created little impact on the masses, hence it withered away. Seeing the miserable plight of the Akalis both Communist Parties withdrew themselves from the Akali partnership. Now the Akalis were in search of a new issue which could attract the masses to join hands with them. They tried their luck in launching agitation against digging of Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal which was supposed to carry waters of river Sutlej to Haryana at the cost of Punjab farmers. They vowed to stop digging of canal near village Kapuri in Patiala district on 24th April, 1982. This agitation also failed to rally the farmers around the Akali leaders and hence it flopped. Repeated failures of the Akalis demoralised them and Longowal felt frustrated.

Longowal failed to rouse the feelings of Sikh masses because he lacked all the prerequisite qualities of leadership. He failed to give meaningful direction to the Sikh Panth because he lacked vision. He failed to set out specific demands which could appeal to the psyche of the Khalsa because he himself was a spiritless and uninspiring leader. Therefore his

feeble leadership threw the Akalis in wilderness.

While Longowal was indulging in cock fighting in Punjab. Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi was fighting for Anandpur Sahib Resolution in Delhi. He shifted his headquarters to Delhi on 13th April 1981, the Baisakhi Day, and launched one-man Morcha for one demand, realisation of Anandpur Sahib Resolution. He commenced his fight at Delhi and went to jail several times by repeatedly breaking prohibitory orders. He remained lodged in Tihar Jail till Sant Bhindranwale persuaded him in August 1982 to return to Punjab to join Dharm Yudh Morcha jointly launched by him and the Akali Dal at Amritsar. Talwandi agreed to join Dharm Yudh Morcha on the condition that his demand of Anandpur Sahib Resolution must find top place in the proposed list of demands set out by the Longowal Akali Dal as well as the demands of Sant Bhindranwale. The Sant not only accepted this condition but he also assured Talwandi that he will adopt Anandpur Sahib Resolution as his own mission. Upon this Talwandi returned to Punjab and joined Dharm Yudh Morcha in September 1982.

Why Talwandi was so much attached to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution? When Akali government under the Chief Ministership of Parkash Singh Badal was formed in 1977 Talwandi was the President of the Akali Dal. Annual general conference of Akali Dal was held at Ludhiana on 27th and 28th October 1978. While other so called moderate Akali leaders were hesitating to touch the Anandpur Sahib Resolution Talwandi, considered as a hard-liner, pushed through it and got it adopted in the open session on 28th October. The Akali High Command was virtually forced by him to adopt the Resolution. Thus, in a way, Talwandi was the second founder of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution though the original Resolution drafted in October 1973 by Kapur Singh Ex. ICS, Ex. M.P. at Anandpur Sahib was some what modified in 1978. Even the

modified Resolution sought enough powers for Punjab so as to make it an autonomous state. This Resolution envisaged that only four portfolios namely, Defence, External affairs, Currency and Communications should be retained by the Union government and the rest of the powers should vest in the states. This system of distribution of powers was quite sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of the Sikh Panth. This was the reason that later on Sant Bhindranwale made it his cherished mission of life and vowed to achieve Anandpur Sahib Resolution that had been adopted in 1973. Akali Dal led by Longowal ultimately threw this Resolution to the wind and set out to accept political power. It was only Sant Bhindranwale and Talwandi who stuck to their guns.

In mid July 1982 Sant Bhindranwale fell ill and doctor attending on him advised a week's rest. In the meanwhile Bhai Amrik Singh, President of AISSF and Bhai Thara Singh, Manager of Gurdwara Gurdarshan Parkash, both close associates of Sant Bhindranwale, were arrested by the police at Amritsar on 19th July 1982. They were booked in a false criminal case and taken into police custody. This wanton act of the government compelled Sant Bhindranwale to fight for justice. In spite of his illness he shifted his headquarters to Amritsar the same day and lodged himself in room number 47 of Guru Nanak Niwas. He performed Ardas at Akal Takht for the success of his fight for justice and despatched a Jatha of 51 Singhs to the residence of Deputy Commissioner to court arrest. The Jatha when not arrested squatted on the middle of the road in front of D.C.'s official residence till it was arrested late night on 19th July. This was the start of Dharm Yudh Morcha. The immediate demands set out by the Sant were unconditional release of Bhai Amrik Singh and Thara Singh and withdrawal of false cases registered against them. As these simple demands were not met "Jail Bharo" movement was launched. The Jathas were daily

sent out from Manji-Sahib to court arrest. Seeing the success the Morcha was achieving Longowal and his supporters found an opportunity to retrieve their impaired position. Longowal called an emergent meeting of his Akali Dal at Amritsar on 25th July 1982 and in consultation with Sant Bhindranwale decided to join the Morcha formally on 4th August 1982. The Sant being a selfless religious leader concurred to make Longowal as Dictator of the Morcha. This was merely a face saving device created for Longowal so as to fulfil his ego. As a matter of fact de facto Dictator of the Morcha was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

To mark formal launching of Dharm Yudh Morcha on 4th August some Sikh youths led by Gajinder Singh hijacked Indian Airlines plane to Lahore. Another plane was hijacked by Musibat Singh (real name Manjit Singh) on 20th August 1982 to Pakistan but it was not permitted to land at Lahore because Indian Government had already lodged protest with Pakistan. The plane landed back at Raja Sansi Airport near Amritsar and the hijacker was persuaded to surrender but was shot dead treacherously by the police without trial by a court of law. This brutal act of the government angered Sant Bhindranwale who declared that it was a grave injustice against the Sikhs. He retorted that two Pandey brothers had hijacked Indian Airlines plane in protest against arrest of Indira Gandhi when the Janata Party was in power at the centre. When Indira Gandhi came back to power in 1980 she rewarded both the Pandey brothers by giving them berths in Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly. This was a clear contrast of the case of Manjit Singh who had been gunned down in a similar act that was committed by Pandey brothers. None the less this tragic incident gave fillip to the Morcha which was further intensified. In a short period of two months all jails in Punjab were jam packed with Akali workers. Even temporary jails set up in the government

buildings were over packed. There was virtually left no room anywhere where the arrested Akali volunteers could be detained. The busses fully loaded with volunteers remained parked outside the jails waiting for accommodation for days and sometimes for weeks together. But the flow of Akali workers continued unabated. There was an unusual euphoria and sparkling enthusiasm among the volunteers young and old alike. The volunteers wearing saffron bands around blue turbans, women supporting saffron *Dupattas*, having daggers (*Gatras*) slung across their shoulders rent the Punjab state with traditional slogans "*Raj Karega Khalsa*" and "*Degh Tegh Fateh.*"

It appeared that the whole Sikh Panth was on the move. The Morcha was a splendid success in the history of Akali movements.

When the Morcha was running in full swing a tragic incident took place on 11th September 1982. A bus fully loaded with Akali volunteers dashed into a speeding train at an unmanned railway crossing near Taran Taran which left 34 Sikhs killed and a large number injured seriously. This incident was not a simple accident. It appeared to have been a deliberate act committed by the authorities at the behest of Darbara Singh, a cruel and cunning Chief Minister of Punjab. He perhaps wanted to blunt the rising spirit and enthusiasm of the Akalis but he failed in his sinister design. His mean act proved as a counter productive. Sant Bhindranwale accused Darbara Singh publicly for his diabolic act and declared all the killed volunteers as martyrs.

In order to register their protest against this wanton act the Akali leaders led the volunteers to Delhi in order to take out a massive procession in Delhi on 10th and 11th October. When Akali workers passed through Haryana they were harassed, obstructed, beaten and even fired upon by the police at the

instance of Bhajan Lal a notorious Chief Minister of Haryana. In spite of all such hurdles the Akalis did reach Delhi and took out a massive procession. The police opened fire on the peaceful demonstration on 11th October when they were proceeding towards the Parliament House to present a memorandum of their demands. Half a dozen Akalis were killed and more than a dozen were injured by police firing. As the Parliament was in session Indira Gandhi was shaken. Under panic she ordered the release of all Akali volunteers lodged in the jails. In fact all the jails over flooded with the Akali volunteers and there was absolutely no room left anywhere in Punjab to accommodate their unending stream. Indira Gandhi, a crook and cunning Prime Minister, found an opportunity to ease the tension. Therefore under the pretext of assuaging the injured feelings of the Akalis she ordered the release of all detained volunteers but they refused to leave the jails. The Darbara Singh government disconnected electric connections and stopped supply of water to the detainees. It was a trick played to force them to vacate the jails but the detainees did not relent. Sant Bhindranwale wanted them to stick to the jails but Longowal opposed his stand. In the capacity of a Dictator of the Morcha he directed the volunteers to leave the jails and they came out triumphantly. Evidently it was a total defeat of the state and the Indian governments. This was the first round of battle won by the Akalis ostensibly under the leadership of Longowal but actually under the guidance and inspiration of Sant Bhindranwale. With this the first phase of Dharm Yudh Morcha was over.

II

The first phase, jail bharo, of Dharm Yudh Morcha ended with unprecedented success. The second phase commenced with the Akali workers marching on Delhi when Asiad games were held by the Congress (I) government in Delhi in November

December 1982. Many Afro-Asian and Arabian countries participated in the games. Prominent foreign countries who took part in the games were Russia, China and Japan. The Akali Dal decided to send some of their workers to Delhi for distributing their charter of demands to the delegates of foreign countries. Their aim was simply to draw attention of other countries to the oppressive and repressive measures adopted by the Central government to subdue the Sikhs as well as to apprise them of their just demands. Rajiv Gandhi, who was then the General Secretary of the Congress (I), was made by Indira Gandhi in-charge of the games. He felt alarmed and became panicky when he learnt that the Akalis were bent upon to carry forward their demands to the international forum. Indira Gandhi PM also shared her son's fears. The Indian government, therefore, decided to prevent the entry of all Sikhs to Delhi during proceedings of the games. All Sikhs bound for Delhi even on their personal missions were debarred from entering the boundaries of Delhi. All routes leading from Punjab to Delhi were completely sealed and the city metropolis was declared out of bounds for the Sikhs of all shades and belonging to all political parties. Whatever their status was they were dragged out of all modes of transportation, harassed and humiliated. They were even arrested and detained by Haryana para military forces. Prominent personalities such as former Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh and Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Arora were subjected to humiliation by the fanatic Hindu paramilitary forces and police. Other dignitaries like judges of High Court, Brigadiers and all and sundry had to face indignity. So much so Congress (I) member of Parliament, Amarjit Kaur, was not spared by the Haryana Police. This high-handedness and vandalism against the Sikhs further injured their psyche and they were forced to believe that they were being treated by the Indian Government as the second class citizens.

Inspite of all this barricading arrangements enforced by the Indian Government some Sikh youths managed to enter the stadium and distributed pamphlets to the foreign delegations. The foreign delegates thus came to learn of the discriminatory behaviour being meted out to the Sikhs by the Indian Government. Thus this naive move of the Indian government to black out the publicity with regard to the Punjab problem proved a failure. It was unwittingly given wider publicity than was being planned by the Akali Dal.

The Sikhs of all shades by and large reacted sharply to the humiliation they or their brothers had suffered during the Asiad Games. Taking full advantage of this opportunity the Akali Dal gave a call to block road traffic (Rasta Roko) on 4th April 1983. The response to their call was remarkable. All roads, national and state highways, passing through Punjab were jam packed by the volunteers. Lakhs of people converged and squatted in the middle of the roads. As a result not a single bus or other modes of transportation was allowed to ply anywhere in Punjab. The call proved a complete success though at the cost of lives of about a dozen volunteers who were killed by the police firing. Many were injured and maimed.

After this splendid success the Akali Dal gave another call for Rail Roko (block the railway traffic) on 7th June 1983. The Indian Government got panicky as it had already tested the strength of the Akalis when they had completely immobilised the road traffic on 4th April. The government therefore voluntarily stopped operation of trains in Punjab in a vain attempt to deprive the Akalis of taking credit for blocking the rail traffic but, credit did go to them as no train moved in the state.

The successive calls given by the Akali leadership and successfully carried out by the volunteers alarmed Indira Gandhi and shook the Indian Government. The unity brought

about by Sant Bhindranwale in various Akali groups and other Sikh organisations was the main reason for these glorious successes.

Seeing the tempo of Dharm Yudh Morcha and successes it had achieved in a period of one year Indira Gandhi and her government were perturbed. All Hindu political parties and other organisations, including the communists of all shades, were pressing her to take stern action against the extremist Akalis and especially Sant Bhindranwale and his supporters who were playing a pivotal role in the agitation, to help the moderate Akalis. She however perceived that so long as the Akalis were united it was difficult to take a drastic action against them. She therefore decided to follow "*Kutil Niti*" enunciated in the *Arth Shashtra* authored by a master craftsman Kautalya. *Arth Shashtra* is an unethical treatise on politics. "*The Prince*" authored by Machiavilli, known the world over, is not even a patch of the former. The basic features of *Kautalya Shashtra* are : *Sam, Dam, Bhed, Danda*, which respectively mean appeasement, bribery, dissension and use of force. All these means could be employed severally or collectively as the situation warranted. Making full use of this immoral treatise on politics Indira Gandhi at first tried to woo Sant Bhindranwale who was the real force behind the Dharm Yudh Morcha. But he was a man of determination and an embodiment of the tenets of the Khalsa. He, therefore, spurned all tricky moves made by Indira Gandhi. She even sent a personal letter to Bhindrawale requesting for meeting. Failing to wean him away from his sacred mission she decided to isolate him. To achieve that end she turned her face to Longowal, a man of flickering mind, and his power hungry gang led by Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh, Ex Finance Minister and the like. Longowal and his notorious gang fell easy prey to her game as they were hankering only after political power and she was ready to throw

them that bait. They were appeased and bribed by her by promising them to hand over political power. What they were required to do in return for that bribery was to divide the Akali Dal and isolate Sant Bhindranwale. This secret bargain was stuck by Longowal and his clique at the back of Sant Bhindranwale.

In order to camouflage their treacherous acts Longowal and his supporters launched a full scale offensive against Sant Bhindranwale and branded him as Agent of the Congress, abettor of terrorist acts, instigator of violence so on and so forth. They went to the extent of dubbing him as extremist, separatist and traitor to the Sikh Panth. Longowal and his wicked gang indulged in all sort of sordid propaganda and went to the meanest extent of maligning him in the eyes of Sikhs and Hindus alike. This was what Indira Gandhi wanted and expected from Longowal and his courterie. And this was what she herself had branded Sant Bhindranwale with. Longowal announced that Sant Bhindranwale would not be allowed to address the audience from Manji Sahib as he was a Congress Agent. Balwant Singh or some other leader like Sucha Singh Chhottepur's utterance was more revulsive who had contemptuously equated Sant Bhindranwale with the dacoit of Chambal. This canard was given wide publicity by government media. Hindu press surpassed even government media by disseminating malicious propaganda against him. In spite of all this slanderous and provocative offensive Sant Bhindranwale maintained his cool. It was his greatness that he never passed any invectives against his maligners, the Akali leaders. He simply but firmly said that time will prove who were Congress Agents and traitors to the Panth. He remarked that the Akali leaders had attacked him nearly half a dozen times during one and a half year of Morcha but he never retaliated by attacking any one of them. He knew that the ugly faces of Akali leaders

would be exposed in due course of time.

As planned the hideous moves of Longowal started unfolding in mid 1983. Longowal and his supporters were by now actively collaborating with the Indian government led by Indira Gandhi. It was not only betrayal of a fair minded teacher and preacher, Sant Bhindranwale, but more than that it was a great betrayal of the Sikh Panth. However the ugly faces of the traitors were yet to be unmasked before the Panth.

When Sant Bhindranwale was convinced that it was impossible to bring back Longowal from the path of betrayal he chose to call a convention of true and devout Sikhs at Guru Nanak Niwas on 3rd and 4th September 1983 to apprise them of the actual situation as well as to deliberate on finding suitable ways and means to achieve the goal set out at the start of Dharm Yudh Morcha. The only goal was the achievement of Anandpur Sahib Resolution adopted by the Akali Dal in 1973. At this Longowal got panicky for he considered that calling of convention by Sant Bhindranwale was a challenge to his leadership. Out of frustration he declared that the proposed convention was anti-Panthic and warned that those Akali leaders who participated in it shall be expelled from the Panth. Despite his hollow warning nearly 300 delegates expressing unflinching faith in Sant Bhindranwale's line of action attended the convention. The most prominent among the participants was Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi who had faithfully adhered to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. Other important personalities were the retired military generals and civilian officers. Major General Shahbeg Singh, Maj. General Narinder Singh, Maj. Gen. Jaswant Singh Bhullar, Brigadier Mahinder Singh and Gurtej Singh, an ex-officer of Indian Administrative Service, were the other stalwarts who participated. Talwandi launched a scathing attack on Longowal whom he blamed for resiling from the demand of Anandpur Sahib Resolution. He also

accused other Akalis who were deviating from the set goal of the Dharm Yudh Morcha. Other participants also gave vent to their feelings and openly denounced Longowal's treacherous and diversionary tactics. On the concluding day the convention adopted several resolutions. Most important of them was that Dharm Yudh Morcha would continue till the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was accepted by the Indian Government in toto. Seeing the determined stand taken by Sant Bhindranwale as well as by a stalwart like Talwandi and other prominent Sikh personalities, Longowal lay low. Apparently he was in wait for hatching another conspiracy against the rising star, the gallant Sant.

By this time Sant Bhindranwale had captured the hearts and the souls of the Sikhs, young and old alike. As a matter of fact he had become a beacon light of the Khalsa Panth.

The All India Sikh Students Federation resurrected by Bhai Amrik Singh under the inspiration of the Sant had become a vanguard of Bhindranwale's movement. Therefore at this stage it was impossible for a spineless Longowal and his gang to dislodge the Sant from the hearts of the Sikh masses who were in state of resurgence. Longowal fearing that his leadership was being eclipsed conspired with Indira Gandhi to physically eliminate Bhindranwale. As a part of this sinister scheme he announced that the Hostel Complex is not a part of the Golden Temple Complex, thereby giving a clear indication that Indira Gandhi could send security forces to arrest Sant Bhindranwale from Guru Nanak Niwas. The secret plan worked out by Longowal and Indira Gandhi was that the commandos would conduct a surprise raid and capture Sant Bhindranwale on 16th December 1983. Getting inkling of this evil design of the enemies of the Panth, Sant Bhindranwale, the beacon light of the Khalsa, shifted his headquarters to Akal Takht before the stipulated date of his planned arrest from Guru Nanak Niwas.



Sant Jarnail Singh and Sant Harchand Singh coming out after attending the convention of Ex Sikh Military Men of Punjab.



Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa returning back to his residence near Akaal Takhat in the evening from the upper storey of Guru Ram Dass Langar where he used to meet the Sikh Sangat.



Writer A.R. Darshi with Baba Joginder Singh, father of
Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala.

Thus he foiled the nefarious design of the traitors. He made the upper portion of Akal Takht as his temporary abode in order to carry on the fight for his cherished mission. Upon his failure to get the Sant arrested Longowal became frustrated and desperate. He stooped so low that he had embarked upon a more nefarious plans to remove Sant Bhindranwale from his way. He mounted a fresh malicious campaign against the Sant to maintain his waning leadership. He raised hue and cry on Sant's stay in the Akal Takht and announced that it amounted to desecration of this holy seat of the Temporal Authority. Sant Bhindranwale countered this false and misleading propaganda by giving specific instances of the Akali leaders who at one or the other stage had sought shelter in the Akal Takht. Those Akali leaders included Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh and the like. Thus ill-conceived motive of Longowal to haunt out the gallant Sant from Akal Takht was completely exposed. Then as a last resort Longowal tried to persuade Kirpal Singh, Jathedar of Akal Takht, to issue Hukamnama against Sant's stay at Akal Takht but the Jathedar resisted the pressure not because he was unwilling to seek ouster of the Sant from Akal Takht but he feared that the Sikh masses and the AISSF would resent this nefarious move and he himself would be dislodged from the Jathedarship of Akal Takht. Failing in his every surreptitious move a wicked Longowal turned more revengeful. His malice and animus against Sant Bhindranwale increased day by day. He continued his vicious campaign against the gallant Sant overtly and covertly. When all his moves failed to see the end of the Sant he entered into a murderous conspiracy to physically liquidate him. For this purpose he employed Gurcharan Singh, a notorious communist from Bhatinda, as his office secretary. He entrusted the task of eliminating Bhindranwale to Gurcharan Singh who was as reckless as his mentor Longowal was. Gurcharan Singh hired the services of

a professional murderer Surinder Singh Chhinda and his immoral young mistress Baljit Kaur. He paid them a hefty amount and promised to pay more if they succeeded to finish the Sant. Both these professional criminals secretly planned to gun down Sant Bhindranwale on 13th April 1984 in the Golden Temple Complex but neither of the two mustered courage to open fire on the Sant although they were sitting in front of him armed with revolvers. However, both these hired assassins did succeed in murdering Surinder Singh Sodhi, a right hand man and faithful supporter of Sant Bhindranwale on 14th April 1984 in the Sindhi Hotel where he had been treacherously lured by them to go on the pretext of taking tea. After this treacherous murder of a right hand man of the Sant Chhinda escaped with the active support of Malak Singh Bhatia, a treacherous follower of treacherous leader, Longowal. Baljit Kaur was however taken into custody by Bhindranwale's followers. She was produced before the Sant where she disclosed the details of conspiracy hatched by Longowal to kill Bhindranwale and his right hand man Sodhi. She also confessed her active involvement in the ghastly murder of Sodhi. Within twenty four hours of killing of Sodhi the Sikh youths avenged his death by exterminating Chhinda, Bhatia and Baljit Kaur. This act of revenge alarmed Longowal and his henchman Gurcharan Singh. Now they too feared to meet the same fate that was met by the assassins of Sodhi, a devout Sikh.

Sant Bhindranwale publicly accused Gurcharan Singh for this heinous crime and announced that now he would not sit as a silent spectator. He openly declared that conspiracy to kill him and Sodhi had been hatched by the Dictator of the Dharm Yudh Morcha. This open announcement further frightened the cowardly Longowal who accelerated his efforts to seek protection from Indira Gandhi lest he himself should meet his destined end because of the dangerous conditions he had

himself stupidly created.

Realising that differences between Sant Bhindranwale and Harchand Singh Longowal had assumed serious proportions and that the situation had become critical, some second rate Akali leaders tried to bring about reconciliation between Sant Bhindranwale and Longowal. The Sant asked the mediators to first ask Longowal why his secretary Gurcharan Singh arranged assassination of Sodhi and at whose behest he had hatched the criminal conspiracy, why Longowal had not so far removed his criminal secretary from the office, and if he (Longowal) did not dismiss the culprit, how Longowal could absolve himself of the criminal conspiracy. Obviously there were no answers given to these few questions. In spite of all this Longowal retained Gurcharan Singh with him till the latter was killed during the military attack on the Golden Temple Complex on the night of 5th June 1984. Had Longowal removed Gurcharan Singh from the office of Akal Dal the latter must have divulged the name of the prime accused of the criminal conspiracy and the prime accused was not any one else than Longowal himself.

Evidently, therefore, efforts made by the mediators to bring about reconciliation between Sant Bhindranwale and Longowal failed. Therefore a final split between them was a certainty and the split between them did occur in April 1984.

Thereafter Longowal had called a joint meeting of the members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and other Akali leaders in Teja Singh Samundari Hall on 27th April 1984 to take stock of the prevailing situation and to discuss plans for future course of action. At the behest of Longowal, his stooges, like Jasdev Singh Sandhu, attacked Sant Bhindranwale branding him as a Congress Agent and saboteur of the Morcha. Such remarks led to counter attacks by the followers of Sant Bhindranwale. Finding no solution to resolve differences between the two sides as many as 42

members of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee walked out of the meeting in protest against Longowal's wilful dithering and diversionary tactics. They raised slogans against Longowal and went to Akal Takht to seek blessings of Sant Bhindranwale. This was a dead end reached by Longowal in a calculated move and to prepare ground for the Indian government to launch military attack on the Golden Temple Complex although the die had already been cast by the government.

It was not for nothing that Sant Bhindranwale, while addressing the concluding session of the Gurmat Training Camp organised by the AISSF at the Guru Ram Das Langar Building on 31st December 1983, had predicted that a conspiracy had been hatched (by Longowal and his clique) to level malicious charges against him and then set a stage for the Indian government to send para military forces to enter the Golden Temple Complex. He therefore cautioned the AISSF and other Akali workers to beware of these enemies of the Khalsa Panth. Hinting at the power hungry Akali leaders led by Longowal the Sant declared in unequivocal terms that they should remember that Dharm Yudh Morcha shall never be withdrawn however prolonged it might be. He emphatically announced that the Morcha would continue till Anandpur Sahib Resolution is accepted by the Indian government in letter and spirit. Dharm Yudh Morcha he added, was a final and decisive battle between the Hindu government and the Khalsa Panth. Earlier he used to say that he was neither in favour nor against the demand for Khalistan but on this occasion he spelt out that now it was up to the Indian government to decide whether they wanted to keep the Sikhs with them or out of them. If Khalistan was offered to them they will not refuse. It was a clear warning to the traitors headed by Longowal as well as the Indian Government that the day Para Military Forces were sent in to Golden Temple Complex the foundation of Khalistan would be

laid. It was also a warning to the Longowal Akali Dal that inspite of their betrayal Dharm Yudh Morcha would continue till the goal is achieved. It was a grave mistake on the part of the Indian Government and the Longowal Akali Dal that they had brushed aside this warning as a braggart and treaded on the path of already planned strategy of launching military attack on the Golden Temple Complex.

III

When, in collusion with the Indian government, Longowal accused Sant Bhindranwale as the Congress Agent in second half of 1983 and simultaneously made an announcement that the Sant would not be permitted to address the audience from Manji Sahib, the Sant shifted his stage to the roof of Guru Ram Dass Langar building not for fear of Longowal but in the interest of unity he had so fondly brought about in the Akali Dal. He therefore voluntarily refrained from going to the Manji Sahib and instead started addressing his audience from the Guru Ram Das Langar building. As a result flow of audience at Manji Sahib gradually withered away considerably whereas the Langar building thronged with the enthusiastic Sikh volunteers especially the youths. Thus Longowal, who had made a futile attempt to isolate Sant Bhindranwale, stood himself isolated from the Sikh masses. This situation totally demoralised Longowal. None the less, bucked up by his stooges like Baranala, Balwant and others, Longowal, in order to test his popularity, gave a call for "Kam Roko" (to stop work in government offices) on 29th August 1983 but this time the response from the Sikh masses was very poor. The old Akalis supporting grey beards casually went to the government offices in consultation with the of officers and requested them to stop working. After having a round of the offices Akalis came out inflatedly claiming that they had closed the government offices.

As a matter of fact this call given without the support of Sant Bhindranwale turned out as a total failure. However in a last bid to regain his lost credibility Longowal adopted a bold posture and gave a call to his Akali Dal for burning the Indian Constitution on 27th February 1984. This time too the response from the Sikh masses was nominal. Only the leaders such as Badal, Tohra and the like turned out and enacted a drama by burning not the Constitution but a typed copy of Article 25 (2) (b) of the Constitution. This clause of the Article 25 (2) (b) defines the Sikhs as Hindus. Badal was arrested in Delhi and Tohra and others in Chandigarh for their alleged offences of burning the Indian Constitution but in fact it was only a stunt. This drama was enacted to befool the Sikhs but actually it was done at the instance of the government so that the front rank leaders of Akali Dal were arrested and gathered together to hold fresh secret negotiations with the government. Talwandi had already been arrested and was detained under the provisions of the National Security Act for his fiery speech delivered on 20th September 1983 on the occasion of election of Bhai Amrik Singh as the President of AISSF and had suggested to Longowal, who was sitting beside Sant Bhindranwale, to form a parallel government at Amritsar as the Indian government was not paying any heed to their demands despite making unprecedented sacrifices.

While Longowal and his gang was waiting for a military attack on Sant Bhindranwale the latter was seriously engaged in his efforts to defend the Golden Temple Complex in case it was attacked either by para military forces or the Armed Forces. At this critical juncture Longowal, sitting in the Air conditioned room was, glibly smiling while Sant Bhindranwale was devotedly planning to defend the sacred of the sacred shrines Golden Temple and Akal Takht. Such was the different stands taken by the two leaders, the former a paper tiger and a

traitor and the latter a real tiger and patriot to the core.

Undaunted by the treachery of Longowal and machanisation of Indira Gandhi, who had nursed deep personal contempt against Sant Bhindranwale the latter continued giving politico-religious discourses to the audience from the Langar building. He was motivating and mobilising the Sikhs especially the youths to defend the faith of Nanak and the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh which seemed to him to be in peril. The impending danger to the faith of Nanak and the Khalsa of Gobind Singh, he declared was coming from within as well as from without. He therefore exhorted his supporters to be ready to fight on two fronts, one, the enemy dwelled within you waiting, and, two, the enemy waiting to pounce upon you from outside. Ultimately his prophetic statement proved true.

Chapter 5

INDIRA GANDHI'S MANOEUVRING AGAINST SANT BHINDRANWALE

We have seen that some sort of agreement between the Akalis and a team of cabinet Ministers of Indira Gandhi was reached but she had resiled. Her ulterior motives were perhaps not known to the Opposition Party leaders. It was well known that the parliamentary elections were due in January 1985 and she contemplated to advance the elections. In order to win the elections she needed Hindu votes as the minorities were disillusioned with her policies and they had drifted away from the Congress (I). To achieve her set objectives she cooked up a plan with the active support of Rajiv Gandhi who had risen from the grave of his younger brother Sanjay Gandhi. Her courtesies like Arun Nehru, Arun Singh and others also played a partisan role in the sinister game.

Their wicked plan was to rouse Hindu sentiments and revive Hindu fundamentalism and then to exploit them in their favour to win the general elections. With a view to achieving her aim Indira Gandhi directed her agents she had planted in the Akali Dal to aggravate the crisis in Punjab. It is worth noting that when the Akalis launched *Morchas* for anti-hike passenger fare and *Nehar Roko*, Bhajan Lal Chief Minister Haryana and the *Haryanavis* remained passive. When the *Akali Morcha* gathered strength and pressure on Indira Gandhi increased she incited Bhajan Lal to react to the demands of Akalis and he faithfully acted upon her advice. He thereafter opened his mouth and vehemently countered the demands of the Akalis especially concerning Chandigarh, Abohar, Fazilka and

distribution of river waters. Subsequently Rajasthan was also brought in the fray as far as the question of river waters dispute is concerned. It is pertinent to mention here that the people of Haryana and Rajasthan had never agitated for share in waters. Their interests were always protected by the centre. Darbara Singh Chief Minister of Punjab also became vocal and launched a tirade against the Akalis. He termed the demands for implementation of Anandpur Sahib Resolution as anti-national. Step by step all main Opposition Parties such as Bhartiya Janata Party, Lok Dal and CPI openly came out against the Akali's demands. Thus there was a chain reaction and ultimately all the Hindus of India including those of Punjab irrespective of party affiliations rose against the Akalis. The fire was fuelled by Indira Gandhi and fanned by her stooges as well as the Opposition Parties. All were however outwitted by the Machiavellian Princess; for, they had failed to see through her game.

It was not only that the Hindu dominated political parties were arrayed against the Akalis and the Sikhs, Indira Gandhi also incited every deputation of Hindus that waited upon her in Delhi and goaded them to react against the Akalis. The deputationists gave distorted versions of the occurrences of Punjab and misrepresented that the militant Sikhs, working under the guidance of Sant Bhindranwale, were committing atrocities on the Hindus. Her only reply used to be "why are you taking every thing lying down? Why don't you react and retaliate." This used to be her message to the Hindus. This was disclosed to me by more than one responsible Congress (I) leaders who had led the deputations to wait upon Indira Gandhi. They encouraged some hitherto unknown Congress workers and antisocial elements to fan the fire of Hindu backlash. One such instance is of a criminal Pawan Kumar Sharma of Patiala who formed Hindu Suraksha Samiti overnight which was

actively supported by the Congress (I). He created a lot of mischief in Patiala. Another instance is of Jagdish Tangri, a notorious Brahman smuggler of Ludhiana. He formed Hindu Shiv Sena. He too got the clandestine support of the Congress (I). Then there is one Surinder Kumar Billa of Amritsar who formed his own Suraksha Samiti. These hitherto unknown persons and other similar scoundrels were projected by the Hindu press and the government media as the protectors of the Hindus. With the political and monetary support of the Congress and the BJP these new paper organisations spread hatred against the Sikhs and publicity given to them by the Hindu press was so extensive that they coloured the demands of Akali Dal as anti-national. It is not unusual that every movement launched against the Congress is termed by them as anti-Hindu and hence anti national. Whatever the Hindus consider as anti-Hindu that is treated as anti-national. So they dubbed the Sikhs as anti-national. This was also the message Rajiv Gandhi disseminated from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and from Punjab to Assam during the Lok Sabha elections held in December 1984. This is the real face of the Congress which always harps on secularism

First instance of Hindu backlash occurred when the Akali Dal decided to lead their workers to Delhi in the beginning of 1982 for holding a peaceful demonstration. Bhajan Lal C.M. of Haryana overreacted to please Indira Gandhi. He ordered his police and para military forces to stop vehicles carrying Sikhs to Delhi. Trains passing through Haryana were stopped and Sikh passengers were rounded up. The Sikhs were insulted, attacked, even fired upon and many were killed when they were on their way to Delhi. It is strange that other Parties like CPI, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Lok Dal and BJP, whenever they wanted to hold demonstrations and rallies in Delhi, were never stopped. It was only the Sikhs who were discriminated

against in such matters.

A second round of gross misbehaviour with the Sikhs had yet to come. It came in the second half of November and December 1982 when Asiad Games were being held in Delhi. This time no Sikh, whatever his status, was allowed to enter the boundary of Delhi. All roads from Punjab leading to Delhi via Haryana were completely sealed to prevent the entry of the Sikhs. Prominent personalities such as former Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh, Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Arora and many dignitaries had to suffer humiliation at the hands of the fanatic Hindu officials while on their way to Delhi. A Judge of High Court, Brigadiers and other Sikhs of high status, including even Congress (I) leaders like Amarjit Kaur M.P., had to suffer indignity.

However, the 3rd round of and worst type of maltreatment awaited the Sikhs as yet. That outrageous episode was well planned by the Haryana and Central Governments and it happened in the third week of February 1984.

This humiliation further injured the Sikh psyche and they were compelled to realise that they are virtually second rate citizens. They felt alienated. That is why Sant Bhindranwale declared time and again that the Sikhs are living in India like slaves. He therefore, exhorted them to fight for their freedom.

Seeing the agony being suffered by the Sikhs, Indira Gandhi again pretended to assuage their injured feelings by inviting the Akali leaders for further negotiations. Strangely enough this time Rajiv Gandhi took active part in negotiations. The talks were held at Delhi on 17th and 24th January 1983 but as usual the result was yet another zero. Except these two secret meetings Rajiv Gandhi never participated in any other negotiations. This was very intriguing. Perhaps he had made up his mind that further negotiations with the Akalis would be a futile exercise. He appeared to have opted for military action

against the Sikhs led by Bhindranwale.

The year 1983 passed under great stress and strain created and fomented by the Intelligence Agencies on the directions of the Central Government. The Central Government had fully succeeded in bringing about a complete break between Longowal and Sant Bhindranwale in November 1983. The chasm created between them turned into atrocious war. They were not even on speaking terms.

Here Indira Gandhi made full use of "*Kutil Niti*" enunciated by Kautalya or Vishnu Gupt in the "*Arth Shastra*". The four unethical principles laid down by Kautalya to vanquish the enemy *inter alia* are : *Sama*, *Dama*, *Bhed* and *Danda*, that is : appeasement, bribery, dissension and force. If the king (ruler) wants to destroy or kill his enemy with some ease he should first try to appease his adversary, if that fails he should try to bribe him, and if that, too, fails he should create dissension and lastly use force to vanquish him. With a view to vanquishing paramouncy of Sant Bhindranwale and quelling other traditional Akali leaders led by a spineless leader, Longowal, Indira Gandhi employed all the four unethical means. She succeeded in creating unbridgeable gulf between Sant Bhindranwale and Longowal. She appeased Surjit Singh Barnala, Balwant Singh Ex-Finance Minister with a secret promise of bribing them with Chief Ministership and Ministership. She then isolated Sant Bhindranwale and later used military force against his citadel. Thus she achieved her mission successfully though with potent and unforeseen disastrous consequences.

The Akali Dal had given a call for peaceful *Punjab Bandh* on 8th February, 1984. In retaliation the Hindu Suraksha Samiti, Hindu Shiv Sena and other similar fanatic organisations supported by the Congress (I) gave a counter call for *Punjab Bandh* on 14th February. Centre wanted to further foment trouble in Punjab in order to later justify the impending

Military Action, code named, Operation Blue Star.

The fanatic organisations, newly formed by the Hindus, gathered antisocial elements from whatever source they could manage. The Hindu leaders gave each of the miscreants a bottle of liquor and hundred rupee note a day preceding the Bandh. Bricks, stones, soda water bottles, acid bottles and other missiles were stored by them on the roof-tops on both sides of the main bazars as well as the streets and alleys of Ludhiana city. The weaker sections of society, mainly unemployed rusty youths were hired by the Hindu leaders and these hirelings spearheaded the violence. They wanted the Sikhs to pull down the shutters of their shops and on their refusal to oblige them they indulged in heavy brick batting and pelting stones.

The author is narrating here eye witness account of Ludhiana incident. The most sensitive area in this Industrial city is the Chaura Bazar where the head office of the Hindu Shiv Sena is located. I was the Chief Magistrate on duty for maintaining law and order in that sensitive area. When the crowd of a few hundred Hindus, including Gundas and anti social elements, mingled with hired and misguided youths gathered in the Bazar at about 10 A.M. and tried to force the Sikhs to close down their shops I dispersed them with the police help with great ease. Soon after Deputy Commissioner and Senior Superintendent of Police appeared there. The scattered agitators gathered around them and both the Officers entered into futile arguments with them. The crowd was allowed to swell and no action was taken by the District Administrators to disperse them. The agitators were persistent in their demand that they should be allowed to move about freely in order to ensure themselves that the shops owned by the Sikhs had been closed. This was not allowed as by doing so the situation, which was already surcharged, would have

deteriorated further. Then the Hindu Shiv Sena leader Jagdish Tangri signalled the miscreants to begin their job. All sorts of missiles mentioned above were thrown on us and the police. The Bazar was so thickly littered with the bricks, broken bottles and stones that there was absolutely no room to place a foot anywhere. The police fled helter skelter and so did the high officers. The author and a few Sikh policemen were however stranded up right in midst of the Bazar in an unsafe room just opposite the Shiv Sena office. Then at about 2.00 P.M curfew was clamped by the District Magistrate and the orders to open fire were given. Heavy stoning continued from the roof tops. It took the police nearly two hours to control the situation. Had timely action been taken as the author had suggested to the D.M. at about 11.30 A.M. the situation could have been easily controlled without any casualty. But it appeared that the situation had been deliberately allowed to deteriorate under the secret orders of the government. Latter I came to know that curfew was also imposed in Amritsar and Patiala almost at the same time as was done at Ludhiana. Clearly it was a well planned move of the government to escalate violence in Punjab.

What had happened in Haryana was more cruel and more disgusting. The fanatic and barbaric Hindus indulged in worst kind of violence from 15th February 1984 to 20th February 1984. They brutally lynched and killed about a dozen Sikhs and grievously injured and maintained many more. The Gunda Hindus molested some Sikh women and looted their ornaments of gold and diamond. More than a dozen Gurdwara were damaged and destroyed in towns like Panipat, Karnal, Kaithal and Jind.

This violence, too, was instigated by the government intelligence agencies. The sole purpose of the government behind this morbid vandalism was to forestall the outgoing

talks with the Akali leaders. The talks which had been held on 14th February were postponed to 20th February 1984. But by escalating violence through its agencies in Punjab and Haryana at that time the government successfully forestalled the talks as the Akali leaders were outmanoeuvred by a tactical move of Indira Gandhi. Thus they were forced to withdraw from the ongoing negotiations in February 1984. Why Indira Gandhi scuttled these talks? Because the opposition parties had suggested a formula which had nearly resolved the Punjab tangle but that solution was not acceptable to the Prime Minister. It is surprising that the Government in the calendar of meetings mentioned in the White Paper has deliberately omitted the holding of meeting on 14th February 1984. It is clear that the government has fabricated the White Paper with dishonesty. Hence the Punjab crisis was allowed to persist till military action was taken in June 1984.

Paradoxically, more or less, the same formulation which had been suggested by the opposition was made the basis of settlement reached between Rajiv Gandhi the then Prime Minister and Harchand Singh Longowal on 24th July 1985. Harchand Singh Longowal at that time was a puppet president of a splinter group of fake Akalis including Balwant Singh and Barnala and the like.

The Haryana police, instead of restoring law and order, and saving the lives and property of the Sikhs, instigated the Hindus to indulge in hooliganism and vandalism. Bhajan Lal, the Chief Minister of Haryana, glibly smiled when he was asked by a press reporter to comment on these inhuman crimes. Several Hindu and Congress (I) leaders boastfully declared that this was only a trailer shown to the Sikhs living out side the Punjab. They were proved right as the holocaust that had occurred later in the first week of November 1984 was a full length feature film of monstrous brutalities

committed on the Sikhs.

And this was what Indira Gandhi declared time and again to warn Sant Bhindranwale that he should keep in mind what would happen to the Sikhs living outside the Punjab. What she said she proved. Is this the character of a secular and a civilised Prime Minister?

II

It has been made clear that Indira Gandhi and her kitchen cabinet never wanted to resolve the Punjab problem through purposeful negotiations with the Akali Dal. Indira Gandhi knew full well that the minorities which formed vote bank for the Congress Party had drifted away. Therefore, the only alternative left for her was to win the Hindu vote bank. She could win the Hindu votes either by repeating the performance of 1971 like Bangla Desh war or to intervene in Sri Lanka. To attack Pakistan in order to free "Azad Kashmir" was very dangerous proposition which could threaten the integrity of India. The reason, Pakistan had become very strong and powerful. It now had possessed Atom bomb. Apart from this the USA repeatedly declared that she was committed to preserve the integrity and security of Pakistan. Unlike the India-Pak war of 1971 this time America could not be supposed to have been a silent spectator. She appeared to have fully prepared herself to intervene in favour of Pakistan in case India imposed war on Pakistan. To protect Pakistan two factors were compulsive for America. First : USSR had already militarily intervened in Afghanistan which had endangered the security of Pakistan. Two : Ayatulla Khumaini had revived Muslim fundamentalism in Iran. Thus Iran, which in the Middle East Asia was a frontal ally of America before rise of Khumaini, had turned her guns against America. Now the only last frontal state left with America to restrict Russian expansion and to contain India was Pakistan. If Pakistan collapsed American influence



The occasion of Dastar Bandi of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale being appointed as 14th head of Damdami Taksal Mehta. Standing behind are Chief Minister of Punjab S. Parkash Singh Badal and Jathedar Gurcharn Singh Tohra.

in whole of Asia and South Asia would end once and for all. America had already lost Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the east. Under these circumstances it was not possible for Indira Gandhi to annex Azad Kashmir by force and repeat feat of Bangla Desh war.

Intervention in Sri Lanka could have not influenced Hindus in the Hindi speaking areas. The only course therefore left for her was to declare Bhindranwale and Sikhs as criminals, secessionists and violators of peace and invade the Golden Temple Complex believing that that action would rouse Hindu sentiments in her favour.

To embark upon this plan was also fraught with danger and serious consequences were bound to follow but her advisors, namely her wooden faced son, Rajiv Gandhi, and elephant-like Arun Nehru, were the strong votaries of taking military action. All Hindus and both Communist Parties also encouraged her to launch attack on the Golden Temple Complex. In order to create favourable conditions which ostensibly could justify her military action Indira Gandhi had formed a top secret Super Intelligence Organisation. This Super Intelligence Agency was code named as the "Third Agency" which was officed in Bikaner House, Shahjehan Road, New Delhi. To camouflage it a board bearing the nomenclature of "Cabinet Secretariat (Security)" was hung at the gate of this office. The actual name of this agency was Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

The Third Agency was masterminded by R. N. Kao, Chief Security Advisor of Indira Gandhi. N. F. Santook Ex-Chief Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), G. C. Saxena, the present chief of RAW, and R. Shankaran Nair, Director of P.M.'s Secretariat, were other important organisers of this super Intelligence Agency. It is surprising that they secured active professional help, training and guidance from MASSOD, an Intelligence Agency of Israel with which India had no

diplomatic relations.

The Third Agency or the RAW was personally supervised and controlled by Indira Gandhi. Her chief aide in this secret Agency was Rajiv Gandhi. Their main objectives were :

- i) To teach a lesson to the ever-agitating Sikhs and to appease the Hindus so as to turn them into vote bank of the Congress (I) ;
- ii) To demolish the credibility of the Jana Sangh and other Opposition Organisations representing Hindu fundamentalism and to ensure the Hindus that those Parties could not safeguard their interests; and
- iii) To prove that the Congress (I) is the only Political Party which represented the Hindus. And Indira Gandhi did temporarily succeed in achieving these objectives though the grave consequences arising out of the Military Operation later proved counterproductive.

The organisers of the Third Agency fully utilised the services of Intelligence Bureau (IB) and RAW officers without letting them know the actual motives. G. S. Mishra was brought back by Indira Gandhi from hibernation in 1980 and was made in-charge of Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan to coordinate and monitor clandestine activities. He was assisted by colonel B. Longer who was considered expert in political outmanoeuvring and planning secret assassinations. He was also in-charge of Political Branch of Intelligence Wing of Indira Gandhi during the emergency. H. S. Kriplani, a RAW man, was also expert in planning secret murders. He was made in-charge of Punjab and was entrusted with the job to plan clandestine assassinations in Punjab. He was also assigned the job of gun running operations. Rabinder Ohri, Assistant Director of RAW, operated from Jodhpur in Rajasthan in 1980-81 and coordinated with Kriplani. W.N.B. Rao, Assistant Director of RAW, took over from Ohri and coordinated clandestine

activities. R.N. Gupta, Assistant Director RAW, replaced Rao in 1982 and supervised the operations from Jodhpur and also secretly inducted arms in Punjab. He remained on the job till December 1983. By that time his job was over because he had inducted sufficient arms in Punjab.

A. I. Vasavada, a RAW officer, remained in-charge of Amritsar till mid 1982. He was the author of mayhem that was unleashed on 20th September, 1981 at Chauk Mehta after the arrest of Sant Bhindranwale. He was replaced by S. K. Tripathi in 1982 who had planned murder of a dozen of Hindus in Gurdaspur and also attack on 47 Railway Stations in February, 1984. He was, however withdrawn from Amritsar on 3rd May, 1984 because his job was also over. Mr. M.K. Dhar, an Central Agency man worked as correspondent for Hindustan Times, New Delhi.

Colonel B. Longer also played a hideous role in Punjab crisis. He was the man who analysed the overall political fallout if a military attack was launched on the Golden Temple Complex. His conclusion was that military operation would create a political climate in the country in favour of the Congress (I) to win the elections. It was, therefore, he who had turned the military action in favour of the Congress just six months before the elections were due in January 1985.

If the clandestine vicious operations of the Third Agency are studied along with political manoeuvring of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi vis-a-vis the Akali leaders the matter would stand cleared. Indira Gandhi retraced her step thrice after agreements were reached with the Akalis. Swarn Singh Ex-Defence Minister, Captain Amrinder Singh and H. S. Surjit of CPI (M) besides others are witnesses to Indira Gandhi's last minute dithering with the agreements. Why? Because she was never serious to resolve the Punjab problem. She was only interested in prolonging and aggravating the crisis till she was

ready to order military attack on the Golden Temple Complex. Rajiv Gandhi's role was not less vicious. He held secret negotiations with the Akali leaders twice: First on 17-1-1983 and then on 24-1-1984. If the calendar of incidents published by the Indian Government in the White (Lie) Paper is consulted it would be observed that after his first round of talks with Akali leaders number of incidents of violence in Punjab had abnormally increased. According to the figures published by the government only 28 violent incidents occurred in 1981 and 33 in 1982. It is pertinent to note that the number of such incidents rose to 138 in 1983. After the second round of talks conducted by Rajiv Gandhi on 24-1-1984 violent incidents rose to 342 from 1st May 1984 to 31st May 1984. Of them as many as 22 incidents occurred only in two days i.e. on the 1st & 2nd June, 1984 although military was deployed in Punjab on 31st May. If the nature of these incidents, especially those referred to have occurred in the first five months of 1984, is analysed, 90 percent of those are frivolous and are of no significance. Those incidents were clearly manipulations of the Third Agency. This Agency accelerated series of violent actions just two months before the impending Operation Blue Star so that the Military Operation could be justified. Thus the clandestine activities of the Third Agency and political manoeuvring of Indira Gandhi outwitted not only the hazy minded Akalis but also the Hindus and other Political Parties. Indira Gandhi never disclosed her hidden aims. Indira Gandhi Government kept on repeating that Armed Forces will not enter Golden Temple Complex.

Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi assisted by the Third Agency meticulously planned, implemented and in the end succeeded in teaching a bitter lesson to the Sikhs but at the cost of integrity of the country. Paradoxically all such violent incidents have been foisted by the government on Sant

Bhindranwale. What a tragedy that few people knew the reality.

The frequent replacements of Intelligence Officers of the Third Agency who had been operating clandestinely in Punjab from 1981 to 1984 were done purposefully lest their identity and activities should be exposed. The Governors in Punjab were also transferred at the same speed under a well considered scheme. Jai Sukh Lal Hathi was the governor of Punjab when Congress (I) Government was formed in June 1980. Hathi resigned in August 1981, and Aminnuddin Khan Ahmed stepped into his shoes who after completing about 8 months in the office was eased out in April 1982. Channa Reddy was brought in his place who too had to quite after a period of ten months. Then came the turn of A. P. Sharma who remained in the office for about 6 months and made the way for B. D. Pandey. Pandey was brought into the picture after imposition of President's rule and it was during his tenure that the ghastly military action code named "Operation Blue Star" was launched in the first week of June 1984. He resigned in protest on 28th June the same year because Mr. Pandey had opposed the savage military action on the Golden Temple Complex.

The calculated game of the two malevolent persons, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, aided by the Third Agency did not end up in frequent transfers of the Governors and the Intelligence Officers. The Chiefs of the Punjab Police were also shifted one after another. During the Punjab crisis as many as four police Chiefs were brought in and sent out in quick succession. Birbal Nath, the first IGP during Darbara Singh's Government was succeeded by C. K. Sahney who was replaced by Pritam Singh Bhinder, the blue eyed baby of Indira Gandhi. It was during his tenure that the "Operation Blue Star" was carried out. He, too, had to resign after the military action was over. He gave way to K. S. Dhillon, a clean shaven, Sikh.

It was not for nothing that the Governors and Police

Chiefs were transferred frequently. This game of shutting and reshuffling was a part of the sinister game played by Indira Gandhi. Her vicious scheme was that no Governor or Police Chief should have an inkling of what she intended to do in Punjab. She kept every body in the dark about her conceited plan till she sent Armed Forces to attack the Golden Temple Complex. Even on the eve of D-Day she vainly tried to conceal her plan when she addressed the nation on the TV and All India Radio in the evening of June-2-1984. Her famous words, "don't shed blood, shed hatred", were proved wrong when maximum blood was spilled but not hatred !

Chapter 6

PRELUDE TO MILITARY ATTACK AGAINST SANT BHINDRANWALE

It had by now become clear that Indira Gandhi, clandestinely aided by the Third Agency had created and fomented the Punjab problem and turned it into seemingly unresolvable crisis. A state of insecurity and instability was deliberately created through the operations of the Super Intelligence Agency. Through the same Agency a feeling of mutual distrust between the Hindus and the Sikhs was generated which led to disturbances of communal harmony not only in Punjab but in the whole country. The Sikhs were projected as communal, extremists, terrorists, separatists and anti national. To disseminate this vicious propaganda against the Sikhs, the Press, All India Radio and TV. were pressed into service. This canard was carried to every nook and corner of the country. The cry of the Sikhs was drowned in the vast sea of this vicious propaganda. Political atmosphere was surcharged to such an extent that the Hindu Opposition Parties vied with one another to denigrate the Sikhs and advocated for taking military action against Sant Bhindranwale and his followers. Atal Bihari Bajpai, President of BJP, Charan Singh, President of the Lok Dal, leaders of both the Communist Parties, which style themselves as secular but basically they too are communal, and others were strong votaries of taking military action against the militant Sikhs. So much so Harchand Singh Longowal, Balwant Singh Ex-Minister, Surjit Singh Barnala, and some other Akali leaders covertly supported the military action simply to please the Centre and then gain political power. So all Hindu Parties and the Akali traitors

among the Sikhs cried with one voice "attack the Golden Temple Complex and teach a lesson to the militant Sikhs.

Now the psychological and political atmosphere was ripe for Indira Gandhi to invade the Golden Temple Complex. She went on the AIR and the TV late in the evening of June 2, 1984 to address the nation. She pretended that she had tried to resolve the Punjab crisis but the Akalis were using dilatory tactics. Her address to the country and the world was a camouflage in order to cover up her ill-conceived motives. Her motives were clear because on June 1, 1984 she had already deployed at least seven Divisions of Armed Forces in Punjab who had taken their predetermined positions the same day. Her address to the nation, in fact, constituted a blatant lie and was a threat to the Akalis that if they failed to accept her dictate she would have her will by use of force.

In her broadcast she blamed the Akali leaders for not having reached agreement though the stark fact was that it was she who had resiled not once but thrice when the agreements between the Akalis and her team of ministers had been reached. Her statement that sale of tobacco, liquor and meat had been banned in the demacrated areas in the walled city of Amritsar was a white lie. With regard to the demand for enacting of All India Gurdwara Act she stated that other states were being consulted. The consultations were going on for about 20 years ! Mere consultation does not amount to accepting the demands. Similarly, her announcement that she would constitute a Tribunal headed by a Supreme Court Judge to decide the distribution of river waters dispute was a diplomatic move which lacked sincerity. Her proposal to appoint a Commission to decide the territorial dispute with regard to Chandigarh, Abohar, Fazilka and other Punjabi speaking areas, was a hollow announcement. The setting up of Sarkaria Commission (R. S. Sarkaria was appointed as one-man Commission to

submit his report redefining State-Centre relations) amounted to ditching the Anandpur Sahib Resolution which has been the main demand of the Akalis. It was clear from her broadcast that she wanted to lull the Akalis with sweet but hollow promises. Not a single demand of the Akali Dal for which it had launched Dharm Yudh Morcha in 1981 was accepted.

In a clever move she blamed the moderate Akali leaders for having lost their control over the Morcha. She chided them that the terrorists, the anti-national elements and the religious fanatics had gained the upper hand and it was they who had been controlling the movement. This was a reference made to Sant Bhindranwale and his followers. Under such pretexts she launched military operation against the Sikhs. She found immediate lame excuse for launching military offensive in the proposed call given by the Akali Dal for blocking movement of grains from Punjab to other States. Longowal intentionally gave this call at the behest of the Centre so that Indira Gandhi could justify her ill-designed military action. Did she give the Akali leaders a single day to reconsider their threatened agitation proposed to be launched from 3rd June onwards? It is pertinent to note that the army had clamped curfew in whole of the Punjab on 3rd June and enforced it so strictly that whole life in Punjab came to a stand still. How the Akalis under such critical conditions could have obstructed running of trains? It was clear that the military curfew had completely thwarted the threatened Rail-Roko agitation. Where was, then, the justification for Indira Gandhi to resort to brutal military action? Any how she found an excuse to take action against Sant Bhindranwale and his followers.

Her closing words in the broadcast that "Don't shed blood, shed hatred" were likened to the Devil quoting scriptures. It was Indira Gandhi who shed blood of the Sikhs and spread hatred against them and not the vice versa.

Chapter 7

OPERATION BLUE STAR OR MILITARY ACTION

The Muslims including Mughals and the Christians like the British ruled India from the 13th century Ad to 1947 Ad. They were foreigners, Indo-Aryans, who had invaded Indian subcontinent in the middle of the second millennium B.C. and thereafter established their rule here, were also foreigners. The present day Hindu rulers are the remote descendants of those Indo-Aryans. They made India their homeland and so did the Muslims. The Christians (British) were the only exception.

The Sikhs fought against the Mughals and other Muslim rulers of India but the Mughals never attacked the Golden Temple or Harmandar Sahib though they committed horrible atrocities on them. The British, too, did not hurt the religious feelings of the Sikhs by attacking Golden Temple though they had fought three wars with the Sikh rulers of Punjab.

Strangely it is the Hindu rulers who claim that the Sikhs are their integral part and yet they have invaded Golden Temple Complex by sending Armed Forces, equipped with the Main Battle Tanks and heavy field guns and vengefully destroyed the Akal Takht, the holy shrine of the Sikhs.

The day of attack, 3rd June 1984, which was being observed as martyrdom day of Guru Arjan, was intentionally chosen by Indira Gandhi and her Hindu government mainly for two reasons. Firstly, she wanted to show indignity to the religious heritage of the Sikhs and challenge their faith. Secondly, she wanted to entráp and massacre as many Sikhs as possible because they had assembled there in large numbers to

have a holy dip in the Sarovar and pay obeisance on that memorable day. On 3rd June the Sikhs pilgrims gathered in thousands and thronged the Golden Temple Complex. They came to observe the martyrdom day from every nook and corner of India and even from abroad. As such, choosing of this auspicious day by Indira Gandhi to take military action was a monstrous crime against humanity which no civilised nation could have thought of much less to carry it out. However, the government in the White (Lie) Paper published in July 1984 naively tried to justify the timing of military action under the pretext that Sant Bhindranwale had instructed his followers to massacre the Hindus on 5th June. To give credence to this white lie Indira Gandhi alleged to have intercepted such a message having been sent by Sant Bhindranwale to the Sikh peasantry. On what date the alleged message was sent by Bhindranwale and when it was intercepted by the government is till a mystery. What were its contents ? If for sake of arguments it is admitted that such an absurd lie was true Indira Gandhi could have advanced the timing of the savage attack by a few days although even then such an attack could not have been considered justified by any reason. This dis-information and lie was spread only to camouflage the monstrous plan of Indira Gandhi and her government. The Sant had never advocated killing of innocent Hindus.

It is non-the-less crystal clear from the actual fact that Indira Gandhi and her government had intentionally chosen the martyrdom day of Guru Arjun for launching savage military attack on the Golden Temple Complex simply to challenge the Sikhs and their religion and force them to surrender themselves before the Hindus. Whether or not she succeeded in her sinister design to subdue the Sikhs is yet to be evaluated.

1st June

The para military forces had already fortified their positions

in the private buildings surrounding the Golden Temple Complex. The Hindus voluntarily vacated and offered their residential and commercial buildings which the para military forces considered strategic for military action and the Sikhs were forcibly pushed out of their buildings which were required to facilitate the attack. These para military forces, equipped with modern and sophisticated weapons, started unprovoked and sudden firing at Guru Ram Das Langar building where Sant Bhindranwale and some of his followers were present on the terrace. Their aim was to kill Bhindranwale but he was escorted by his body guards downstairs. The CRPF started firing at twelve forty mid-noon and continued it till seven O'clock in the evening. The dauntless militant Singhs, trained and positioned by Major General Shahbeg Singh, an expert in guerrilla warfare, did not return fire for strategic reasons although a dozen of innocent pilgrims were killed and more than 30 bullets hit the Golden Temple. The main purpose of attack on the Golden Temple Complex by the CRPF was to probe positions taken by the defenders of the Complex as well as to exhaust their ammunition if they retaliated. The para military forces failed in both their objectives as the defenders' guns remained silent.

When the CRPF opened fire the army officers were present beside them with a view to observing and studying the positions of the defenders of the Golden Temple Complex. But they could achieve little except hitting the Golden Temple and Guru Ram Das Langar building where Bhindranwale held his daily congregation.

2nd June

The Indian army had already completely sealed the international border right from Jammu and Kashmir to Ganga Nagar. At the same time at least seven divisions of army were extensively deployed in all villages of Punjab and the troops took up their predetermined positions. Tanks, artillery and

Armed Personnel Carriers (APC) were also pressed into service. By the nightfall media and the press were gagged; the rail, road and air services in Punjab were suspended. All channels of communications in the state were snapped. Foreigner's entry including NRI's into Punjab was banned. In short Punjab was totally cut off from the rest of the country and the world. The whole state was completely besieged by the Armed Forces.

Military Rule was imposed and General Gauri Shankar was appointed as the Security Advisor to the Governor of Punjab. The civil administration and para military forces were placed under the control of the Army. It was actually an imposition of Martial Law in Punjab.

During the night the Army replaced CRPF and BSF around the Golden Temple Complex and besieged it completely. Water supply and electric connections were completely cut off in order to add to the miseries of the inhabitants of the Golden Temple Complex. It was perhaps the hottest month of June in this century.

3rd June

The day dawned with the graveyard like silence in Punjab as no human being was visible on the streets, on the roads and in the village streets except the Army, CRPF, BSF personnel and the police who roamed about every where to ensure imposition of total Martial Law in the state.

Lt. General Krishna Swamy Sunderji, the General Officer Commander-in-Chief, Western Command, was made the overall in-charge of the Operation Blue Star. His immediate subordinate was Lt. General Ranjit Singh Dyal. They drew up the foolproof plan to carry out the military operation. They set up the Command Headquarters in the Kotwali opposite the main entrance of the Golden Temple Complex to execute and monitor the military attack on the magnificent Golden Temple Complex.

At Delhi, too, a Control Room was set up under the over all Command of Rajiv Gandhi to keep track of the battle. He was assisted by Arun Singh, his most trusted aide, and K.P. Singh Deo, the Deputy Defence Minister.

K.S. Brar was a clean shaven Sikh and, therefore, he could not be called a devout Sikh and so was Arun Singh, a scion of the ex-royal family of Kapurthala State. R.S. Dayal was allegedly a follower of the Nirankari Mandal, the sect which is the sworn enemy of Dama Dami Taksal and Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Rajiv Gandhi's views about the Sikhs are well known. He was a megalomaniac son of a megalomaniac mother and was always a strong votary of military action against the Sikhs and wanted to teach them a lesson. This was the wicked mental frame of the Hindu leaders who ruthlessly conducted and monitored the brutal military operation against the people whom they claim to be an integral part of their Hindu society. By late night the Army tightly and closely sealed all routs of ingress and exit around the Golden Temple Complex so that none could sneak in or out of the Complex.

Five Corps of the Army, the 10th, the 11th the 2nd, the 1st and 15th, were actively deployed to attack the Golden Temple Complex. These troops were selected from the crack fighting formations of the Army. Besides, there were two battalions of specially trained Commandos who were dressed in jet black uniforms, even their heads were covered with black helmets so as not to be spotted by the defenders of the Complex at night. All of the Commandos had put on bullet proof vases under the uniforms.

The army opened heavy fire on the positions of the defenders of the Complex but the Army was given a befitting reply. The exchange of fire continued incessantly throughout the night intervening 3rd and 4th June and ended in the morning in a stalemate. Neither side was victor nor vanquished. But the

army was beaten back.

While Sant Bhindranwale and his followers were defending the Golden Temple and Akal Takht with exceptional courage and valour, Harchand Singh Longowal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra and his courties hid themselves in the office of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. They were surrounded by some of their supporters including Balwant Singh Ramuwalia, Bhan Singh and Abinashi Singh Asstt. Secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Gurcharan Singh, Secretary of Longowal Akali Dal and Bagga Singh, Secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, were also present there. Bibi Amarjit Kaur, wife of Bhai Fauja Singh a martyr of 13th April 76, Chief of lady wing of *Akhand Kirtani Jatha* and patron of *Babar Khalsa*, who had dubbed Sant Bhindranwale as a coward, had also hid herself in the same room where other paper tigers had huddled themselves together. These self styled "brave" leaders were among those who had undertaken oath (Ardas) at Manji Sahib, Golden Temple, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib to the effect that they shall defend the sacred shrine at the cost of their lives. They vowed if the Indian Army ever entered the Golden Temple Complex it will have to pass over their dead bodies. And when the time came to lay down their lives in defence of the sacred shrines they hid themselves like mice and anxiously waited for the Army to be rescued. Could they be called Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh? These shameless traitors of the Khalsa Panth deserve exemplary punishment as they have not only betrayed the Panth but also broken the Ardas so sacred to the Sikh religion.

4th June

The Indian Army, as already explained, had laid complete siege of the Golden Temple Complex on 3rd June. Army's Main Battle Tanks Vijayanta (MBT) fitted with the biggest and

heaviest guns of 105 mm, heavy field artillery and Armed Personnel Carriers had been positioned all around and inside the Complex as though the Army had to fight a war with the Army of an enemy country. The Sikh defenders of the Golden Temple and Akal Takht, at best, were armed with ordinary weapons like Light Machine Guns, Rifles and Carbines. They had however high morale and were motivated and committed to die for their mission.

On the morning of 4th June the Indian Army bombarded the historic Ramgarhia Bungas, the eighteenth century brick-laid towers, located near Guru Ram Das Langar and water tank, located behind the Guru Nanak Niwas. Other adjoining houses and buildings situated around the Complex were also bombarded heavily. Heavy artillery, which is used only in the open field battle, was arrayed against the defenders of the Golden Temple Complex and deadly 25 pounder shells were fired at them. As a result the buildings around the Golden Temple Complex were reduced to rubbles, the Bungas and the water tank were blasted along with their occupants and their bodies were flung off in pieces all around. Bombardment by the Indian Army was so severe, so cruel, and so savage that not a single defender and other innocent Sikh occupants of the buildings survived. The casualties of innocent Sikh pilgrims who had been trapped there were enormous.

I saw these buildings about two weeks after the terrific bombardment which were razed to the ground. I was shocked to see the extant of cruelty and brutality committed by the Indian Army on their own people. Perhaps the Army had treated the innocent Sikh victims as their enemies. Gen. Brar when addressing the Army Jawans, before attack had used word 'enemy' for those inside the Complex. And for that matter it is also doubted if the Indian government had treated those victims as their own citizens.

The Army led by Ranjit Singh Dyal positioned the Vijayant Tanks and the Armed Personal Carriers (APC) on the road separating the Guru Nanak Niwas, Teja Singh Samundari Hall, Akal Rest House, and other buildings adjoining them in such a formation that the Golden Temple Complex was totally separated and cut off from the former. The Tanks and APCs virtually formed an iron wall between these two Complexes so that the Army could concentrate their monstrous attack on both the Complexes with full force.

When a word of total siege of Golden Temple reached the villages, thousands of Sikhs armed with their traditional weapons like swords and spears and 12 bore guns, gathered in the nearby villages in order to march towards the Golden Temple with determination to liberate their sacred shrines from the diabolical hands of the Indian Army. Nearly fifty thousand Sikhs gathered in Golewal village about 25 kms from Amritsar and thirty thousand Sikhs converged from the side of Batala in Gurdaspur district. Besides twenty thousand Sikhs gathered near Chauk Mehta, the head quarters of Sant Bhindranwale. Other formations of twenty to thirty thousand Sikhs were marching from the side of Harike Pattan, a bridge built on the confluence of rivers Sutlej and Beas. The Army Helicopters spotted the massive movements of the Sikhs converging on Amritsar to free the Golden Temple from the siege laid by the Indian Army. The military officers on board of these helicopters sent wireless messages to the temporary headquarters of Lt. General K. Sunderji. He sent Battle Tanks, APCs and artillery to all directions where the Sikhs had gathered and wherefrom they were marching towards Amritsar with a clear order to check their advance by force. The Army killed hundreds of these Sikhs with canon fire and dispersed them and only then their advance was checked.

Interestingly, when Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and

his companions were bravely and courageously defending the Golden Temple and Akal Takht and lakhs of Sikhs from the villages were converging on Amritsar to free their sacred shrines, Gurcharn Singh Tohra emerged from his hideout and went to Sant Bhindranwale in the Akal Takht to persuade the gallant defender of the faith of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh to surrender before the Army. It could not be supposed that Tohra went to the Sant voluntarily. Perhaps he was negotiating the surrender of the Sant on behalf of the Central Government. That is why the Army, which had besieged the Complex, had not opened fire till he returned from the Akal Takht to his office.

When Tohra argued with Sant Bhindranwale that he could not match the tanks and heavy field guns he snubbed and reprimanded Tohra and dismissed his suggestion with contempt blaming him as an agent of the Indian government. Had Tohra wanted to fulfil his pledge to defend the Golden Temple, he would have sided with Sant Bhindranwale and remained with him in the Akal Takht to fight the Army. But he preferred to surrender.

Worse than Tohra's role was that of Harchand Singh Longowal, the traitor, who kept himself hidden in the office of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee till he was safely rescued by the Army on the intervening night of 5th & 6th June.

The savage onslaught of the Indian Army launched on 4th June was bravely and successfully repulsed by Sant Bhindranwale and his followers and the battle again ended in a stalemate. Well equipped Indian Army, the generals and the Indian government were stunned to see the extraordinary courage of a few motivated and committed Sikhs defending their sacred shrine. The Army Generals had to change the strategy several times to win the battle at any cost irrespective

of loss of life to be suffered by hundreds of innocent Sikh trapped in the Complex.

5th June

Major-General Kuldip Singh Brar, a clean-shaven Sikh belonging to the caste of Sant Bhindranwale was chosen by the Indian government to launch a frontal attack on the Akal Takht. He was personally inimical to Sant Bhindranwale, for he was snubbed by him for having shaved his head and beard. Sant used to taunt such persons with comments, "whose face does not resemble his father, what we call him?" Thus carrying a personal malice against him, Major General Brar, Commander of the 9th Division which is considered as a crack division of the Indian Army, launched a frontal attack on the Akal Takht. It was not the only Division that had taken part in the military operation. There were six divisions more. There were Madrasis from Tamil Nadu and Biharis from the Tribes of Central India, Dogras from Jammu & Kashmir and Kumaonis and Garhwalis from Uttar Pradesh. Besides there were Rajputs from Rajasthan. There were Sikhs too whose presence was symbolical. The Sikhs were inducted by the Indian government for the purpose of publicity and to show the world that the Sikhs had also taken part in the attack. These few Sikhs however could not be called true Sikhs. They were mainly supporters of Narankaris and some of them were Mazhabis.

The main armaments used by the Army against Sant Bhindranwale and his supporters were :-

- i) 38 Ton Vijayanta Tank fitted with 105 mm heavy guns.
- ii) Heavy artillery including 25 pounder canons and Howitzers, mortars and 3.7 inch Howell guns.
- iii) Armoured Cars.
- iv) Ot64 Armoured Personnel Carriers-These are Polish

built eight-wheeled mechanised carriers.

v) Helicopters.

Carrying with him this heavy and sophisticated armaments to attack the Golden Temple Complex K. Sunderji later on he was made Chief of Army Staff, slyly said, "We went inside the premises of Golden Temple Complex with humility in our hearts and prayers on our lips?"

This reminds one of a typical proverb used by the Hindus. The proverb is : "*Munh mein Ram Ram, Baghal mein Chhuri*"

(A man having name of God on his lips and hiding a dagger under his arm-pit).

They attacked the Golden Temple Complex nevertheless with all malice in their hearts and cruelty in their minds. They continued incessant firing on the Akal Takht and surrounding residential buildings throughout the day but failed to frighten the brave Lion, Sant Bhindranwale and his fighters. They failed either to win the battle. The battle of the day again ended in a stalemate. But the Indian Army was severely beaten.

When night fell the three experienced Generals, K. Sunderji, R.S. Dyal and K.S. Brar, put their heads together desperately to chalk out a fresh strategy to subdue the one brave General, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. They strained their nerves to fulfil the desire of Indira Gandhi, to capture Sant Bhindranwale dead or alive. This was the main and the only objective of Indira Gandhi which she had assigned to the Army. But this task was not easy. That is why the Generals were worried and so was Indira Gandhi.

The final strategy formulated by the three Generals was to launch frontal attacks on Akal Takht from all sides simultaneously. Specially trained Commandos from the 1st Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, dressed in black denims, wearing bullet proof vests, were directed to force their entry from the main entrance of the Complex. But as soon as they



Sant Jarnail Singh with opportunist trio of Sant Harchand Singh, Balwant Singh Ramoowalia and ex minister Balwant Singh.



Sant Jarnail Singh having a chat with the scribes, S. Gurtej Singh National Prof. of Sikhism also sitting near him.



The family of Sant Jarnail Singh (left to right). His wife Bibi Preetam Kaur, son Inderjit Singh, mother Nihaal Kaur and son Ishar Singh.

stepped in, the Sikh defenders, positioned on either side of the entrance, gunned them down. The few who managed to flee towards Parkarma were taken care of by other defenders entrenched around the Akal Takht. Thus the Commandos, assault utterly failed. It looked impossible for the so-called brave Commandos to accomplish the task assigned to them. Now Brar was dismayed as he had failed to dislodge the brave Sikh fighters from their positions. In order to accomplish his task he ordered his troops to fire stun-gas bombs at the Sikh defenders. These chemical weapons made the Sikh fighters semi-unconscious. It was only then that the Commandos could force their entry to the Clock Tower gate and shot the semi-unconscious Sikhs dead. Could it be called a fare war? Could it be called a bravery? It was all shame and nothing else.

Any way, when the Commandos, reinforced by the 10th Battalion of the Guards, known as another pride of the Indian Army, stepped in the Parkarma, they faced withering fire from all directions. It was remarkable planning and strategy of General Shahbeg Singh which out manoeuvred all the three Generals of the Indian Army. The Sikh defenders trained and positioned by General Shahbeg Singh, mowed down these fresh Guards too. Thus the second assault was also repulsed by the brave Sikhs by inflicting heavy casualties on the attackers.

However the third assault carried out by about 200 Commandos and the same number of Guards succeeded to a limited extent when some of them managed to make their way in front of the Akal Takht. But no sooner did they reach the courtyard than they were gunned down by squads of defenders positioned inside the Akal Takht itself. The rest of them fled to safety. This was the battle scene on the North side or the main entrance of the Complex.

The Madrasis, who were ordered to enter the premises of Golden Temple Complex from the side of Sarais (Hostel

Complex) failed to appear anywhere near the Parkarma. They were badly bashed by the lightly armed squads of the Sikh defenders positioned on the Southern side. Thus the strategy chalked out by the three Generals to effect the entry of the Commandos and Guards from northern side, and Madrasis and Garhwalis, from the southern side simultaneously, and then to take up positions to attack the Akal Takht was also foiled by the Sikh fighters.

The three Generals, Sunderji, Dyal-ji and Brar-ji, who had boasted before Indira Gandhi that they would capture Sant Bhindranwale dead or alive within two hours had to cut a sorry figure. They had taken three days i.e. 72 hours but they were nowhere near their objective. They became frustrated and desperate. The same was the condition of Rajiv Gandhi, K.P. Singh Deo and Arun Singh who were anxiously waiting in the Delhi Control Room to hear some "good news" Indira Gandhi was perhaps most nervously waiting for that news. She had instructed her Generals to accomplish the job assigned to them at all cost and without further loss of time. But it was easier said than done.

Sunderji and Dyal, now furious, ordered the Commandos to launch the fourth assault. This time the General reinforced the beaten Madrasis with two more companies of the 7th Garhwal Rifles and placed them under the command of Brar. Their objective was to push their way inside the premises of the Golden Temple Complex from the South entrance but Madrasis and Garhwalis were again badly beaten back by the Sikh fighters.

A braggart Brigadier A. K. Diwan was commanding the Madrasis and the Garhwalis. Seeing his soldiers badly beaten he requested Brar for further reinforcement of his troops who had suffered heavy casualties. Brar sent him two companies of the 15th Kumaonis. Reinforced by the fresh troops Diwan made

repeated assaults in order to storm the Akal Takht but each time his troops were forced to flee. Finding that the Akal Takht was impregnable for the Indian Army and feeling that Sant Bhindranwale was invincible, Brigadier Diwan asked General Brar to allow him to use Vijayant Tanks to blast the Akal Takht. He pleaded if he was not permitted to use Battle Tanks his troops trapped in the battle field would be finished in no time as they looked like sitting ducks before the Sikh fighters.

It is pertinent to note that the troops of the Indian Army were repeatedly reinforced with fresh soldiers who had been provided with all comforts of life. They were also equipped with the most sophisticated weapons available in the world. On top of this, they had outnumbered the Sikh defenders thousand times. Still they were kept at bay by a handful of Sikh fighters.

On the other hand the Sikh defenders were confined inside the parched buildings and that, too, in the scorching heat which was at peak in the 1st week of June, 1984. They had nothing to eat but roasted grains, nothing to drink but their sweat. They spent sleepless nights without rest. They had no provisions and no source of reinforcement of troops as the Army had. They had no sophisticated weapons to match armoury of the Indian Armed Forces. They did not sleep since 1st June. Naturally, in such circumstances ordinary men are bound to become weary and teary. But they were not ordinary men, they were the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, inspired and resurrected by Sant Bhindranwale and trained by General Shahbeg Singh. In spite of all this atrocious life they remained dauntless and valiant warriors. They remained unfrightened and unshaken. Heavy bombardment and incessant firing by guns could not demoralise them. Had they been equipped with the weapons like the Vijayanta Tanks, heavy field guns and artillery as the Indian Army had been equipped with, what would have been the result of the battle? Had this been the case the Sikh fighters must have

chased the Indian Army beyond Yamuna river. That is why General Brar pitifully explained to Lt. General Sunderji about the hopeless condition of his fighting troops.

“That infantry was in danger of being massacred. The infantry just cannot carry on doing the impossible task. I should be allowed to call up tanks to bombard and blast the Akal Takht.”

Sunderji contacted Delhi where a special Control Room had been set up to keep track of the battle. K.P. Singh Deo, Deputy Defence Minister, and Arun Singh were present there to assist Rajiv Gandhi, who was overall in-charge of monitoring Operation Blue Star. Rajiv Gandhi in turn discussed with her mother Indira Gandhi, who called in the Army Chief A.S. Vairya. A quick decision was taken and permission was given to Sunderji to use whatever armament was effective to subdue Sant Bhindranwale. This blanket order included use of even jet bomber to blast off the Akal Takht if the Main Battle Tanks Vijayanta failed to achieve the assigned objective.

Even before the final orders were received from Indira Gandhi seven Vijayanta tanks were already positioned inside the Golden Temple Complex. As soon as a “go ahead” signal was given to General Brar he ordered the tank operators to bombard the Akal Takht.

The Vijayanta tanks fitted with 105 mm guns fired hundreds of high-explosive squash-head shells at the Akal Takht and blasted the sacred shrine, the highest seat of Sikh authority, during the night of 5th & 6th June 1984. The whole front of the Akal Takht was destroyed and hardly a pillar was left standing. The adjoining buildings were also bombarded and razed to the ground. Even “*Darshni Deori*” and “*Tosha Khana*” were destroyed.

A simultaneous Operation under the command of K. Sunderji was being carried on in the Hostel Complex where the

traitor, Harchand Singh Longowal and his cowardly stooges, had hid themselves. The main objective of this Operation was to secure the safety of Longowal and perhaps Gurcharan Singh Tohra and to escort them out safely. There was a discernible difference of objectives in the two sided operation simultaneously carried out in the Golden Temple Complex. The main objective of the military operation conducted in the Akal Takht was to ensure the physical liquidation of Sant Bhindranwale whereas the objective of other operation was to ensure the safety of Longowal. This act of the Indian government proved beyond doubt that Longowal was acting as an agent of the Congress government while Sant Bhindranwale was gallantly defending the Golden Temple Complex and as such he was identified as the enemy of the Indian government.

As the main gate, fortified by iron gate, had blocked the way to the Hostel Complex, the Army had to bring in the battle tank to crash the gate. After smashing the iron-gate Armoured Cars were driven in and positioned on the road separating the two Complexes. Then followed the 9th Kumaonis and the commandos wearing bullet proof vases. As soon as the troops moved in they came under heavy firing from the roof-tops on both sides of the road. The resistance was not as tough as was met by the Army inside the Golden Temple Complex. Therefore the troops managed to enter the Hostel Complex where the traitor of the Sikh Panth, Longowal, along with his hoodlums, had huddled himself in the office room of Gurcharan Singh Tohra. When the Commandos entered the office all those who had hidden themselves there surrendered meekly by raising their arms above their heads. Among those who had surrendered by raising arms were Harchand Singh Longowal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Bhan Singh, Balwant Singh Ramuwalia and Abinashi Singh, Assistant Secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Surprisingly Harmander Singh Sandhu,

General Secretary of AISSF, was also present in the office of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee who, too, surrendered himself along with Longowal. He was later on killed by militants for betraying Sant Bhindranwale. The fact that Longowal and Tohra had surrendered by raising their arms above their heads was later confirmed by Abinashi Singh and Nazar Singh, a personal bodyguard of Tohra whom I incidentally met in the Central jail Ludhiana in August 1984.

Nazar Singh told me the whole story about Tohra's activities beginning from 2nd June to 5th June 1984 till the latter had surrendered himself at about 2 A.M. on 6th June.

After surrendering themselves Tohra and Longowal were separated from others and were taken to a safer place. The remaining lot was left behind. They were made to sit in the compound where sudden firing was opened and a hand grenade was also thrown. There were at least seventy casualties of the Sikhs. Among the dead were some female and children. It was confirmed by Nazar Singh that the troops had opened fire killing seventy persons and wounding many others. He too suffered two bullet injuries, one in the leg and an other in the upper arm.

Interestingly Gurcharan Singh, Office Secretary, and Bagga Singh, a staunch critic of Sant Bhindranwale, were not killed by the troops. They were shot dead by supporters of Sant Bhindranwale. Thus both the traitors were punished.

It is disgusting to note that Longowal, had vowed repeatedly in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib at Manji Sahib, Amritsar, to defend the Golden Temple Complex if it was attacked by the army, but when the sacred shrine was actually attacked he surrendered without making a fuss and walked over the dead bodies of his own people. Thus ended the terrible night of 5th June 1984.

6th June

At dawn pounding of the Akal Takht by Vijayanta tanks ceased and with it ceased partial firing from inside the Akal Takht because emplacement set up by the militants had been shattered by heavy bombardment.

Para 28 of "White (Lie) Paper" on Punjab agitation published by the Government of India mentions that the Army had taken control of the Akal Takht by 12.30 P.M. on 6th June and that only the ground floor and the basement were yet to be captured. Then para 30 reads. "The continued resistance from the ground floor and the basement of the Akal Takht was tackled during the night of June, 6-7. This statement completely stands at variance with the actual account given by the eye witnesses and also that dead bodies of Sant Bhindranwale and Bhai Amrik Singh were found on the ground floor on 7th June.

Hari Singh, *Sevadar* in Golden Temple, along with 30 other persons had been hiding in the Kotha Sahib where Guru Granth Sahib is solemnly laid to rest in the Akal Takht every evening. It was a miracle that Kotha Sahib, despite heavy bombardment, suffered comparatively little damage although it is situated in the front of the Akal Takht. Hari Singh says that at about 7.30 A.M. on 7th June Bhai Amrik Singh entered Kotha Sahib and told them to leave the room as now they (the defenders) could not match heavy bombardment by the tanks brought in by the Indian Army. About a few minutes later Sant Bhindranwale alongwith nearly forty followers entered that room. He prayed before the Akal Takht and then addressed his followers, "Those who want to attain martyrdom may stay with me and others should leave the Akal Takht."

When Sant Bhindranwale left the room his forty supporters followed him. Bhai Amrik Singh was one of them. They raised war slogan of the Khalsa "Jo Bole So Nihal, Sat Siri Akal" and then rushed out of the Akal Takht in order to pounce

upon the Army. The troops who had been keeping a strict eye on the Akal Takht fired bursts of machine guns at them. Some of them were hit and killed. Among those martyrs was Bhai Amrik Singh. There was another burst of machine guns which took life of a dozen more. The rest of the militants escaped and went to the residence of Bhai Ram Singh, one of the priests of the Golden Temple. His house is situated behind the Akal Takht. Those dozen followers of Sant Bhindranwale changed their traditional clothes there and disappeared wearing bushirts and trousers. They told Bhai Ram Singh and Pritam Singh, another priest who had hid himself there, that Bhai Amrik Singh had attained martyrdom. They however asserted that Sant Bhindranwale was not among those who were hit by bullets. Some of the enthusiastic followers of Bhindranwale proudly said that if they had seen the Sant hit or martyred, they would have never left that place and would have preferred to die there and then. Where Sant Bhindranwale disappeared they did not know. There was a dense smoke emitted by heavy bombardment and fire that broke out all around the Akal Takht. They explained that due to dense layers of smoke visibility was poor. Therefore, they could not see anything including the Sant.

The Bridge of Sighs

Any way, it is a fact that the Army was in full control of both the Complexes on 7th June. Major General Brar, who was present inside the Temple Complex, ordered the infuriated and blood thirsty soldiers to search all the rooms situated around the Parkarma and the adjoining buildings. The soldiers went berserk and threw hand grenades inside the rooms and blasted every inmate. The rooms which were bolted from inside were broken open by machine gun fire and the Sikh pilgrims found there were shot dead. Those Sikhs who surrendered or were seized from other buildings, including the Hostel Complex,

were lined up and gunned down. These innocent victims of army, army's wrath were the pilgrims who had come to observe the martyrdom day of Guru Arjun who had fondly built the holy shrine surrounded by the Sarovar. The Army mercilessly killed even children and women. Some survivors told me later that young women and girls were raped by the army and some of them were killed. Some of them, however, escaped and told their woeful stories. One young woman of about 20 years, who belonged to Sanghera village of Sangrur district, along with other women was confined in the Central Jail Ludhiana narrated me a horrible tale of terror. Her husband had bought a new truck. A male child was born to her a couple of months before. Her husband, therefore, took, his whole family, including their grand mother, to the Golden Temple for paying obeisance, They were fourteen in number. All of them except this young woman and the grand mother of about 80 years, were shot dead by the savage soldiers. Her two months old child was hit by a bullet and killed while he was in her arms. She was raped and then taken to the army camp. Another married young girl, who was also lodged in Ludhiana jail, was gang raped by the army.

Another tale of terror was narrated by a young Sikh woman teacher of the Khalsa School, Paunta Sahib. She along with her two colleagues, one male and another female teacher, had brought in a bus carrying 65 students, ranging between six and fourteen years, to the Golden Temple Complex on 2nd June 1984 to observe the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev. They were trapped there when the Army had imposed strict-curfew. As they had no way to escape they all huddled themselves in a hall in the Sarai Complex. The blood thirsty army mercilessly mowed down 33 children along with the male teacher on the night intervening 4th and 5th June. The rest of them miraculously survived the bullets. The young female teacher, who had narrated the horrible story in the Central Jail Ludhiana, was

raped by the Army personnel and her other colleague was taken away to unknown place. I met the 32 surviving students of tender age in the jail who were terror-stricken and still looked frightened. I was stunned on listening the terrific tale of terror. I could never imagine that the Indian Army could be so cruel, so brute, and so monstrous.

I reported this matter to the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana district and pleaded with him that these innocent children, who had experienced the horrible trauma, should be immediately released from the jail but he had expressed his inability saying that the Army was not inclined to set them free. Then I sought his permission to release them myself by exercising my power in the capacity of Special Magistrate for State of Punjab, which powers the state government had vested in me during the emergency to enable me then to deal with the detainees belonging to different districts of Punjab. The D.C. was reluctant to give me a formal concurrence. Thereafter some noble lawyers filed a petition in the Supreme Court for gross violation of human rights by the government. The Supreme Court accepted the petition and ordered the release of these innocent children with immediate effect. Only then they were released.

Were these children of tender age extremist or terrorists?

When the curfew was lifted in the evening on 6th June for two hours several hundred pilgrims who had been hiding themselves in the Sarais and other adjoining buildings came out to set out for their destinations but all of them were captured by the army. Their hands were tied with their turbans and they were taken to the side of library building. There they were shot dead indiscriminately. The killing spree by the savage army continued till 7th June.

The Indian Army threw powerful incendiary bombs in the rooms and Halls of the Hostel Complex and killed all the

occupants. The intensity of the bombardment was borne out by the facts that the steel almirhas and other steel furniture were charred and twisted by the impact of the blast. Even the ceiling fans were charred and their wings were twisted by the fire caused by the bombs.

The bombardment directed at the multistoreyed buildings behind the Akal Takht was so sever that all the buildings were razed to the ground. The fact of heavy and fierce bombardment was borne out by the fallen heavy steel girders which were found twisted. I saw the whole horrible scene of frightful destruction all around, two weeks after the Operation Blue Star was over.

The army Generals lied by saying that they did not fire a single shot at the Golden Temple. I myself counted at least 250 holes caused by gunfire inside the Golden Temple. Virtually there was no room or building in the Golden Temple which did not have bullet holes.

Destruction of the Akal Takht was an attempt to destroy the will and spirit of Khalsa Panth. And each bullet fired at the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple wounded heart of each member of the Khalsa Panth. In short Sikh nation lay wounded, with of course the exception of traitors such as Longowal, Balwant Singh and the like.

7th June

The main military operation ended in the morning of 7th June. The day followed with setting afire the library building which had preserved invaluable historical works, manuscripts of the Sikh Gurus and other religious scriptures like Guru Granth Sahib. The army set afire the library building on 7th June deliberately. It is a white lie to say that it caught fire accidentally by cross firing between the Army and the militant Sikhs. And it is an absurd and a vulgar lie to add that when the

Indian army tried to put down the fire the Sikh militants had fired at them and prevented them from extinguishing the fire. Who would himself destroy invaluable religious scriptures of their own faith written by their Gurus? This very idea looks absurd and obnoxious.

Brutalities committed by the Indian Army on the Sikhs during Operation Blue Star, were shocking and terrific. Innocent Sikhs old, young and children, were mercilessly slaughtered. Women were raped by the soldiers. Valuable articles like T.V. sets, VCR, refrigerators and other electronic gadgets, besides ornaments of gold and diamonds, were looted and usurped by the Army. Not less than 4 quintals of gold was seized and usurped by the Army from the Tosha Khana and the Complex.

This gold comprised the offerings and gifts presented by the devotees. All soldiers and some officers of the Indian Army carried away everything and anything which they happened to lay hand at.

It has been mentioned earlier that the army diabolically massacred the Sikhs. The total number of Sikhs killed including the pilgrims could not be less than five thousand. The buildings around the Golden Temple Complex destroyed by bombardment were nearly seventy. This is the most conservative estimate of casualties.

The dead bodies were lying scattered everywhere. The injured pilgrims were crying loudly, but nobody cared to render any service to them. The army officers asked their men to lift the dead bodies in order to load in the trolleys. But even the soldiers were reluctant to handle the dead bodies. When they were ordered to bear the consequences then they agreed and loaded the corpses in the trolleys like gunny bags which were then taken out side the city. They piled up the corpses and burnt them together at an unknown place. No formal rituals

were performed. This was the shabby respect shown by the Indian government to the dead bodies.

No proper postmortem of the dead bodies was conducted. However to give an impression that postmortem was done, about a hundred bodies were carried to the mortuaries where doctors from the neighbouring districts had already been summoned. The doctors completed the formalities on the papers. Some of the doctors whom I later contacted confirmed that some dead bodies had their hands tied behind their back, and some bore marks of ropes and turbans on their arms. Still some dead bodies had their turbans tied around their hands but knots behind their backs were opened. One doctor told me that he found a young Sikh still breathing and yet he was brought by the army for postmortem. The doctor asked to the officer in-charge deputed for the purpose that the youth should be taken to the operation theatre for immediate treatment. The army officer of course took away the breathing young man, shot him dead and brought the corpse back and told the doctor "Look here, he is dead." The doctor was shocked as he had heard the gunfire outside the mortuary.

Could the acts of devils and monsters be more cruel and brutal than the ones committed by the Indian Army? Yes of course the soldiers and officers of the Army surpassed the monsters. Some of the senior army officers naively tried to justify such savage and barbaric acts by arguing that the soldiers had lost their temper because of unusually heavy casualties they had suffered at the hands of the militant Sikhs during the operation Blue Star. How shameful the argument is ! Had not the army brutally killed thousands of Sikhs including innocent pilgrims?

It is a white lie published in the White Paper by the Indian government that the army did not kill any woman, child, or innocent Sikh; and that no bullet was fired at the Golden

Temple, sanctum sanctorum. To further justify monstrous acts committed by the Army the government shamelessly accused that the militant Sikhs during Operation Blue Star had also committed brutalities on the army personnel. How ridiculous this proposition looks. The victors always write history in their own favour and depict their adversary in dark.

8th June

Giani Zail Singh, the first sucker Sikh President of India, paid a visit to the Golden Temple Complex on 8th June 1984 under tight security arrangements made by the Army. He was dressed in a spotless white Achikin and Churidar Pyjama. The only 'blot' on his snow white, shining, dress was a red rose hung on the left side of his Achikin. He was roaming around in the Complex clasping "red rose" as though he had gone to attend a marriage party. He must have witnessed the horrible scene there. The blood stained rooms, the blood stained Parkarma around the Sarovar were still visible here and there although the Army had washed away all these places with water of sacred pool and polluted water flowed back into the pool before his visit. He must have seen the Akal Takht reduced to rubbles by heavy and intensive bombardment and heavily damaged Darshni Deorhi as well as bullet holes in the Golden Temple. He must have witnessed the destruction of surrounding buildings and debris scattered all around in the Parkarma and outside the Complex. He must have smelt the stench emitted by the decomposed bodies of thousands of Sikhs. Seeing all these horrible acts of savagery he was not visibly moved. What he said to the Governor B.D. Pande was "Wherefrom such a large number of weapons happened to be smuggled in by the extremists and brought to the Golden Temple Complex. Did you lend your eyes and ears to some one else."

Astonishingly, he did not bother about the destruction of

Akal Takht and other buildings. Nor did he bother about the brutalities committed by the Army. He did not question why the army used main battles tanks Vijyanta and heavy field guns to destroy the Akal Takht and blast off hundreds of Sikhs.

The weapons Giani Singh had talked about were not those recovered from the militants. These were brand new weapons arranged by the Army to give a false impression that the extremists were heavily armed. When those weapons were telecast they looked brand new and were shining. The weapons possessed by the militants were either damaged by heavy bombardment or some of them were left by those who had escaped. The weapons recovered from them ought to be old and damaged.

Anyway Giani Zail Singh's remark was not strange. He was expected to use any language against the militants. He is the same Giani Zail Singh who, before election to the institution of President of India, had declared publicly, "I am prepared to sweep the room of Indira Gandhi with a broomstick if she orders me to do so." If this man could stoop so low, what else could be expected of him. Sant Bhindranwale rightly said about him that he was a Sikh of Indira Gandhi and not of Guru Gobind Singh. The Giani by his selfishness proved that he was really the Sikh of Indira Gandhi who is a slur on Sikhism. He gave explanation to Jathedar Kripal Singh and others that he being a constitutional head of the state could not do anything. In other words he meant to say that he could not prevent attack by the Indian Army on the Akal Takht. If he was so helpless, he could have resigned in protest against the military operation. His resignation might have forced Indira Gandhi to reconsider her decision to send Armed Forces to invade the Golden Temple Complex. Did he resign? Well, he did not. But when he had seen horrible destruction of the Akal Takht and other buildings, and learnt about merciless massacre of Sikh pilgrims, he should

have resigned there and then and atoned his sins.

The last moments of Sant Bhindranwale

As Hari Singh, a sewadar, said that Sant Bhindranwale had appeared in the Kotha Sahib of the Akal Takht between 7.30 A.M. to 8 A.M. on 7th June and prayed before Guru Granth Sahib, it seems that by that moment the Sant was alive. He left Kotha Sahib after 8 A.M. along with some of his followers and proceeded to the ground floor or the basement of the Akal Takht to carry on fight against the Army. However this version given by Hari Singh is contradicted by the government controlled T.V. and Radio network. The news bulletin broadcast by the T.V. at 8 A.M. on 7th June had announced that the dead bodies of Sant Bhindranwale and Bhai Amrik Singh were found in the basement of the Akal Takht. It is clear that one of these versions lacks credibility. It however appears from all accounts that statement, in this regard given by Hari Singh carries weight. Para 30 of the White Paper published by the Indian government throws some light on this issue. Para 30 reads as follows :

"The continued resistance from the ground floor and the basement of the Akal Takht was tackled during the night of June 6-7. When this resistance was "finally" overcome the troops commenced a thorough search of the ground floor and the basement. The bodies of Shri Bhindranwale and Amrik Singh were found among 34 other bodies on the ground floor of the Akal Takht."

The word "finally" used in the second sentence is very important as it clearly indicates that the fight in the ground floor and the basement of the Akal Takht was continuing in the morning of 7th June or continued even later. Here, testimony of captain Harcharan Singh, brother of Sant Bhindranwale, is very significant. He said that body of his brother, which was lying on the ice slab inside the main entrance of Golden Temple

Dead body of immortal Shaheed Sant Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.



“Maran na manda aakhee-ai je mar jaānai aisa koe. Seveh saahib samrath aapna panth suhela hoe.” (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, P. 579)



Sant Jarnail Singh, Sant Harchand Singh and Bhai Harminder Singh Sandhu, G. Secretary S.S.F.I. coming out of Guru Ram Dass Langar building after attending the Sikh Intellectuals Convention.

Complex was shown to him by the military authorities at about 3.30 P.M. on 7th June and that it was beyond recognition. The statement of the doctor who had prepared the postmortem report of Sant Bhindranwale corroborated the testimony of Harcharan Singh by saying that the deceased's right face was so badly injured and disfigured by bomb-blast that it was beyond identification or recognition.

Time of postmortem mentioned in the postmortem report is 8 P.M. whereas the body was taken to the mortuary at 7.30 P.M. It means that the alleged postmortem was conducted after 8 P.M. But this fact, too, stands totally falsified by the statements of the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police of Amritsar district, and Director of Health Services Punjab government who were present at the time of cremation of Sant Bhindranwale. They categorically stated that the cremation had taken place much before the sunset on 7th June. Hence it can be concluded that actually no postmortem of Sant Bhindranwale was conducted and only formal report was prepared by the doctors. The doctors had later confirmed this fact.

The Sant had sustained more than a dozen bullet injuries all over his body besides having his right face blasted off. It is, therefore, amply proved that he had attained martyrdom while fighting the Army in the Akal Takht some times after 8 A.M. on 7th June 1984. Therefore, the rumours spread or assertions made by some cynic Hindu Press reporters or writers that the Sant had surrendered himself before the army on the 6th or 7th June and then he was shot dead are all rubbish and absurd. Such mischievous elements have maliciously tried to demolish and belittle the heroic sacrifice of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Inspite of the proven fact that Sant Bhindranwale had attained martyrdom I thought it advisable before writing this book to seek advice from Baba Joginder Singh, father of the

Sant. He emphatically said that the Sant was in "*Charhdi Kala*", that is "he was alive and in high spirits." Similar was the assertion made by Baba Thakar Singh, Acting Jathedar of *Dam Dmi Taksal*. Their mystic expression perhaps reflect their firm belief in immortality of the soul and also that a martyr never dies, he lives for ever and ever. Therefore immortal soul of Sant Bhindranwale will dwell in the hearts of the Khalsa and will inspire them to live with dignity and die with honour.

Chapter 8

THE UNEQUAL BATTLE

It was an utterly unequal battle fought between a handful of Sikh defenders led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale assisted by Major General Shahbeg Singh and Bhai Amrik Singh on one side and the massive Indian Army headed by Lt. General Krishnaswamy Sunderjit besides Lt. General Ranjit Singh Dyal and Kuldeep Singh Brar. The Sikh fighters were armed with ordinary weapons in comparison to the ones possessed by the Indian Army. The former had no superior weapon than Light Machine Guns. Other arms they possessed were sten-guns, carbines of .30 calibre, self-loaded Rifles, 303 Rifles, revolvers and pistols of various calibres besides some hand grenades. On the other hand the Indian Army was equipped with all kinds of heavy and sophisticated weapons which included Main Battle Tanks "Vijayanta", howitzer, heavy guns and canons using twenty-pounder shells, mortars, machine guns, light machine guns and other pieces of artillery used in a field war against an enemy country. Besides, the army had stun-gas bombs, incendiary bombs, highly explosive hand grenades, Armed Personnel Carriers, Armoured Carriers and a lot of other sophisticated weaponry. The Army used Russian made helicopters too.

Numerical strength of the Sikh militants was also miserably insignificant in comparison to that of the Indian Army. The Sikh fighters were not more than two hundred whereas the Army's numerical strength fighting them in the Complex was at least seven thousand.

The Sikh fighters had no line of communication and

source of supply. They were totally cut off from the state, the country and the world. They were completely besieged in the Golden Temple Complex, particularly inside the Akal Takht. Supply of electricity and water was cut off. They had no reserves to reinforce their positions. They had nothing to eat but roasted grains, nothing to drink but their own sweat oozed from their bodies due to scorching heat. They had no place to answer the call of nature. They could not sleep for seven days and seven nights. They were exhausted and wearied out under these horrible conditions. On the other hand Indian Army had all sorts of provisions, facilities, reserves and what not. Yet the Sikhs fought gallantly and demonstrated their remarkable valour, courage and fighting skill. Yet they held the well equipped Indian Army at bay for five days and gave it a bloody reply, the reply which the Army would remember for ever.

Had the militant Sikhs been equally armed, had their numerical strength been even one-tenths of the Indian Army, they would have pushed the Army up to Delhi or even beyond Jamuna.

The unequal battle, that handful supporters of Sant Bhindranwale fought, would be recorded in the golden letters in the history of the Sikhs. The entire credit for this exemplary valour goes to Sant Bhindranwale who had enthused and inspired the Sikhs to fight for their rights and defend their faith. It would not be an exaggeration to say that after Guru Gobind Singh it was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who has taught the Khalsa to live with dignity and die with honour.

Chapter 9

OPERATION WOOD ROSE

During military attack on the Golden Temple Complex, code named, "Operation Blue Star" at least five thousand innocent Sikhs who had gathered there for observation of the martyrdom day of Guru Arjun, were massacred by the Indian Army. Feeling not content with this ghastly bloodshed the Indian government, side by side with Operation Blue Star, launched on the Sikhs another attack known as Operation Woodrose. The main purpose of this Operation was to mop up all Amritdhari Sikhs, especially the young boys, from all villages of Punjab. During this mopping up operation the Army indiscriminately picked up all Sikh boys and other Sikhs who had supported flowing beards and adorned *Gatra*, a small dagger, one of the five symbols prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh. It is preposterous that the Army branded in their official publication "*Bat Cheet*" all Amritdhari Sikhs as extremists and the Indian government led by Indira Gandhi had endorsed this grave disinformation spread by the blinded Army. Instead of asking the Army to keep their hands off the innocent Amritdhari Sikhs, the Indian government framed draconian laws to facilitate the Army to carry out indiscriminate arrests of the Sikhs, young and old, alike. The state of Punjab and Chandigarh were declared as disturbed areas and to accord it legal sanctity the Punjab Chandigarh Disturbed Areas Act was passed by the government. Not only that, to enable the Army to round up any Sikh they wished to without impunity the government passed another Act called the Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Act. To provide sharp teeth to the courts, the Terrorists

Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act was also passed to deal sternly with the arrested Sikhs. And to arm the police and the paramilitary forces with unbridled powers the Criminal Procedure Code was amended. The civil administration was virtually subordinated to the military authorities. Thus Punjab was virtually converted into a Military Occupied Area as is done in the case of captured area of an enemy country.

The Army revengefully let loose a rein of terror in every nook and corner of all villages of Punjab. Like hunting hounds they rounded up thousands of Sikhs especially the youths, detained them in military camps, tortured them brutally, and in many cases shot them dead. Many were crippled and maimed permanently. The reckless oppression forced hundreds of those Sikh youths, at whom the Army could not lay hands, to flee their villages. Many of them went under ground and many escaped to Pakistan and other countries to escape ruthless oppression let loose by the Army. The mothers, sisters and wives of those Sikhs, who went under ground for fear of arbitrary arrests, were arrested, detained in the military camps, tortured and in many cases molested in order to force their fleeing relatives to surrender. There was none to hear their wails and woes; there was none to give them healing touch. Only wild wolves were let loose to howl and growl at them. The fanatic Hindus slyly smiled and gleefully rejoiced at the pitiable plight of the Sikhs in Punjab.

This monstrous military action against the Sikhs was mischievously code-named as Operation Woodrose because in the blind eyes of the Indian government the young Sikhs were of course roses but "wildly" grown in the woods. With this malice and contempt in their minds the Indian Army weeded out the "roses" from the "Woods". In this way the land of the roses, the state of Punjab, was ruined beyond repairs.

The ruthless repression of the Sikhs in Punjab surpassed

the atrocities committed by Zakarya Khan and Mir Mannu, in the eighteenth century A.D. under the Mughal rule as well as of Ahmed Shah Abdali.

Thus "Operation Blue Star" and "Operation Wood Rose" left a deep and indelible scar in the face of the land of the roses, the land of Punjab. Who will heal these wounds; who will remove this scar? None else, One day the Sikhs alone would heal their wounds. Or some day some Messiah may be born again to restore confidence in them and elevate them.

Chapter 10

MILITARY ATTACK ON AKAL TAKHT AVENGED

Who so ever in the past committed a sin of destroying and desecrating the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht had to suffer the penalty of death at the hands of the brave Khalsa. History of the Sikhs bears testimony to such past events but some of the cynical Hindus scoffed at such heroic deeds. While in the wake of brutal military operations in Punjab there was a wide spread resentment and rumour afloat in the air that Indira Gandhi, the Machiavellian Princess, would soon meet her nemesis as was met by Massa Rangar, the cynic Hindu laughed it off. They discarded that historic event as a myth of myths. They never believed that Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh, the valiant Sikhs, had beheaded Massa Rangar for his sin of committing desecration of the Golden Temple in the eighteenth Century A.D. However, keeping alive the heroic traditions of the Khalsa and the glorious history of the Sikhs two young Sikhs, Bhai Beant Singh and Bhai Satwant Singh, inspired by the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh, on one fine morning of 31st October 1984, gunned down Indira Gandhi right in her fortified official residence and right under the nose of her scores of security guards, and thus avenged the destruction and desecration of the Golden Temple and Akal Takht. These two brave Sikhs greatly surpassed even the heroic and glorious deeds of Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh.

The Sikhs who were languishing under the oppressive Army rule in Punjab, un-mindful of the impending danger, heaved a sigh of relief but it proved only momentary. The

fanatic Hindus, who were already motivated by Indira Gandhi and other Congress leaders including Rajiv Gandhi, to teach the Sikhs a lesson, were mobilised and organised in the late evening of that fateful day.

When Rajiv Gandhi arrived at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, at about 3.30 P.M. and saw her mother in the shape of a lump of flesh, he flew into rage. In a fit of rage he instructed the Congress leaders present there to fan out and teach the Sikhs a lesson. He added that he did not want to see the ugly face of any Sikh. At that time he was not sworn in as the Prime Minister. Perhaps for that reason the Congress hordes did not take his cynical utterance seriously. Nonetheless they directed the Congress activists to do something to satisfy the whims of their boss. But what they simply did was that they manhandled the Sikh passers by and damaged their scooters and cars by which they were travelling in the vicinity of the Medical Institute. Such sporadic incidents occurred in other parts of Delhi too. But when Rajiv Gandhi succeeded to the throne of Delhi in the evening and was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India by Sikh President Zail Singh, the situation took a traumatic turn. Rajiv Gandhi was hell bent to teach the Sikhs a bitter lesson to avenge his mother's assassination. The Congress Ministers and other leaders now realised that they would have to take some drastic action against the Sikhs in order to please their new blood thirsty Prime Minister. They chalked out a sinister and dangerous plan during the night which was meant to be implemented the next morning. Prominent Congress leaders, Harkishan Lal Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar, Lalit Makan, Arjun Dass, Dharam Dass Shastri and the like were made in-charge of their respective constituencies and were assigned the defined duties to ensure the successful implementation of the "Operation Genocide" of the Sikhs. It is pertinent to mention here that after operation

Blue Star, Sikhs of Delhi had protested and demonstrated in June 84, to the embarrassment and annoyance of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

These Congress Ministers collected hundreds of criminals, professional killers, bandits, marauders, looters and plunderers, during the night intervening 31st October and 1st November and let them loose like hungry wolves in Delhi to carry out the "Operation Genocide." The residential houses, shops, business, industrial and commercial establishments belonging to the Sikhs were identified and marked to be made targets of attack by the arsonists, rapists, killers and the plunderers. All sorts of weapons and incendiary material to carry out the diabolic plan were collected in large quantities and handed over to the killer Hindu gangs. In short the stage was set during the night to launch a major onslaught against the Sikhs the next morning.

In order to give free hand to the Hindu-killer-gangs the Delhi police and the Central Reserve Police Force were passed on secret instructions to keep their hands off when the criminally motivated gangs were in action. Sikh police men were not deployed and their weapons were withdrawn. Further, to give an ample time to these organised criminal Hindu gangs to accomplish their assigned diabolic job the government declared that the dead body of Indira Gandhi would be preserved in the Teen Murti for three days to enable the people to pay homage and simultaneously curfew for an indefinite period was also clamped in Delhi. The hidden motive behind all this game plan was to permit the killer gangs to move about in the city freely and to prevent movements of others who could have saved the Sikhs.

What happened in Delhi from 1st November to 5th November was a horrible holocaust. Almost all shops, business, commercial establishments and industries were first plundered and then set ablaze. The hapless and innocent Sikhs, old and

young alike, were mercilessly massacred in thousands. Hundreds of them were literally burnt alive in their houses as well as in the open streets and on the roads. The barbaric Hindus frenziedly danced and sang around the burning and crying Sikhs as though they were celebrating some festival. Burning Sikhs, were described as 'Dekho, Sardar Sala Nachta Hai'. Hundreds of Sikh women and girls were gang raped in the presence of their fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands. Then the males were brutally slaughtered before the eyes of raped and ravished ladies.

Some of the brave Sikhs, who dared to resist and combat the killer Hindu gangs, were fired at by the Para Military Forces and disarmed so as to let them fall easy prey to the monsters. In many cases the Para Military Forces gunned down the Sikhs in view of the organised killers simply to boost their morale and signal them to carry on with loot, plunder and murders without any hindrance.

Under a well considered vicious plan the military was called in Delhi and ostensibly given orders to shoot at sight the arsonists and the killers of the Sikhs but not a single shot was fired by the Army during its deployment for full four days. On the contrary, the Army witnessed all monstrous crimes as silent spectators. It is crystal clear from their passive role that the Army was deployed in the city to convey false information to the general public and the world at large that the Indian government had taken all necessary steps and precautions to prevent and control the calamitous situation.

It was not all that only the killer Hindu gangs of Delhi were let loose like mad and ferocious dogs to pounce upon defenceless innocent Sikhs. The Congress leaders transported hundreds of such volves in buses and trucks from the neighbouring villages of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh on the pretext that they had come to pay homage to the dead Indira Gandhi. As a matter of fact

they were brought to Delhi to expedite and complete the genocide of the Sikhs by the time the dead body of Indira Gandhi was cremated on 3rd of November. I observed that the killers did not have the slightest sign or expression of grief or sorrow on their faces. Rather, they were smiling and laughing and dancing as though they had come to join some fair or festival.

It was not only in Delhi that the Sikhs were mercilessly massacred. The same naked monstrosity was in display in other states too, especially those ruled by the Congress Party.

At least five thousand Sikhs were slaughtered in Delhi alone, the same number that had been killed by the Indian Army during the Operation Blue Star.

This genocide of the Sikhs was committed by the barbaric Hindus without any fear of retaliation in Punjab because Punjab was already reeling under the repressive rule of the Army. And the Armed Forces were alerted on any kind of retaliation in the Punjab.

It would be a partial truth to say that only some of the Congress Ministers and leaders had masterminded and organised the genocide of the Sikhs. The real but invisible force behind this great holocaust was Rajiv Gandhi himself, the ruthless Prime Minister of India. This fact stands proved by his own confessional statement when he publicly declared that when a big tree falls the earth shakes. If this devious justification of the genocide is supposed to be held tenable then why the earth did not shake when Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi was gunned down by Nathu Ram Godse, a Marathi Brahmin, on 30th January 1948? Should it be believed that Indira Gandhi was greater than M.K. Gandhi who is revered and remembered by the Congress as the father of the nation? Not a single Maratha Brahmin was even manhandled not to talk of having been killed. Why? Because in that case both the killer and killed

were Hindus and Brahmans. All this proves that the genocide of the Sikhs was masterminded and organised by Rajiv Gandhi himself.

All this naked barbarity, brutality and monstrosity brazenly displayed by the fanatic Hindus in carrying out the genocide of the Sikhs is not a new development in their character and culture *viz a viz* the non Hindus. They have inherited this criminal and outrageous element of character from their remote ancestors, the Irano-Aryans who had invaded the Indo-Pak subcontinent in about 1500 B.C., conquered it and made it their homeland. Their kith and kin, the Irano-Aryans, have alluded to Indo-Aryans in Zend Avesta in the following words :-

(1) "You Devas, sprang out of evil spirits, who take possession of you by intoxication, teaching you manifold arts to deceive and destroy mankind, for which arts you are notorious every where."

(*Yasna - 32*)

(2) "I forsake the Devas, the wicked, bad false, untrue, the originators of mischief, who are most baneful, destructive, the basest of all beings."

(*Yasna - 12*)

The Devas here are alluded to the Indo-Aryans whose remote descendants the present day Hindu are.

Their bestial character remains dormant when they are subdued and enslaved by a superior force but as soon as they regain freedom and become rulers, their inherent character becomes visible. This was clearly manifested in the outrageous genocide of the Sikhs. So it is not a flurry of their ferocity. In fact it is an age old bestial habit of the Hindus which will recur again and again till they are enslaved by some future superior power.

Chapter 11

THE AFTERMATH

Military attack on the Golden Temple Complex was tauntingly Code-named by the government as Operation Blue Star because the Akalis support turbans of blue colour and the government wanted not only to remove blue turbans but their heads too. Similarly Operation "mop up" carried out simultaneously was code named "Woodrose" because the Sikh youth were like roses but in the eyes of government grown in the woods. Both these bloody Operations were carried out with reckless vengeance. They aroused in the minds of the Sikhs deep resentment, hatred and revulsion against the government. Therefore the devout Sikh youths were virtually burning with fire of revenge and vowed to avenge the murder of Akal Takht from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Her sin was unforgivable and unatonable. Hence she was destined to meet her nemesis one day or the other and she did meet it on 31st October 1984 just five months after she had taken the suicidal step to attack the Golden Temple Complex. Though her assassination resulted in the genocide of the Sikhs yet it raised the head of the Khalsa and restored their honour and pride. After 1984, people World over want to know more about Sikhs and Sikhism. Many new books have come up.

III

The rise and fall of the Traitors

Though all Akali leaders were released from the Jail in early 1985 yet the Sikh masses seemed to be leader less, for, the released leaders had been badly discredited by their own

omissions and commissions. Therefore, they pleaded with Baba Joginder Singh, father of Sant Bhindranwale and persuaded him to lead the demoralised and vanquished community. He was thus forced to lead the Akali Dal. As a result Longowal demitted office of the President of Akali Dal and Talwandi also disbanded his own splinter group. This paved the way for unity among the Akalis and United Akali Dal was formed under the Presidentship of Baba Joginder Singh.

This new dispensation, however, was a big sore in the eyes of courteries of Longowal, especially Balwant Singh, who was Longowal's main advisor, besides Surjit Singh Barnala, who was dreaming to become Chief Minister of Punjab. Seeing their dreams shattered Balwant Singh and Barnala persuaded Longowal to withdraw his resignation who readily obliged them as he, too, had a lust for power.

This trinity, while holding negotiations with the Central government before military action, called Operation Blue Star, had considered Sant Bhindranwale as a stumbling block in their way because the latter wanted nothing short of realisation of Anandpur Sahib Resolution while the trinity was ready to give up that demand in return for power. Now that the stumbling block had been removed from their way the "trinity" reopened talks with the Central government. They picked up the thread where they had left it before military action and deliberately ignored stalwarts like Tohra, Badal and Talwandi. To facilitate success of negotiations the Central government appointed Arjun Singh as the governor of Punjab, for, he had cordial relations with the trinity.

Although Tohra, Talwandi and Badal were aware of the secret dialogue being held by Longowal and his courterie with the government yet they did not know what specific formulation the demands would take.

However a sudden announcement made by the Central

government in the evening of 23rd July 1985 surprised the Akali Dal and the general public. That announcement said that Longowal would meet Rajiv Gandhi the Prime Minister, on 24th July. It was a clear indication that some sort of agreement between them had been arrived at. As was expected it was announced by the government on 24th July that a "Memorandum of Settlement" had been signed by Rajiv Gandhi and Longowal. Thus Longowal stabbed the Akali Dal and the Sikh masses in the back once again. At that juncture Longowal did not represent the Sikh masses or the Akali Dal. He was leading only a splinter group of Akalis whereas the majority of them was being led by Baba Joginder Singh but even then he had not been taken into confidence by Longowal. As a result all top Akali leaders outrightly rejected the Memorandum of Settlement branding it a great betrayal of the Khalsa Panth.

There is nothing new in the fake Memorandum of Settlement because similar offers were being made by the government before the military attack on the Golden Temple Complex and those offers were rejected and debunked by Sant Bhindranwale and other leaders including Tohra and Talwandi. If such a lollipop was to be accepted by these old traitors and that too after experiencing a catastrophe then why they had allowed the government to destroy and desecrate the Golden Temple Complex which had caused enormous loss of life and property. Apparently these traitors have laid waste the sacrifices made by the devout Sikhs.

According to the terms and conditions of the so called Memorandum of Settlement the main demand of Anandpur Sahib Resolution has been permanently buried into the deep sea; transfer of Chandigarh has become a dead issue; river waters dispute and other issues have been thrown to the wind. Thus the Memorandum has turned out to be a negation in totality and demands raised during the Dharm Yudh Morcha

have been given a permanent burial.

II

The Last efforts for unity

Fortunately I have had very close and cordial relations with the top Akali leaders especially with Jathedar Gurcharn Singh Tohra and Jagdev Singh Talwandi. Therefore I tried to create some conducive atmosphere for bringing about unity among them. I met all top leaders. They all were willing to forge unity but were apprehensive. Nevertheless I held last meeting with Balwant Singh and Surjit Singh Barnala at Ludhiana on 18th August 1985. We discussed various formulations to forge unity but Balwant Singh harped only on one point saying that none else than Longowal was acceptable to him as the President of Akali Dal. Upon this a quick idea came to my mind and I suggested the name of Barnala for Presidentship of Akali Dal. This suggestion enlivened Barnala but Balwant Singh's face turned pale. Any way gathering his nerves he questioned me whether this proposal was acceptable to Talwandi. Certainly, I said with full confidence, and when in ecstatic mood I begged leave of them to convey good news to Talwandi, Balwant Singh followed me to the gate and said in no uncertain words that even Barnala was not acceptable to him. When I asked why he did not say so to Barnala he replied. "How could I say so in his face." There ended the last efforts for forging unity in the Akali Dal. Two days later Harchand Singh Longowal was gunned down by some devout Sikh youths in his own district of Sangrur. When his body was cremated (when he was given bath before cremation, it was seen that his pubic and armpit hair were shaved) in his own village Longowal I came across Balwant Singh who was in a gloomy mood. He murmured that he had been ruined. I reminded him of his obstinacy shown by him on 18th August and whispered to him that should Longowal be raised from the grave.

As the luck would have it Barnala was made President of Akali Dal. As committed by Rajiv Gandhi, Akali Dal led by Barnala was facilitated by the Congress to win the elections and form the government in 1985. Rajiv Gandhi had publically expressed his happiness over victory of Barnala Akali Dal. Barnala however was a *de jure* Chief Minister while Balwant Singh was a *de facto* Chief Minister.

Rajiv Gandhi wanted to extract an extra pound of flesh from the Barnala government. Then Rajiv inducted government agents in the Golden Temple Complex in the guise of fake militants and then conducted Operation Black Thunder by sending commandos to capture them from the temple. This drama was enacted by the Rajiv government in connivance with Barnala and Balwant Singh in order to justify the earlier military action code named "Operation Blue Star."

Soon thereafter the Barnala government was dismissed in 1987. And Balwant Singh met the fate of a traitor like his mentor, Longowal. Thus ended the sordid story of these traitors.

Post Script

Without giving some more detail about Jathedar Ranjit Singh and assessment of the present politico-religious situation this book seems to be some what incomplete.

Bhai Ranjit Singh was born on 25th June 1955 in village Thatta Ghariala in Patti Tehsil of district Amritsar. This area is a part of "Majha" which is known as a land of the brave people. Like Sant Bhindranwale, Bhai Ranjit Singh also studied upto 5th standard in Patti town and then shifted to Delhi in 1970 in search for livelihood. He worked and lived in Delhi upto 1980.

When traumatic incident of 13th April 1978 occurred at Amritsar he was still living in Delhi. This incident shook his

conscience, for, being a devout Singh he could not swallow the cruel and ghastly murder of the 13 defenceless Sikhs at the hands of blood thirsty Nirankaris. He vowed to avenge the massacre of the Sikhs and set upon the job while he was still in Delhi. By winning confidence of the Nirankari leaders he managed to enter their citadel, the Nirankari headquarters, at Delhi. Accordingly he was allowed to stay in a room opposite the main entrance of Nirankari Chief's residence and worked there in the guise of a carpenter for about four months. During this period he carefully watched the movements of Gurbachan Singh and assessed his security arrangements. Then he meticulously worked out a plan to exterminate the Nirankari Chief in his own den, for, he was solely responsible for the Amritsar episode. When he was fully confident that he would accomplish his task he called upon Sant Bhindranwale in the Golden Temple Complex perhaps to seek his blessing and then returned to Delhi about two weeks before he actually assassinated Gurbachan Singh on 24th April 1980.

This stout and sturdy man, six feet tall, had a companion called Kabul Singh.

Bhai Ranjit Singh's companion Kabul Singh, stayed with him in the Nirankari headquarters. Ranjit Singh perhaps first intend to gun down the Nirankari Chief on the Baisakhi day, that is, the 13th April, but he could not get the chance. However this stout and sturdy man stunned the country on 24th April 1980 by assassinating Gurbachan Singh, Nirankari Chief right in his fortified citadel in Delhi. This brave Singh avenged the gruesome massacre of the Sikhs and the whole Sikh community was jubilant for his feat of valour. As he and his companion Kabul Singh knew the exit routes they easily managed to escape. After their escape Kabul Singh went to Sant Bhindranwale and lived with him till the end.

Contrary to the widely published reports that Bhai Ranjit

Singh also sought shelter in the Camp of Sant Bhindranwale and that later he was weaned away by Longowal who arranged his surrender through Surjit Singh Barnala Bhai Ranjit Singh emphatically said that he himself surrendered on 24th March 1983 before G.S. Bawa who was then additional Director of Central Bureau of Investigation. He was then convicted in the Nirankari Chief murder case and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was detained in Tihar Central Jail in Delhi and was released on 12th October 1996. Significantly, while Ranjit Singh was still undergoing sentence, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, appointed him Jathedar of Akal Takht in 1993 after attack on him by militants. Tohra escaped with minor injuries. However he was formally installed as Jathedar after his release from the Jail on 12th October 1996. In his absence Professor Manjit Singh worked as Acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht and when he demitted his office he was appointed Jathedar of Takht Keshgarh Sahib.

During his tenure as Acting Jathedar of Akal Takht Professor Manjit Singh played an uncharitable role. He acted more like a politician than a religious head. He developed vested interests because in the capacity of chairman of World Sikh Council, he had collected huge amount through donations but refused to render accounts despite repeated appeals made by Bhai Ranjit Singh. It appears that his insolent behaviour smacks some foul play as he has openly challenged the Supreme Authority of the Akal Takht.

With a view to diverting attention of the Khalsa Panth from his uncharitable behaviour Professor Manjit Singh has superimposed another controversy. This controversy relates to a Hukamnama issued by the Akal Takht Jathedar forbidding the Sikhs to partake langar in the Gurdwaras sitting in the chairs and served on the tables. Some Sikhs in Canada wilfully violated this Hukamnama and the tradition laid down by the

Sikh Gurus. Therefore the Akal Takht Jathedar declared some of them Tankhayia and then excommunicated them. Being a Jathedar of Takht Keshgarh Sahib it was bounden duty of Professor Manjit Singh to endorse the religious edict that enjoins upon him but he intentionally opposed and criticised the Akal Takht Jathedar keeping his selfish interests above his religious duties. Not surprisingly he has found a ready accomplice in Brajinder Singh, editor of "Ajit", a daily newspaper, published from Jalandhar. This editor at the behest of Professor Manjit Singh and the Chief Minister, has given a new twist to this debased issue which has been raised in order to diminish the authority of the Akal Takht. Brajinder Singh has gone to the mean extent of criticising Akal Takht Jathedar in his newspaper by name and is indulging in irreligious activities. He seems to be playing more or less the same role as was being played by Lala Jagat Narain before Operation Blue Star.

It is an irony that history is waiting in the wings to repeat itself so soon. Exactly twenty years ago more or less a similar politico-religious situation was prevailing in Punjab. At that time, too, Punjab government was being run by Parkash Singh Badal in coalition with the Jan Sangh which represents Hindu fundamentalism.

At that time, too, there was a same formulation of political parties which was reigning the country. At that time, too, the same set of moderate or secular Akali leaders had played in the hands of fundamentalist Hindus and had vitiated the peaceful situation in Punjab. Twenty years later they are again playing the same game unmindful of the consequences.

It is an irony that the same set of failed and discredited Akali leaders are in power in Punjab who had been in power twenty years ago. And it is a tragedy that they have again arrayed themselves against the true leaders of the Khalsa Panth. In a calculated move they have started a vicious attack on the

Akal Takht Jathedar and the President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Twenty years ago they had frowned at Sant Bhindranwale and arrayed their forces against him and Dami Dami Taksal but they were badly battered by the brave Sant. And ultimately they sought the help of Central government which had attacked the Golden Temple Complex to save the "great traitor" (Harchand Singh Longowal) and smash the citadel of the gallant defender of the Panth.

Today too anti-Panthic forces waging war against Bhai Ranjit Singh, Jathedar of Akal Takht, not simply to brow beat him but also to diminish authority of the Akal Takht. They are acting in the same fashion as they had done in the case of Sant Bhindranwale.

But Badal should carefully study ABC of dialectical materialism and learn some lesson from the past events, formulate his present policies after rectifying past mistakes, and plan for the future correctly, lest history should repeat itself again.

Annexure 1

ANANDPUR SAHIB RESOLUTION

Basic Postulates of the Shiromani Akali Dal as adopted by the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal at its meeting held at Sri Anandpur Sahib on 16-17 October, 1973.

(A) Postulates

1. The Shiromani Akali Dal is the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the Sikh Nation and as such is fully entitled to its representation. The basic postulates of this organisation are Human Coexistence, Human progress and ultimate unity of all Human beings with the Spiritual Soul.
2. These postulates are based upon the three great principles of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, namely, a Meditation on God's Name, dignity of labour and sharing of fruits of this Labour.

(Nam Japo, Kirat Karo, Wand Chhako)

(B) Purposes

The Shiromani Akali Dal shall ever strive to achieve the following aims :

1. Propagation of Sikhism and its code of conduct denunciation of atheism.
2. To preserve and keep alive the concept of distinct and independent identity of the *Panth* and to create an environment in which national sentiments and aspirations of the *Sikh Panth* will find full expression, satisfaction and growth.

3. Eradication of Poverty and Starvation, by increased production and more equitable distribution of wealth and the establishment of a just social order sans any exploitation.
4. Vacation of discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or illiteracy in keeping with basic principles of Sikhism.
5. Striving for the removal of diseases and ill-health, denouncement of use of intoxicants and enlargement of facilities for physical well-being to prepare and enthuse the Nation for the National defence.

First Part

The Shiromani Akali Dal considers it its primary duty to inculcate among the Sikhs, religious fervour and a pride in their rich religious heritage for which it proposes to pursue the following programme:

- a) Reiteration of the concept of the unity (Oneness) of God, meditation on His Name, recitation of Gurbani, renewal of faith in the ten Holy Sikh Gurus and the Holy *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and other appropriate measures for such a purpose.
- b) Grooming the accomplished preachers, *Ragis*, *Dhadis*, and poets in the Sikh Missionary College for a more effective propagation of Sikhism, Sikh Philosophy, belief in Sikh code of conduct and Kirtan etc. at home and colleges, in villages and in cities as indeed at every place.
- c) Baptising the Sikhs (*Amrit Parchar*) on a vast scale, with particular emphasis on Schools and Colleges of which the teachers and the taught shall be enthused through regular study circles.
- d) Reinculcate the religious practice of 'DASWAND' among the Sikhs (Giving one tenth of one's earnings for the

welfare of the Community)

- e) Generating feeling of respect for the Sikh intellectuals, writers, preachers, *Granthis*, etc., who also in turn, would be enthused to improve upon their accomplishments while conforming to the basic Sikh tenets and traditions.
- f) Streamlining the *Gurdwaras*, administration by giving better training to their workers. Appropriate steps would also be taken to maintain Gurdwara buildings in proper condition. For such a purpose, the party representatives in the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and local Committees would be directed from time to time to pull their weight.
- g) Making appropriate arrangements for the error free publication of *Gurbani*; promoting research work in the ancient and modern Sikh history as also its publication; rendering *Gurbani* in other languages and producing first rate literature on Sikhism.
- h) Taking appropriate steps for the enactment of an All India Gurdwara Act with a view to introduce improvements in the administration of the *Gurdwaras* throughout the Country and to reintegrate the traditional preaching sects of Sikhism like *Udasis* and *Nirmalas* with the mainstream of Sikhism without in any way encroaching on the properties of their respective individual '*maths*.'
- i) Taking such steps as may be necessary to bring the Sikh *Gurdwaras* all over the world under a single system of administration with a view to run them according to the basic Sikh norms and to pool their sources for the dissemination of Sikhism on a wider and more impressive scale.
- j) Striving for free access to all those holy Sikh Shrines,

including Nankana Sahib, from which the *Sikh Panth* has been separated, for pilgrimage and proper upkeep.

Political Goal

The political goal of the Panth, without doubt, is enshrined in the commandments of the Tenth Lord, in the pages of the Sikh history and in the very heart of the *Khalsa Panth*, the ultimate objective of which is the pre-eminence of the *Khalsa*.

The fundamental policy of the Shiromani Akali Dal is to seek the realization of this birth right of the Khalsa through creation of congenial environment and a political set up.

For Attainment of this Aim

- 1 The Shiromani Akali Dal is determined to strive by all possible means to:
 - a) Have all those Punjabi speaking areas, deliberately kept out of Punjab, such as Dalhousie in Gurdaspur District; Chandigarh; Pinjore-Kalka and Ambala Saddar etc., in Ambala District; the entire Una tehsil of Hoshiarpur District; the '*Desh*' area of Nalagarh; Shahabad and Gulha blocks of Karnal District; Tohana Sub-Tehsil, Ratia block and Sirsa tehsil of Hissar District and six tehsils of Ganganagar District in Rajasthan; merged with Punjab to constitute a single administrative unit where the interests of the Sikhs and Sikhism are specifically protected.
 - b) In this new Punjab and in other States the centre's interference would be restricted to Defence, Foreign relations, Currency and General Communication; all other departments would be in the jurisdiction of Punjab (and other states) which would be fully entitled to frame its own Laws on these subjects for administration. For the above departments of the Centre, Punjab and other

States contribute in proportion to representation in the Parliament.

- c) The Sikhs and other religious minorities living out of Punjab should be adequately protected against any kind of discrimination.
2. The Shiromani Akali Dal would also endeavour to have the Indian Constitution recast on real federal principles, with equal representation at the centre for all the States.
3. The Shiromani Akali Dal strongly denounces the foreign policy of India framed by the Congress party. It is worthless, hopeless and highly detrimental to the interests of the Country, the Nation and the mankind at large. Shiromani Akali Dal shall extend its support only to that foreign policy of India which is based on the principles of peace and national interests. It strongly advocates a policy of peace with all neighbouring countries, especially those inhabited by the Sikhs and their sacred shrines. The Akali Dal is of the firm view that our foreign policy should in no case play second fiddle to that of any other country.
4. The Shiromani Akali Dal shall raise its firm voice against any discrimination against any Sikh (or even other) employees of the central or state Governments. The Shiromani Akali Dal shall also endeavour to maintain the traditional position of the Sikhs in all wings of the defence departments and the Panth would pay particular attention to the needs of the Sikh armymen. The Shiromani Akali Dal would also see that 'Kirpan' is accepted as an integral part of the uniform of the Sikhs in Army.
5. It shall be the primary duty of Shiromani Akali Dal to help rehabilitate the ex-servicemen of the Defence Departments in the civil life and or such a purpose it

would extend them every help to enable them to organize themselves so that they are able to raise their voice in an effective way for gaining adequate concessions and proper safeguards for a life of self-respect and dignity.

6. Shiromani Akali Dal is of the firm opinion that all those persons males or females-who have not been convicted of any criminal offence by a court of law, should be at liberty to possess all types of small arms, like revolvers, guns, pistols, rifles, carbines etc., without any licence, the only obligation being their registration.
7. The Shiromani Akali Dal seeks ban on the sale of liquor and other intoxicants and shall press for prohibition on the consumption of intoxicants and smoking on public places.

Annexure 2

MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT

The following is the text of the memorandum of settlement, arrived at between the Government and the Akalis:

1. Compensation to innocent persons killed

1.1 Along with ex-gratia payment to those innocent after 1.8.82, compensation for property damaged.

2. Army recruitment

2.1 All citizens of the country have the right to enrol in the Army and merit will remain the criterion for selection.

3. Enquiry into November incidents

3.1 The jurisdiction of Shri Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission enquiring into the November riots of Delhi would be extended to cover the disturbances at Bokaro and Kanpur also.

4. Rehabilitation of those discharged from the Army

4.1 For all those discharged, efforts will be made to rehabilitate and provide gainful employment.

5. All India Gurdwara Act

5.1 The Government of India agrees to consider the formulation of an ALL India Gurdwara Bill, Legislation will be brought forward for this purpose in consultation with Shiromani Akali Dal, others concerned and after fulfilling all relevant constitutional requirements.

6. Disposal of pending cases

6.1 The notifications applying the Armed Forces Special Powers Act to Punjab will be withdrawn. Existing Special Courts will try only cases relating to the following type of offences (a) waging war (b) hijacking.

6.2 All other cases will be transferred to ordinary courts and enabling legislation if needed will be brought forward in this session of Parliament.

7. Territorial claims

7.1 The Capital Project Area of Chandigarh will go to Punjab. Some adjoining areas which were previously part of the Hindi or Punjabi regions were included in the Union Territory. With the capital region going to Punjab the areas which were added to the Union Territory from the Punjabi region of the erstwhile State of Punjab will be transferred to Punjab and those from Hindi region to Haryana. The entire Sukhna lake will be kept as part of Chandigarh and will thus go to Punjab.

7.2 It had always been maintained by Indira Gandhi that when Chandigarh is to go to Punjab some Hindi-speaking territories in Punjab will go to Haryana. A commission will be constituted to determine the specific Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab which should go to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh.

The principal of contiguity and linguistic affinity with village as a unit will be the basis of such determination. The commission will be required to give its findings by 31st December 1985 and these will be binding on both sides. The work of the commission will be limited to this aspect and will be distinct from the general boundary claims which the other commission referred to in para 7.4 will handle.

7.3 The actual transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and areas in lieu thereof to Haryana will take place simultaneously on 26th Jan. 1986.

7.4 There are other claims and counterclaims for readjustment of the existing Punjab-Haryana boundaries. The Government will appoint another commission to consider these matters and give its findings. Such findings will be binding on the concerned States. The terms of reference will be based on village as a unit, linguistic affinity and contiguity.

8. Centre-State relations

8.1 Shiromani Akali Dal states that the Anandpur Sahib resolution is entirely within the framework of the Indian Constitution : that it attempts to define the concept of Centre-State relations in a manner which may bring out the true federal characteristics of our unitary Constitution : and that the purpose of the resolution is to provide greater autonomy to the State with a view to strengthening the unity and integrity of the country, since unity in diversity forms the cornerstone of our national entity.

8.2 In view of the above the Anandpur Sahib resolution insofar as it deals with Centre-State, relations, stands referred to the Sarkaria Commission.

9. Sharing of river waters

9.1 The farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan will continue to get water not less than what they are using from the Ravi-Beas system as on 1-7-1985. Waters used for consumptive purposes will also remain unaffected. Quantum of usage claimed shall be verified by the tribunal referred to in para 9.2 below.

9.2 The claims of Punjab and Haryana regarding the shares in their remaining waters will be referred for adjudication to a tribunal to be presided over by a Supreme Court judge. The decision of this tribunal will be referred for adjudication to a tribunal will be rendered within six months and would be binding on both parties. All legal and constitutional steps required in this respect be taken expeditiously.

9.3 The construction of the SYL canal shall continue. The canal shall be completed by 15th August, 1986.

10. Representation of minorities

10.1 Existing instructions regarding protection of interests of minorities will be recirculated to the State Chief Ministers. (PM will write to all Chief Ministers.)

11. Promotion of Punjabi language

11.1 The Central Government may take some steps for the promotion of the Punjabi language.

This settlement brings to an end a period of confrontation and ushers in an era of amity, goodwill and cooperation, which will promote and strengthen the unity and integrity of India.

RAJIV GANDHI

Prime Minister of India

SANT HARCHAND SINGH LONGOWAL

President, Shiromani Akali Dal

Dated the 24th July 1985