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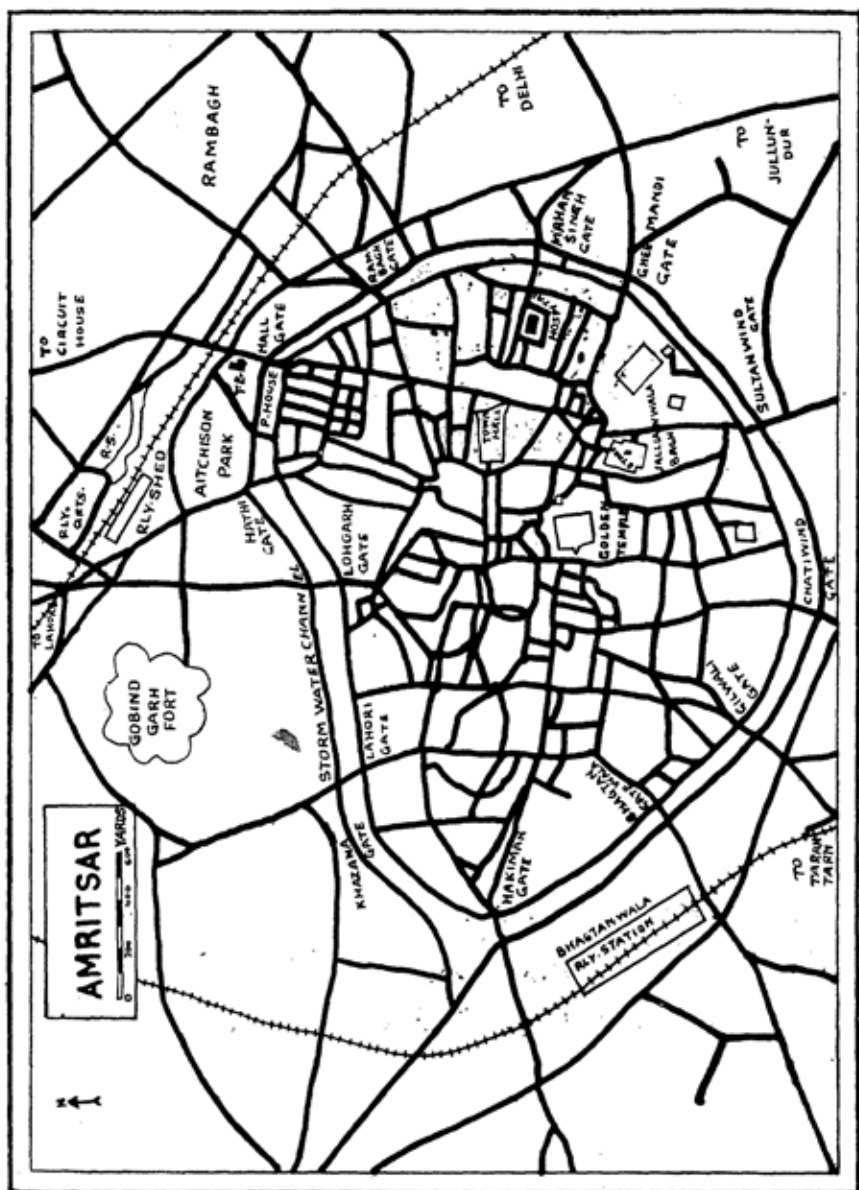
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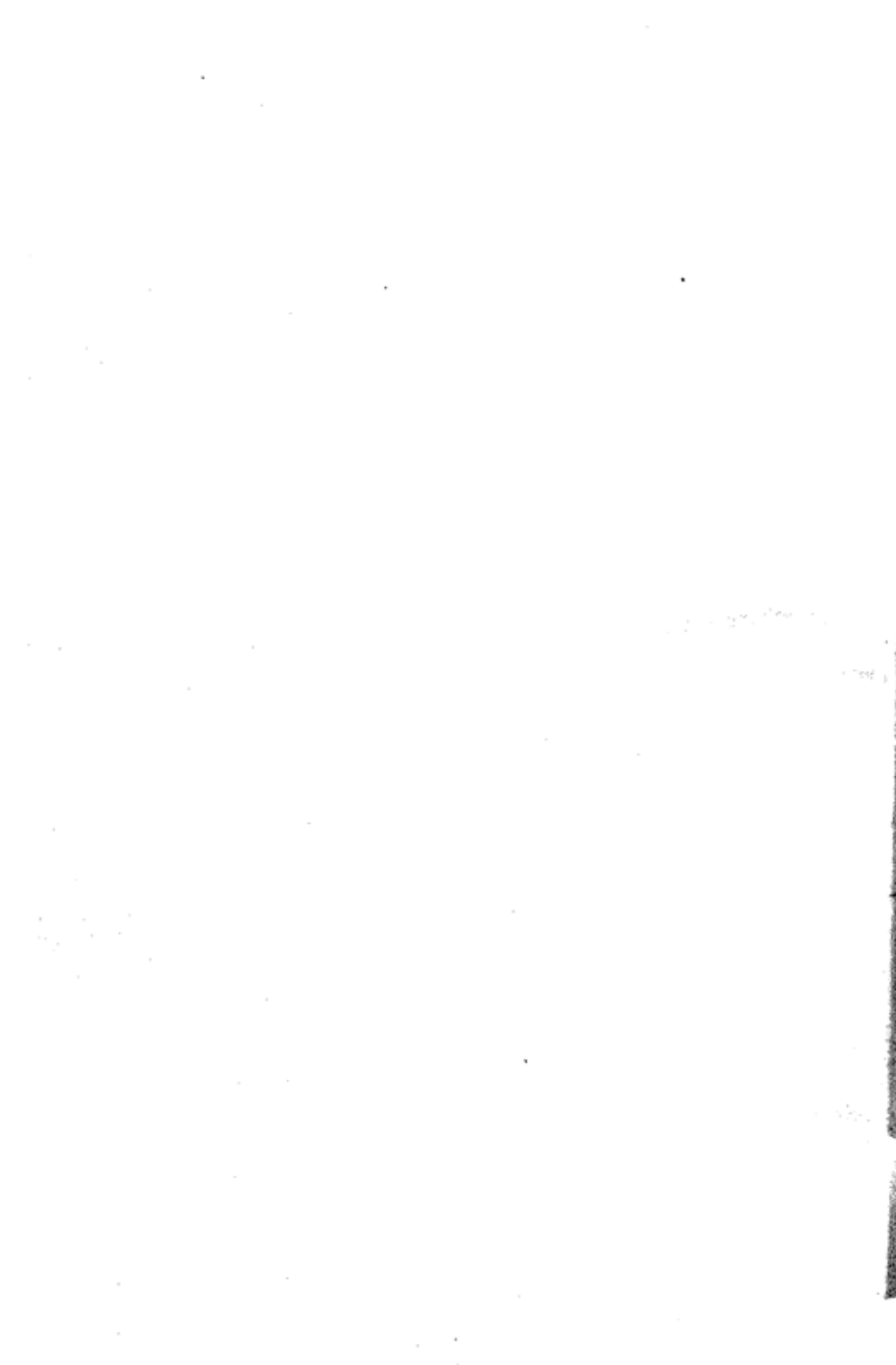
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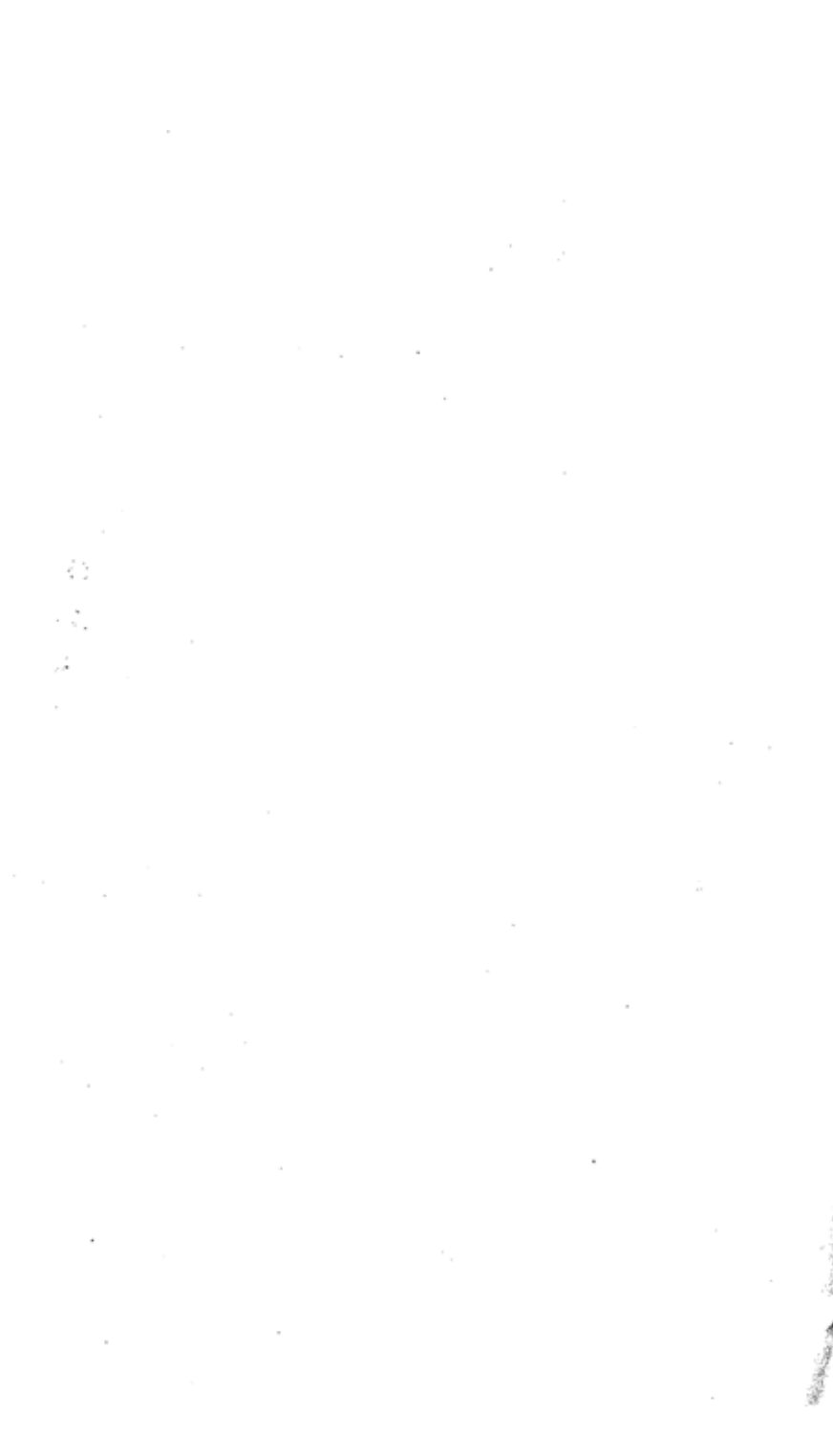
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in gratitude and affection



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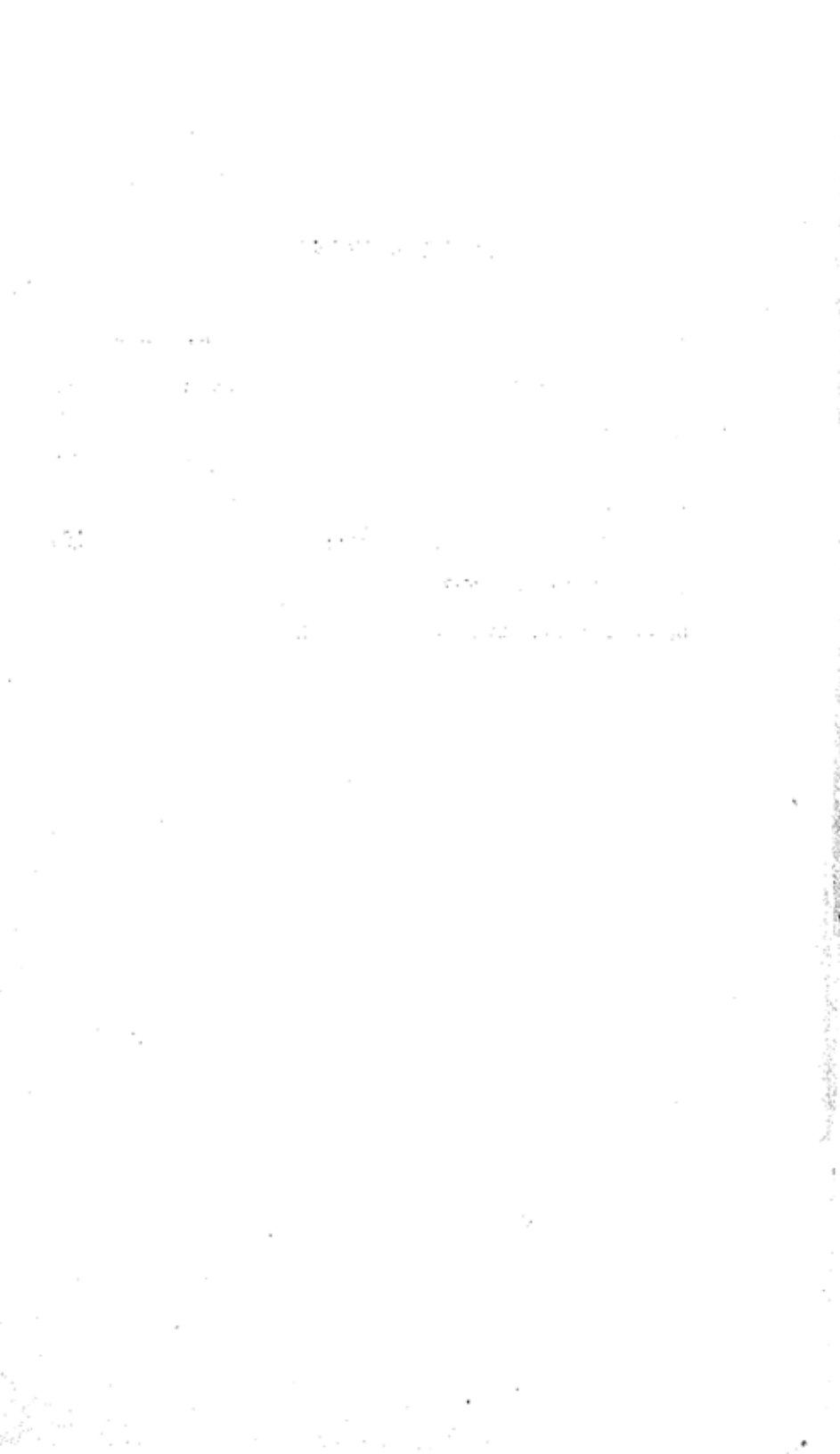
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## PREFACE

This work is an attempt to illustrate the general character of Amritsar, to convey some notion of its tradition and continuity as a city and to indicate the nature of the changes that have made Amritsar what it is. It is rather curious that for the study of larger units—a province or country—the materials are usually more abundant and above all more intimate than those available for smaller areas. Amritsar never enjoyed the status of a metropolis, and therefore could not, like the 17th century Delhi or the 18th century Calcutta, inspire chroniclers to write accounts for the benefit of future historians. For Amritsar's early history, one has naturally to depend on tradition, and for the period immediately after the British annexation, the material available is mostly official. While no historical work on Amritsar has appeared, the series of the District Gazetteers of Amritsar, produced at different periods by officials, who knew their districts well enough, contain valuable information for reference on the life and manners of the people of Amritsar. But a gazetteer is not history precisely for the reason that a gazetteer is concerned more with matters of immediate and local interest, and far less with the complexity of backgrounds and broad highways of general history.

In a sense, this book is a work on local history which is a Cinderella among historical studies in India. One of the problems in local history is to draw a line between what is local and what is general (meaning national). Because of its intense concern with the particular and the concrete, local history is liable to become parochial or general for want of adequate material. Both local and general history are complementary to each other and there are no border-lines between them, though their relative importance would depend on the extent to which one contributes to the elucidation of the other.

Any study of Amritsar would be incomplete without some mention of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. In authoritative official Reports and recent works like Rupert Furneaux's 'Massacre at Amritsar' and Arthur Swinson's 'Six Minutes to Sunset', the familiar story of General Dyer and his actions has often been skilfully told. The victims have been mourned and pitied and

their heroism admired. Here it is intended to describe how the tempo of the whole movement gained momentum in successive stages and how it had a profound impact on subsequent events. In the chapter on 'People' there are judgements open to question which are inevitable in a work of this nature.

The Municipal Committee, Amritsar entrusted me with the task of writing a book on the history of Amritsar. They wanted the work to be authentic as a historical study, and the rest, they left to my discretion. I am grateful, first of all, to the Municipality both for giving me complete freedom in the preparation of this work, and a free access to their records. My thanks are also due to Shri Kulwant Singh, Administrator, Municipal Committee, Amritsar and to Shri H. R. Khanna, the present Executive Officer, Municipal Committee and his predecessor, Shri V. P. Dubey, for expediting the publication of the book.

Among a number of persons connected with Amritsar who helped me in many ways, I should like to mention, in particular, the late Shrimati Rattan Devi, the late Shrimati Attar Kaur, Mahasha Rattan Chand (alias Ratto), Sardar Maharaj Chand, Col. Sir Buta Singh and, above all, the late Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, who despite his failing health in his last days, afforded me opportunities to listen to his first-hand vivid recollections of the eventful years 1919-1922 in which he so prominently figured. For offering me facilities to use their material, I am indebted to the following : the Director, National Archives of India, New Delhi; the Librarian, National Library, Calcutta; the Librarian, Khalsa College Amritsar; the Manager, Darbar Sahib Committee, Amritsar, Shri N. M. Ketkar, the Librarian, Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi and Shri K. S. Dalal, the Librarian, Kurukshetra University Library. I must acknowledge the assistance by Shri J. K. Khanna in the preparation of the index. I owe much for their comments and criticisms to my father and to Professor M. Mujeeb, Sir Penderel Moon, Dr. Vikas Mishra, Shri R.N. Rihan and Shri O. P. Mahajan, and I thank them. I thank also Miss Mira Seth for her help and advice. And finally, I am grateful to my wife for her sustained interest and unfailing assistance in this work.

## CHAPTER I

# HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

### I THE SIKH GURUS AND AMRITSAR

As contrasted with other cities like Varanasi and Delhi, what is striking about Amritsar is not its antiquity but its rapid and sustained transformation into a modern city, its special and warm flavour, its verve and dynamism. Its origin is steeped in the faith of Nanak, and from a tiny seed it has grown into a bustling and overcrowded city. It was not founded as an administrative or a military centre. Its site was chosen for religious purposes, but it was in the latter half of the eighteenth century that it acquired prominence by the events which occurred in its neighbourhood. One is surprised at the changes which have taken place there, and yet more surprised at the way the place has remained the same. Originally Amritsar occupied a small portion of the area on which it now stands, but round the temple, that has formed throughout the nucleus of the city, sprang up buildings and narrow streets thus adding to its length and breadth. From its inception, Amritsar has been regarded as a place of pilgrimage due to the existence of the holy tank which has attracted pilgrims from almost every part of India to pay their homage.

Amritsar has remained for over a century the first mart in the Punjab and the commercial emporium of Northern India. Its prosperity did not depend on the agricultural district in its immediate vicinity, but primarily on its commerce. Its name recalls the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh where a large number of people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion laid down their lives. In 1947 it presented a gloomy picture of bitter communal fighting between Hindus and Muslims. With the partition of the country and the creation of Chandigarh as the capital of Punjab, Amritsar lies sulking near the border, but still thrives due to its initiative and resilience and for that remarkable spirit, forbearance and courage which accepts the reality of a situation. To the nationalist, it is a place of inspiration and memory, to the religious, of pilgrimage

and reverence for the past; and to the business-minded, still quite a flourishing market. It is to the Sikh what Rome is to the Roman Catholic; what Mecca is to the Mohammedan, and what Gaya is to the Buddhist. It has been throughout its short, but eventful history, the scene of splendid pageantry, of thrilling escapes, and of memorable deeds.

Our story centres round a city lying in the heart of pre-Partition Punjab, in a vast undulating plain which has lain open to each successive wave of marauders whether Assyrian, Scythian, Persian, Greek, Mohammedan, Mughal, Afghan or Ghakkar and has remained bounded for centuries by the snowy ranges of the Himalayas. Its natural irrigational advantages are considerable and are supplemented idly in summer and profitably in winter by water courses which preserve the verdure of the land and enhance its productive capacities. Amritsar situated  $31^{\circ}.38'N.$  and  $74^{\circ}.53'E$  lies between the Beas and Ravi rivers, known as the Bari Doab, and is separated from the hills by a part of the District Gurdaspur; to the south-west 33 miles further down the Doab is the city of Lahore, which had its influence on the growth and changing fortunes of Amritsar, a point at which many metalled roads of the district meet, and through which ran up to 1947 the main line of the North Western Railways from Peshawar to Delhi and the Grand Trunk road. The city of Amritsar covers an area of 13.00 square miles. In pre-Partition days, it was the capital of the Manjha—mid upland country of the Sikh Commonwealth, a tract lying east and south of Lahore, and which includes the holy city of Amritsar. From the junction at Amritsar, the Pathankot line branches off to the north and connects it by road with Jammu, the winter capital of Kashmir. The tract comprising the city is accessible in all parts, is fertile and eminently favourable for the development of the physical frame of man. Owing to the proximity to the hills and the prevalence of canal irrigation, the hot season is temperate compared with that of Lahore. Summer ends with September and hoar-frost is common in January and February. The rainfall is fairly constant.

The origin of the city of Amritsar lies hidden in the mists of time due to the scanty evidence available on its early history. On the origin of the city, the generally accepted view among historians

is based on the Amritsar District Gazetteers<sup>1</sup>, the authoritative works of reference on local history. In dealing with the city of Amritsar, they state that the site where Amritsar now stands was granted by Akbar in 1577<sup>2</sup> to the fourth Guru, Ram Dass (1574-1581)<sup>3</sup> who dug a pool which subsequently acquired a reputation for sanctity. Consequently thus grew up a small town known at first as Ramdasapur or *Guru Ka Chak*, and later as the pool improved and formed into a tank, as Amritsar signifying 'pool of immortality'. Another plausible explanation is that the city was named after the third Guru, Amar Dass (1552-1574) but in that case the original form of the name would be Amarsar (Tank of Amar Dass) which it was not. The District Gazetteer of 1914 takes the story of the city further back to the times of Guru Nanak who is said to have visited the small natural pool of water. John Malcolm does not ascribe the foundation of the city to Guru Ram Dass but thinks that it was a very ancient town, known formerly under the *Chak* but he does not give any evidence to support his contention<sup>4</sup>. The details given in the District Gazetteers do not present a coherent picture, the story is there but the explanation is not. Perhaps binding the strands together instead of laying them out separately would portray an adequate picture.

The site where Amritsar is now situated formed a part of the *Subah* of Lahore which was ruled by the Mughal Government. Akbar visited Lahore a great many times especially during 1582-1598 when it became the chief headquarters of Mughal Government. Tradition suggests that on one of his visits, he heard favourable accounts of the saintliness of Guru Amar Dass<sup>5</sup> and pressed on

1 The first Gazetteer of the Amritsar district was published in 1883-84 and was almost entirely based on a draft Gazetteer compiled by F. Cunningham in 1870 and on H. Davies' Settlement Report of the district in 1856. A second edition was prepared in 1893 by J.A. Grant, Settlement officer, when practically the whole of the earlier volume was rewritten. Grant's volume was in turn brought up to date in 1914 by H.D. Craik, Settlement officer. The latest Gazetteer of the Amritsar district was published by A. Macfarquhar in 1947.

2 H.D. Craik, Amritsar District Gazetteer (1914), p. I, See the Imperial Gazetteer of India (Provincial Series), Punjab, Vol. II, 1908, p. 53.

3 The years shown against the names of the Gurus indicate the duration of their apostolical succession.

4 Lieutenant Col. John Malcolm, Sketch of the Sikhs, p. 29.

5 M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. II, p. 97.

him as gesture of goodwill, the acceptance of several villages which the Guru declined. People had complained to Akbar that Guru Amar Dass had outraged the existing Hindu customs, but the Emperor found on inquiry that the tenets of the Guru really embodied the highest and the purest form of humanity. Eventually the Emperor is said to have granted 500 *bighas* of land to his daughter, Bibi Bhani which her husband Jetha, the future Guru Ram Dass, acquired and which became known as *Guru Chak*. A piece of land detached and given to *faqir* would naturally be known as *Chak Guru* or *Guru Chak*. In Brown's map, prepared about 1787, it still bore that name as well as the modern one of Amritsar<sup>1</sup>. It is believed also that Guru Ram Dass purchased that portion of land on payment of Rs. 700 from the *Zamindars* of Tung<sup>2</sup> (a village close to the Sacred Heart School) who owned the land. According to Macauliffe, Guru Amar Dass exhorted<sup>3</sup> Jetha to concentrate on the excavation of the tank on account of its healing properties. Guru Ram Das received a parting injunction to make a supreme place of pilgrimage at Amritsar and he spent several months there excavating the tank as ordered by Guru Amar Dass<sup>4</sup>. Macauliffe suggests that the removal of the earth had been effected under Guru Ram Dass but the task of making the masonry side walls and floor fell to Arjan, the fifth Guru. By asking a Muslim *Pir*, Mian Mir of Lahore, who was his friend and admirer to lay the foundation stone of the temple, Guru Arjan re-emphasised the beliefs and ideals of Nanak. Macauliffe suggests the year 1576<sup>5</sup> A.D. as the date of the foundation of the sacred reservoir, and George Forster holds the view that the town of Amritsar was founded by Guru Ram Dass about the year 1581<sup>6</sup>. In view of the lack of concrete primary evidence on the subject and general disagreement among historians, it would not be possible to fix a precise date for the foundation of the city of Amritsar, though it is clear that Amritsar was founded in the latter half of the 16th century during the reign of Akbar when Guru Amar Dass initiated

1 W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 75.

2 *The Gazetteer of the Amritsar District* (1883-84), p. 61.

3 Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, p. 141.

4 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 258.

5 M. Macauliffe, 'The Rise of Amritsar and the Alterations of Sikh Religion, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XLIII (1881), p. 60.

6 George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. 1, p. 258.

the idea of excavating the tank which Guru Ram Dass carried<sup>1</sup> out about 1576. Guru Ram Dass induced his followers to join in the work under Bhai Buddha's superintendence and employed labourers to assist him<sup>2</sup>. Bhai Bhagtu and Bahilo are specially mentioned for their unremitting labour in the task of constructing the temple. Bhai Salo, a devotee of Guru Ram Dass, with the efforts of friends and influential relations, like Bhais Chander Bhan and Rup Ram, brought together the people of all trades from neighbouring villages and had them settled in Guru Ka Chak<sup>3</sup>. The hut in which the Guru sheltered himself was enlarged for his residence and subsequently became the residence of Guru Hargobind, which is now known as *Guru Ka Mahal*, situated near the *Guru Ka Bazar*. While the tank was being excavated, dwellings arose in the vicinity for the accommodation of the Guru's followers, visitors and workmen<sup>4</sup>.

Places of religious importance tend to encourage trade and so the pilgrims who visited the temple naturally bought and sold goods and thus there developed the small beginnings of a market. Around the tank were built small temples and the huts of *faqirs* and baths and a number of villas. Accompanied by followers, the Guru would often come to this new place from Govindwal and stay there for some time. Thus a beautiful town was built which was first called Ramdaspur<sup>5</sup> (the city of Ram Dass) and finally Amritsar as it is now known. The Guru gained much popularity and influence among the *Zamindars* and from henceforth the Guru and his followers had a place of worship, conveniently situated both from the point of view of distance and fertility of soil. Succeeding Gurus added to the wealth, grandeur, and the religious character of Ramdaspur. For long the city retained the name of its founder, until the lapse of historical memory and the growing fame of the sacred tank led to the bestowal of the name Amritsar on what became the 'most populous and opulent city of the land of the five rivers.'

Guru Arjan (1581-1606), a man of name and wealth, who succeeded his father Guru Ram Dass in 1581, resided mostly at

1 Var Bhai Gurdas, p. 47.

2 Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religions*, Vol. II, p. 271.

3 Jagjit Singh, *Temple of Spirituality*, p. 19.

4 Macauliffe, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 276.

5 Ramdaspur or Rampur furnishes the additional proof that Guru Ram Dass completed the work he had begun under his predecessor.



Amritsar and made it the headquarters of his following. The construction of the temple was completed in the time of Guru Arjan about 1601. With great assiduity Guru Arjan collected together the hymns and sayings of his predecessors, as well as the choicest literary productions of other Hindu and Muslim religious reformers, to which he added his own inspired compositions, and produced that remarkable book, the *Adi Granth*, which became the sacred book of the Sikhs. He appointed Baba Buddha as the first *Granthi*. The *Granth* was placed in the temple in 1604, and recited each day to the large number of people, who came to bathe in the tank, to offer prayers, and to partake of the *darshan* of the Guru. With what faith, with what simplicity, and, with what reverence, they came to the sacred place! Hymns were sung in praise of God by a band of musicians who earned the gratitude of many listeners.

Guru Arjan's followers assisted him in the excavation of the tank but money was needed to pay to the labourers and to maintain the Guru's kitchen. Bhai Buddha and the foremost Sikhs represented to the Guru that further funds were necessary. Guru Arjan reduced to a fixed scale the previously irregular offerings of his adherents and despatched his agents called *Masands* far and wide to receive their contributions<sup>1</sup>. His followers combined mercantile transactions with religion and took interest in banking, carpentry and engineering. In imitation of the Hindu festival at Hardwar, at the beginning of the month of *Baisakh*, Guru Arjan established the *Baisakhi* festival at Amritsar, and utilized the *Diwali* festival as a secular and religious gathering of the Sikhs. Apart from commercial interests, he realized the necessity of actively uniting the Sikhs and stimulated them to observe their religion. Thus he gave a concrete and coherent form to the religion of the Sikhs. People charged Guru Arjan with libel and calumny against their religion, but Akbar was impressed by the exemplary piety of the Guru and did not encourage his adversaries. The attitude of Akbar towards the Guru was one of sympathetic understanding which was reversed in Jahangir's time. After the death of Akbar, Guru Arjan blessed the distressed rebel prince, Khusro. His enemies made the

1 M. Macauliffe, 'The Rise of Amritsar', *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XLIII, (1881), p. 60.

most of it, and represented it as treacherous conduct to the Emperor, who was first of all inclined to take a lenient view, but later on was influenced by the Guru's enemies, especially Chandu Shah, who condemned the Guru as a man of dangerous ambition. Jahangir was perturbed over the growing popularity of the Guru and decided to teach him a lesson. Consequently, the Guru was fined, imprisoned, and sentenced to death, and his property confiscated. The whole affair was motivated primarily by political reasons<sup>1</sup>. But Jahangir never showed any hostility towards the temple. He was prejudiced against Sikhism but he refrained from religious persecution<sup>2</sup>.

The followers of the Guru were deeply embittered by the thought of Guru Arjan's death and they were ready to pay off the fine imposed on the Guru. But Guru Arjan would not yield a penny and his heroic death was bound to arouse resentment in the minds of his followers against their rulers. The next heir, Guru Hargobind, (1606-1645), organised a military system and resorted to arms with the object of punishing his enemies. It is believed that either he secured Chandu Shah's condemnation by the Emperor or his removal to Amritsar, where he was dragged through the streets with a rope round his feet and made to sit on heated frying pans and hot sand. This was done to wreak vengeance on Chandu Shah for his cruel treatment of Guru Arjan. Guru Hargobind, then a small child of eight, used to play on a mound nearby which was later used as a *thara* or raised platform where the Sikhs began to assemble together for holding discussions. Guru Hargobind laid the foundation in 1607 of the *Akal Takht*, the throne of the Gurus, built of solid masonry—the place where he had been installed as Guru by putting a mark on his forehead. Assemblies began to gather round this throne where orders from the Guru were proclaimed. They were called *Hukamnamas* while fines and punishments were also levied by the Guru in the name of the *Panth*. Seated on the *Akal Takht Bungah*, he told Bhai Buddha that henceforth he would wear two swords, one of *Miri*, the other of *Piri*, i.e.

1 Beni Prasad, History of Jahangir, p. 149.

2 Tazak-i-Jahangir, p. 34.

'For many a year the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this false traffic, or that he should be brought within the fold of Islam.'

temporal as well as spiritual leadership. He used to preach to his congregation and occasionally go on shooting excursions. When not occupied with preaching or prayer, he generally sat in the open air, and the places, where he mostly sat, are now called Lohgarh and Chaurasti Atari. During the Guru's absence, Bhai Buddha organised a nightly sacred concert to be sung round the tank of Amritsar. While on a journey towards Delhi in 1612, Guru Hargobind said, 'The Hari Mandir is specially devoted to God's service wherefore it should ever be respected. It should never be defiled with any impurity of the human body. No gambling, wine drinking, light behaviour with women or slander should be allowed therein. No one should steal, utter a falsehood, smoke tobacco or contrive litigation in its precincts.' The fiscal policy of Guru Arjan and the military system of Guru Hargobind had imparted a distinct identity to the Sikhs. Guru Hargobind's military career extended over several years. Lohgarh, or the strong fortress, outside the city, was a platform where the Guru often held his court in the afternoon. He had a high wall built round it, and prepared it for defence, though it could not withstand the might of the Imperial host. When the Mughal army, 15,000 strong attacked Amritsar in 1628, the Guru offered some resistance but, thinking discretion to be the better part of valour, finally withdrew to his hill retreats.

Guru Har Rai (1645-1661) and Guru Harikishan (1661-1664), were connected more with Hoshiarpur District than with Amritsar. Because of their travels and political activities, neither Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) nor Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708), found time to settle down at Amritsar. It is said<sup>1</sup> that Guru Tegh Bahadur went to Amritsar to bathe in the sacred tank and to see the temple of Guru Ram Dass. He bathed, but the ministrants of the temple closed the doors of the Hari Mandir against him. He saluted it from without and rested on a spot where a stone-platform was later built and dedicated to him. He said that those who had entered the temple solely for the collection of offerings were 'rotten within'<sup>2</sup>. The Guru then sat near the spot (which is now a part of the cattle market), on which is erected a resting place in

1 Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 336.

2 'Anter-Sarya' was the actual expression used.

his honour. After the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was seized and beheaded at Delhi at the orders of Emperor Aurungzeb, the complexion of events in Sikh history changed. Inspired by a deep sense of injury, which they had suffered at the hands of the Muslims, Guru Gobind Singh's followers began to consolidate their position. The political necessities of the time awakened amongst them a feeling of solidarity. Besides the simplicity, meekness and humility which had formed the core of Nanak's teachings, a new spirit of discipline, of valour and zeal, was infused among the Sikhs by the example and teachings of Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. During the course of the seventeenth century, Sikhism which sprang up originally as a pacific cult, became a militant creed under the political tyranny of Muslim rulers. The change was not spasmodic but came about slowly until Guru Hargobind substituted zeal in the cause for saintliness of life as the price of salvation. This principle was adopted by his followers, especially by the last Guru, Gobind Singh who sharpened his sword by converting the Sikhs into a militant community and ordained the observance of definite rules of conduct. During the years of resistance first by Guru Gobind Singh and then by his chosen disciple, Banda, the Hari Mandir remained a source of inspiration. Guru Gobind Singh had first conceived the idea of forming the Sikhs into a religious and military Commonwealth, and as Mountstuart Elphinstone remarks, he 'executed his design with the systematic spirit of a Grecian lawgiver'<sup>1</sup>. He gave the form of a federative republic to the Commonwealth of the Sikhs<sup>2</sup>.

In his 'Sketch of the Sikhs'<sup>3</sup>, Sir John Malcolm has given a vivid description of the *Gurmatta*, its aims, functions and activities. According to him, Guru Gobind Singh instituted the *Gurmatta* or the 'State Council' which met year by year at least once at Amritsar<sup>4</sup>. *Gurmatta* denoted that in conformity with Gobind's injunction, those who assembled sought wisdom and unanimity of Council in a solemn manner from their teacher and the book of his word. To this Council of Amritsar were admitted Sikhs of all

1 Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India*, p. 678.

2 Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 52.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

denominations, especially the Sikh chiefs and leaders, who were given an opportunity of expressing their opinion on political matters as a federative republic and thus eventually were admitted to a personal share in the government. Those who attended were expected to sacrifice their personal feelings and interests to the good of the *Khalsa*. When the chiefs and principal leaders took their seats, the holy books were placed before them and they bent low their heads in a spirit of utter humility and reverence and with the customary exclamations 'Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa', 'Wah Guru ji ki Fateh'<sup>1</sup>. Pudding made of flour, butter and sugar called *Karah Parshad* was placed upon the sacred volumes which were covered with cloth. Salutations were made to the holy pudding which was distributed in commemoration of the injunction of Nanak; the members then rose and prayed aloud and the musicians recited the hymns. The Akalis, when the prayers were finished, desired the Council to be seated. The chiefs then drew close and said to each other: 'The sacred *Granth* is betwixt us, let us swear by our Scripture to forget all internal disputes and to be united'. They then proceeded to consider the impending dangers and decided on war or peace, forming alliances, detaching parties on expeditions and selecting generals who were to lead their armies against the common enemy. The *Gurmatta*, 'the grand convention', represented thus the will of the community and the sanction behind it was religious. Malcolm's explanation of the term *Gurmatta* as State Council is not accurate. In reality *Gurmatta* was not an assembly of Sikhs but a resolution passed in an assembly of Sikhs in the presence of the Sacred Book. A *matta* literally means an opinion or a resolution, and it is called a *Gurmatta* or a resolution endorsed by the Guru. The meeting of the entire Sikh community in that case was called the *Sarbat Khalsa* (the grand diet of the Confederation) and the decisions of the *Sarbat Khalsa* were embodied in the form of resolutions or *Gurmatta*. Guru Gobind Singh held the first *Gurmatta* and according to Malcolm, the latest was called in 1805 when the British army pursued Jaswant Rao Holkar to the border of the Punjab<sup>2</sup>. At Amritsar, which had for long remained the religious seat of the Sikhs, considerable interest now

1 Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 52 ff. 119-21.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

began to be evinced in political affairs, and arms were collected to train followers in the austerities of military discipline.

## II MUGHAL DISINTEGRATION—THE AFGHAN MENACE

Out of the political disorder and confusion, resulting from the weakness of the Central power after the death of Aurangzeb, and the repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, which created unrest and turmoil in the Punjab, the Sikhs emerged gradually as a power to be reckoned with. Bahadur Shah had been induced to remove his capital from Delhi to Lahore. Hearing of large scale devastations brought about by the Sikhs in the Punjab, he issued orders to Hindu officials to shave off their heads and beards lest they should be mistaken for Sikhs. The Imperial forces attacked the Lohgarh fort. The siege continued for a long time, and cut off from food supplies, the Sikhs were driven to eat their horses and other animals. Finally Gulab Singh offered to sacrifice his life by impersonating Banda, whilst the real Banda escaped through the Imperial lines to the hills. Gulab Singh was captured the next day.

The death of Bahadur Shah in February 1712 was followed by the usual struggle for sovereignty among his four sons. Eventually in 1712 Jahandar Shah became the ruler for a short time, but was later defeated and put to death by his nephew, Muhammad Farukhsiyar in January 1713 who in turn ascended the throne. Farukhsiyar ordered Abdis Samad Khan, the Subahdar of Punjab, to march against the Sikhs, who were overwhelmed and forced to submit unconditionally. A large number of prisoners were placed in fetters and brought to grace the triumphal entry into Delhi on March 10, 1716<sup>1</sup>. From March 15, 1716, one hundred men were executed every day<sup>2</sup> for a week. On June 19, 1716, Banda and his remaining followers were led to execution. After the death of Banda, an active persecution was kept up against the Sikhs, whose losses had been great and depressing. All who could be seized had to suffer death, or to renounce their faith. In 1725 the relations between the *Khalsa*

1 William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 315-6.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 317.

and the followers of Banda had become strained and it was only through the good offices of Bhai Man Singh that a civil war was prevented. On the basis of the lottery which decided the whole issue, the temple was restored to the Khalsa and the Bandais were expelled.

Abdul Samad's son, Zakariya Khan Bhadur<sup>1</sup> was appointed in 1739 as the Governor of Lahore and was given the charge of Multan. He took measures for the repopulation of the towns and villages which had been ravaged by the Sikhs, and the Punjab was at peace for a short time. In 1733 efforts were renewed to crush the power of Sikhs by concessions and bribes. Khan Bahadur recommended to the Government of Delhi the grant of a *jagir* and title to the Sikhs. His suggestion was appreciated and a *jagir* of Rs. 100,000 and the title of *Nawab* for their leader was sent to their representative at Amritsar. The offer was first rejected but later on wiser counsel prevailed and the *jagir* was accepted. No one was coming forward to accept the title and the robes of honour; they were tossed about from one person to another. Finally Kapur Singh who was moving the *pankha* in the assembly offered his willingness to be decorated with the title and robes of a Nawab, and for thirty years under his leadership, the Sikh power grew and spread. The Sikhs lived peacefully for some time upon the revenues of the new *jagir*. Kapur Singh started organising the celebrated *Dal Khalsa* or the army of the theocracy of the Sikhs which was divided into two parts at Amritsar, *Buddha Dal* consisting of the older members, and *Taruna Dal* including the younger *Singhs*.

In 1738 one of the most important events that took place in Amritsar was the martyrdom of Mani Singh who had been sent by Guru Gobind Singh's widow to Amritsar to settle disputes between Banda's followers and the *Tatwa Khalsa*, the staunch and original followers of Gobind. Mani Singh was respected as a pious and learned man by the Hindus of Amritsar, who had nothing to do with the Sikh rebels. He looked after the temple, and in 1738 two years before its destruction, he applied to the *Hakim* of Amritsar for holding the *Diwali* fair in Amritsar. As

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1 Zakariya Khan was his name and Khan Bahadur his title.

the matter was of serious import, it was referred to Zakariya Khan. Permission was however given by the authorities on condition that Mani Singh would contribute Rs. 5,000 to the State treasury after the fair. Mani Singh issued invitations to the whole body of the *Khalsa* and the Sikhs started coming to Amritsar in large numbers. His intention was to settle the differences between the Sikhs and the ruling authority. The Governor's sole concern in giving the permission was to allow the Sikhs to assemble at one point and then to deal them a crushing blow. Zakariya Khan sent a detachment of troops to Amritsar under the pretext of maintaining law and order during the coming fair. The Sikhs were frightened by the seemingly encouraging but suspicious move and they turned back. In the circumstances, the fair was not held and the sum of Rs. 5,000 which Mani Singh was expected to pay out of the offerings made at the temple was not paid. This enraged the authorities. Mani Singh was arrested and removed to Lahore where he was asked either to pay the promised amount or to embrace Islam. Mani Singh's admirers raised Rs. 5,000 but it was too late. Mani Singh had already been put to death, his body having been cut to pieces at each joint<sup>1</sup>. This tragic episode supplied a much needed fillip to the Sikh struggle for independence. Another brave act was performed by Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh. The temple at Amritsar was profaned by the Muslim Officers holding *nautch* parties. This could not be tolerated by Sikhs. Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh came from Bikaner in the garb of peasants with bags full of coins as revenue and appeared before Massa Ranghar, the officer-in-charge. Their swords fell on Massa Ranghar and his assistants and the Muslim soldiers were too astonished to offer any resistance. Subsequently these warriors were traced and done to death mercilessly. This happened in 1740. The temple was locked and sentries were posted at the entrance with strict orders not to let in any stranger.

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1 It is stated in *Panth Prakash* by Gian Singh (1923 Edition, pp. 530-5) that Mani Singh had altered the arrangement of the text of the *Adi-Granth*, with a view to compiling the hymns of each Guru separately, an action which was greatly resented by the Sikhs who looked upon this sacred work as a living personality, and they prophesied that Mani Singh's body would be cut into pieces in the same way as he had cut the body of the sacred book.



In 1745 the *jagir* which had been granted to Kapur Singh being considered no longer necessary was confiscated and the *Khalsa* re-embarked on a campaign of rapine and plunder. The political disturbances, which followed in the wake of the frightful invasion of Nadir Shah, and the utter confusion into which the province of Lahore was thrown, provided a favourable opportunity to the Sikhs for organising themselves in ever increasing strength. While passing through the Punjab on his return in 1739, Nadir Shah had inquired of Zakariya Khan if there existed in the Punjab troublesome characters, and he received the reply that vast crowds of 'disorderly Sikhs visited the sacred shrine at Amritsar every six months where they formed their plans'<sup>1</sup>. Nadir Shah then asked where their abode was, to which the Governor replied, 'Their homes are their horses' saddles' meaning thereby that it was difficult to get at them. It is said that Nadir's army was attacked in the rear by the Sikhs<sup>2</sup>. In the forties of the eighteenth century, when stead threatened stead and the batches of mounted soldiers passed through villages and cities, carrying their much coveted booty, the Sikh followers still paid stolen visits to the shrine of their faith at Amritsar, and resorted to the holy tank for consultation. Sikh horsemen were seen rushing towards the holy shrine to pay obeisance; and some among them were often killed in this attempt; and others captured but 'an instance were never known of a Sikh taken in his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith and to avoid the crown of martyrdom'<sup>3</sup>. In due course pilgrimages ceased to be performed in secret or in disguise as earlier in the worst times of persecution.

After the death of Zakariya Khan on July 1, 1745, the civil war between his two sons Yahiya Khan and Hayatullah Khan (surnamed Shah Nawaz Khan<sup>4</sup>) rent the Government of the Punjab into two and made that province too weak to resist a foreign invader. Furthermore Hayatullah sent a letter inviting Ahmad

1 W.L. M' Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 115.

2 Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 86-8, see Irvine, *Later Mughuls*, Vol. II, p. 376.

3 Malcolm, *op. cit.* p. 88.

4 Shah Nawaz was the title conferred on Hayatullah by Nadir Shah whom he accompanied up to Larkhan in Sind on his way back to Persia.

Shah Abdali to come and take the sovereignty of the land<sup>1</sup>. The continued attacks on the Punjab by Ahmad Shah between 1748 and 1768 weakened the administration of the province and exercised a decisive influence in the history of the rise of the Sikh power. The Sikhs were now very hard pressed and they built the mud fort of Ram Rauni afterwards called Ramgarh. When Ahmad Shah was in full flight, pursued desperately by Mir Mannu in 1748, Sikh Sardars like Jassa Singh Kalal (Ahluwalia), a brewer or distiller (by caste), one of the ablest leaders, whom the *Sarbat Khalsa* would invariably nominate as a Commander in all combined undertakings, Hara Singh, Karam Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgrahia, Naja Singh and Charat Singh boldly proclaimed the birth of a new power in the state—the *Dal* of the *Khalsa* or the army of the *Singhs*<sup>2</sup>. When Emperor Muhammad Shah learnt of the defeat of the Abdali invader at Manupur on March 11, 1748, he appointed Mir Mannu under the title of Muin-ul-Mulk, *Subahdar* of Lahore. Muin marched against the Sikhs, captured their fort *Ram Rauni*, the seige of which in those days had engaged some of his best soldiers, dispersed their troops and took measures for the restoration of law and order<sup>3</sup>. Whosoever brought a Sikh's head to Muin received a reward of Rs. 10 for each man slain<sup>4</sup>. After the death of Mir Mannu in 1753, Punjab remained for a time under the capricious regency of Mughlani Begum until it was assailed again by Ahmad Shah. As the peasantry were more and more ruined by their rulers, the number of Sikhs multiplied in proportion. In 1756 Ahmad Shah again attacked the Punjab and left his son Taimur under the tutelage of a chief named Sardar Jahan Khan, as Governor of the Punjab in 1757 who ruled up to April, 1758.

Taimur's first object was to disperse the insurgent Sikhs. Jahan Khan planned to cut off a large body of Sikh rebels who had assembled at Amritsar for a religious bath. In 1757, there occurred the martyrdom of Baba Dip Singh who fought his way through and faced death, near Amritsar, when Jahan Khan brought his large Army. Amritsar was occupied and five Sikh infantrymen who

1 Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 106-9.

2 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 13.

3 J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 86.

4 Sarkar, *op. cit.* p. 241.

were standing on guard before the shrine were slain<sup>1</sup>. The place of worship was defiled and the Sikhs were provoked into assembling in large numbers to fight with their swords. They renewed their attacks on the Punjab, erected their forts and occupied Lahore temporarily under the leadership of Jassa Singh Kalal who assumed the 'sovereignty of the country'. Those Afghans who had been left alive were driven by the Sikhs to Amritsar where they were compelled under blows and whips to clean out all the rubbish with which Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan had defiled their tank<sup>2</sup>. The Marathas captured Lahore in April 1758. Adina Khan was appointed as Governor of Punjab with a promise to pay an annual tribute of seven million rupees a year to the Marathas. Adina Khan sent a strong body of cavalry under Mirza Aziz to destroy the Sikhs wherever they could be traced. A large number of Sikhs took shelter in their mud fort, Ram Rauni. Nand Singh Sanghania was the leader of this body. The Sikhs, being desperate, fought bravely. At last Mir Aziz succeeded one night in making a hole in the wall of the fort. The Sikhs then sallied out and many were killed or taken as prisoners<sup>3</sup>. Emboldened by the news of Bhau's capture of Delhi, the principal Sikh chiefs—Jassa Singh Kalal, Jai Singh Kanahya, Lahna Singh Ramgarhia and Gujar Singh Bhangi assembled at Amritsar on Diwali day (November 7, 1760)<sup>4</sup>. A Council was held and an attack on Lahore was decided on. The chiefs, standing before the sacred book, prayed for success in their expedition. They attacked Lahore and the city was plundered. At this time Amir Muhammad Khan was the Governor of Lahore. The residents submitted and the Sikhs left the city after receiving Rs. 30,000<sup>5</sup>. After their victory against Abid Khan, the Durrani Governor, they assembled at Amritsar, performed ablutions in the sacred tank and perhaps held a meeting of the *Sarbat Khalsa*. Thereafter certain Muslim principalities were ravaged.

Hearing of the Sikh victories, Ahmad Shah again invaded India in 1762 and defeated the Sikhs at Kot Rahira near Ludhiana in February 1762 and their rout is still known as *Ghallu Ghara*

1 Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 48.

2 Dr. H.R. Gupta, *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab*, p. 97.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

4 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 352.

5 N. K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 29.

or great scrimmage in which it is estimated they lost about ten thousand men<sup>1</sup>. The *Baisakhi* festival was approaching and the Shah visited Amritsar where he spent several days in shooting and recreation in the company of his *Omrahs*. He signalled his stay, as was to be expected, by committing atrocities. The temple of *Hari Mandir* at Amritsar was blown up with gunpowder. The sacred reservoir was again choked with rubbish and the ruins of demolished edifices polluted with the blood of cows and bullocks. Numerous pyramids were prepared of the heads of those who had suffered decapitation and the walls of principal mosques which had been desecrated by Sikhs were cleansed with the blood of his infidel enemies<sup>2</sup>. It is believed that while the *Hari Mandir* was being blown up, a flying brick and lime piece hit him on the nose and wounded him. Throughout 1763 Ahmad Shah was kept busy in his own country by rebellion in Khurasan and he could not attend to India. The Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on *Diwali* day (November 4, 1763) and vowed to restore their sacred shrine<sup>3</sup>. They attacked Sarhind and crossed the Jamuna and later captured Lahore in February, 1764<sup>4</sup>.

Again in 1764 the Shah decided to crush the power of Sikhs and marched upon Amritsar with a light army. Qazi Nur Muhammad, a protégé of the Baluch chief, Mir Nasir Khan, says that over thirty Sikhs were in an enclosure (the *Bungah* of *Akal Takht*) when the army of the Shah entered the Sikh temple on December 1, 1764<sup>5</sup>. The names of three other Sikhs, Man Singh, Basant Singh and Nihal Singh of this devoted band have also survived. These warriors of the *Jatha* of Bhai Gurbakh Singh Shahid fearlessly rushed out to fight the Afghans and Baluchis. "They had neither the fear of slaughter nor the dread of death". They grappled with the *Quasis*, shed their own blood and sacrificed their lives for their Guru. The Shah then sent forth his men in search

1 Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 255. Dr. N.K. Sinha accepts Murray's figure of the number of killed as 12,000.

2 A vivid account is given in George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol., 1, pp. 277-8. See Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 356.

3 Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 359.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 360.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 363.

of Sikhs but they were not to be found and the Shah returned to Lahore. The Sikhs celebrated the *Baisakhi* festival in Amritsar in 1765 and decided by *Gurmatta* to take possession of Lahore. They had mastered the upper plains from Karnal to the banks of the Jhelum. The Sikh temple was rebuilt in 1764 and coins were struck for the first time in 1765 with the inscription—that Guru Gobind Singh received from Nanak, 'Festivity (abundance), Sword and Victory without delay'<sup>1</sup>. For the next two years, the Sikhs were not interfered with. In 1767 Ahmad Shah invaded India for the last time. It is said that a band of 120,000 Sikhs assembled at Amritsar to give the Shah a fight. But Abdali was perhaps not in a position to meet them. As soon as he turned back, the Sikhs appeared with all their force. Lahore was occupied as indeed all the open country.

In the eighteenth century, the general situation in the Punjab (including the city of Amritsar, which had a special significance for Sikhs engaged in fighting the Muslims) was one of widespread political instability. Amritsar suffered much at the hands of invaders who struck terror into the heart of the people living there. Thousands of people died as victims of fanatical persecution. Some among them faced death boldly. But almost every year the *Sarbat Khalsa*<sup>2</sup> met at Amritsar on the occasion of *Diwali* with the conviction and belief that the spirit of reverence which the sacred place instilled and the performance of religious duties might wipe out selfishness and create a feeling of brotherhood among the chiefs who assembled there. The bold and heroic resistance

1 It has been suggested that Sikhs struck coins for the first time in 1758 after the expulsion of Timur Shah and Jahan Shah. These coins bore the following inscription, 'Coined by the grace of Khalsaji in the country of Ahmad conquered by Jassa Singh Kalal.' Dr. H.R. Gupta's own date for this first coin is November 1761. (Dr. H.R. Gupta, *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab*, p. 313). On the other hand, Dr. N.K. Sinha admits that it is difficult to deny the fact of coinage but it would be improper to assert that those coins were authorized official issues of the Sikh Commonwealth. Ganesh Das, a later writer, suggests that these coins were struck in 1794 by *Quazis* and *Mullahs* and sent to Ahmad Shah in order to incite him to fall upon the Sikhs for the open insult to his authority. (N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, pp. 54-6).

2 N.K. Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 47,

together with the lack of political stability, which inevitably occurred due to the weakening of Central influence, offered a challenge to the Sikhs, who made desperate efforts to prepare themselves to meet any crisis in the political sphere. Among them, traditional Sikhism was a strong and living faith—a Cromwellian ingredient, in the Sikh struggle.

When the Afghan tornado at last rolled back from our land, we can see in contrast to the devastation, the clear eyes of faith undimmed by persecution or the uncertainty of the times, with wills fashioned like steel, turning all their constructive energies to the task of rebuilding their ruined city and jewel, the *Hari Mandir*. No matter what the future might hold, the temple must be reconstructed—the symbol of their faith. No matter how often it might be pulled down, undismayed they set about its reconstruction. In this era we see them at their most sublime—their resilience in face of defeat, their courage in face of persecution.

### III THE MISLS AND RANJIT SINGH

On the decline of the Mughal Empire, the tract now comprised in the Amritsar district was gradually occupied by the more powerful of the Sikh chiefs, who called the tracts under their jurisdiction after the names of their native villages like Ramgarhia, Ahluwalia and others which had been originally named according to the habits of the people, such as Bhangi from their being addicted to the use of *bhang* or the trades or classes residing principally in them. The possessions of each Sardar was called a *Misl*<sup>1</sup>, a kind of military confederacy, and a chief of a *Misl* was appointed from time to time, by the popular voice of the *Khalsa*. The chiefs built forts and fortresses to safeguard themselves and their property, which were exposed to sudden incursions of the Muslims, and they drew their forces from the hardy Jat peasantry. Every *Misl* acted independently, or in concert as political exigency demanded or inclination suggested and there generally took place an assembly of chiefs called the *Sarbat Khalsa* held twice a year at Amritsar during the *Baisakhi* and *Diwali* festivals where after a dip in the holy tank, matters of common interest, concerted plans and expeditions were freely and fully discussed. The assembly was summoned by

1 An arabic word meaning an equal or alike.

the Akalis. The amount of contributions levied was reported to the assembly and divided among the chiefs in proportion to the number of their troops. They were at the same time obliged to distribute a certain share of this property to their soldiers who on any cause of dissatisfaction made no hesitation in quitting their service and following a more popular leader<sup>1</sup>. Whenever any serious social or religious problem arose, the contending parties were brought before the *Sarbat Khalsa* and asked to swear before the *Granth* and consequently justice was administered. If several chiefs who assembled there determined upon an enterprise, then their army assumed the denomination of *Dal* of the *Khalsa*. The National Council, which was established at Amritsar, looked into the administration of Home and Foreign Affairs, arranged expeditions to avert national danger, and provided opportunities for people to be educated in the doctrines of their religion.

The Sikh sway was firmly established in the Punjab. Between 1767 and 1773, the Sikhs practically extended their power from Saharanpur in the East to Attock in the West, from Multan in the South to Kangra and Jammu in the north. According to the studies of James Rennel (1742-1830), Surveyor General of Bengal—Lahore, Sirhand, Karnal, Hissar, Ludhiana and Multan were the only principle towns in the Punjab by the early 18th century, and he regarded Lahore as 'Capital of the Sikh, a new power,' Attock and Multan as the foundation on which the scale and relative parts of the whole Punjab depended<sup>2</sup>. From this it would appear that Amritsar did not gain sufficient importance as to merit special mention.

In those days Amritsar was no more than a large village, chiefly a sacred place for Sikhs who used to organise their political activities there. Later Mohammedan rulers came to regard Amritsar as a place for hatching conspiracies against their rule, and naturally they came here to destroy vestiges of Sikh influence by attacking and abusing the place of their faith. All this naturally struck terror into the hearts of the residents who

1 George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 287.

2 James Rennell, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindustan or the Mughal Empire*, p. 78.

heaved a sigh of relief when the invaders retreated after perpetrating loot and destruction on the place. Simultaneously the chiefs of different *Misls* had gained influence over the city in separate small principalities or quarters called *Katras* where they exercised their jurisdiction and executed civic administration. Assisted by Missar Chajju Mal, Sada Kaur ruled over Katra Kanahya ; Sardar Jaimal Singh managed Katra Jaimal Singh and Sardar Bhag Singh Bagha, a Sanskrit and Persian scholar and a cannon maker, was in charge of Katra Bhaggian. Katra Ramgarhian and Katra Ahluwalian were held by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nawab Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the founder of Ahluwalia *Misl* and of Kapurthala State. These chiefs built houses, *bungahs* round the temple, roads, forts and bazars. They brought with them wealth and workmen and it was on their plan that Ranjit Singh largely built the town.

The Sardars, belonging to different *Misls*, quarrelled amongst themselves quite often, and showed distrust of each other's power and indulged not infrequently in intrigue but when these chiefs met at the holy tank at Amritsar to discuss their plan for fighting against the Mohammedan rulers, they showed forbearance and goodwill to each other and worked in unision. They sat and listened to the expounding of the *Granth* in the holy temple. The musicians then played the martial and secular tunes for the diversion of the assembly. Each sardar had a separate dwelling place and, in certain cases, a fort, with a bazar attached from which he supplied his cohorts and retainers with food and other necessities of life. The frequent visits of the chiefs, the existence of their temporary places of residence and constant flow of numerous pilgrims increased the importance of the city, where resplendent dresses, spirited horses, a lavish display of power contrasted with the simplicity and austerity of pilgrims on their way to pay homage. Conflicts between retainers belonging to different chiefs and blockades of carriages, became a common sight for the people living there. The Akalis—a band of enthusiasts—acted as the armed guardians of the Amritsar temple.

Not only did these powerful chiefs—the Bhangis, the Ramgarhies, the Ahluwalias, the Kanahyas and the Majithas lay out



roads, and construct buildings and make liberal contributions to the temple, but their descendents, who formed a kind of aristocracy also continued to render service to the city in various forms. Jassa Singh Kalal (Ahluwalia) laid the foundation of the Ahluwalia Bazar (named after his village Ahlu), which has enjoyed an unquestioned and sustained reputation as a trading centre. He helped to a large extent in April 1764 in the restoration of the *Hari Mandir* which Ahmad Shah Abdali had defiled with the blood of 'sacred cows'. Jassa Singh, a man of saintly and generous disposition, became one of the greatest Sikh chiefs, who first imparted a vein of royalty to the character of the *Khalsa*. He died at Amritsar in 1783 at the age of 65 and a monument was erected to his memory in Dera Baba Atal, in the Golden Temple.

The Bhangi Misl, the members of which were much addicted to the use of *bhang*, an intoxicating decoction prepared from the hemp leaves, was the wealthiest of the *Misls* and was largely responsible for the enlargement of the town of Amritsar. In 1772 Jhanda Singh went to Amritsar and started building a brick fort<sup>1</sup> which came to be known as the Bhangi fort<sup>2</sup>, situated near Loon Mandi and he also laid out fine bazars. He recovered the *Zam-Zama* or the Bhangi gun from the Chattah chiefs of Ramnagar and sent it to Amritsar where it remained in the Bhangi fort till 1802. The *Zam-Zama* gun had been assigned to Ranjit Singh's grandfather, Charat Singh as his share of the plunder when Lahore was captured in 1764. Ranjit Singh had a great ambition to possess it; and much later, when he drove the Bhangis out of Amritsar, he seized it. Jhanda Singh was succeeded by his brother, Ganda Singh to the command of the *Misl*, and he gathered together a large number of workmen round him, completed to a great extent the work of improvement which had been initiated by his predecessor, finished and strengthened the Bhangi fort and enlarged the beautiful town with many notable edifices. Golab Singh, the most important of the Bhangi chiefs, also added to the enlargement of the city. But after Golab Singh's death, Gurdit Singh, 10 years old, conducted the affairs through his mother, Mai Sukhan who

1 According to Lepel Griffin's 'The Panjab Chiefs,' this fort was built in 1767.

2 W.L. M'gregor, The History of the Sikhs, p. 123.

offered resistance to Maharaja Ranjit Singh when he attacked Amritsar.

Gujar Singh, another powerful chief of the Bhangi *Misl*, for the defence of the city of Amritsar, laid the foundations of fort Gujar Singh, where now stands the new fort of Govindgarh. Charat Singh Sukarchakia also built a fort to the north of temple, while that of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia lay to the east, and that of the Bhangis to the south. The existence of these forts, in different parts of the city, gives a glimpse into the federal character of the Sikh government before Ranjit Singh's acquisition of the city of Amritsar.

The Ramgarhia *Misl* was closely associated with the city of Amritsar. This *Misl* took its name from Ram Rauni or 'Fortlice of God' at Amritsar, a mud work, which a small party of Sikhs had thrown up during the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and which was converted into Ramgarh by Jassa Singh Thoka, the famous carpenter, who took to the profession of arms and became renowned among the Sikhs as a brave and intrepid warrior. Earlier on the retreat of the Afghans, Nand Singh Sanghani and Jassa Singh had partially fortified it, surrounding a portion with a high mud wall, which they called Ram Rauni. As already noted, Jassa Singh and his companions had offered a brave resistance against Mirza Aziz in 1748 and were compelled to retreat after battering down the walls of Ram Rauni.

Ranjit Singh began to be jealous of the power of the Ramgarhia *Misl* and after Jassa Singh's death in 1803, he feigned the greatest affection for Sardar Jodh Singh. A contract of friendship had been drawn up between him and the Ramgarhia family at Amritsar before the *Granth* in the holy *Darbar* (the Court Divine formerly known as *Hari Mandir*). Ranjit Singh stamped the papers with his open palm dyed with saffron, but he cared little for the keeping of oaths. He went to the Ramgarh fort and also succeeded in capturing it with his artillery. During the ensuing night those in the fort made their escape and fled. He ordered the new fort of Govindgarh to be built on the model of the Ramgarh fort.

At Amritsar a spacious Katra was built by the four Sardars of the Kanahya *Misl*. Jai Singh, the leader of the *Misl*, embellished the city of Amritsar by building in it a spacious Katra. He had employed Missar Chajju Mall (after whose name a lane still exists) in his military command. Missar Chajju Mall was present at the battle of Batala in 1783 when Gurbuksh Singh, son of Sardar Jai Singh, was killed fighting Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Maha Singh Sukarchakia. He was later made the Chaudhri of Katra Kanahya in Amritsar and he reduced the Customs duty, and thus attracted many merchants who settled in this Katra.

Mehtab Kaur, the daughter of Sada Kaur, the widow of Gurubaksh Singh, was betrothed to Ranjit Singh, and thus there was formed an alliance of marriage between the Kanahya and Sukherchakia families. Golab Singh Bhangi and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nizam-ud-Din Khan of Kasur were members of the cabal that was formed to check the influence of Ranjit Singh who had defeated them at Bhasin in 1800, a place between Lahore and Amritsar. This defeat of the Bhangi alliance gave an opportunity to Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakia *Misl* to march against Amritsar, the religious capital of the Punjab and the great Bhangi stronghold. Mai Sukhan, the widow of Golab Singh, had by then gained a firm hold over the city. Gurdit Singh, her son, was a minor and Santokh Singh, her general manager, was not on friendly terms with Shaikh Kamal-ud-Din who was in charge of the *Deori* of the fort. Kamal-ud-Din took advantage of the situations to negotiate with Ranjit Singh. With a house divided against itself, Mai Sukhan could not be expected to resist for long.

During his fourth expedition of 1796-7, Timur Shah's son, Zaman Shah occupied Lahore and the Sikhs fled away but their fort in Amritsar held out. After Shah Zaman's retreat, the Sikhs reoccupied Lahore. The leading citizens of Lahore sent a petition to Ranjit Singh twenty six days after Shah Zaman's retreat to occupy Lahore. In 1799 Ranjit Singh captured Lahore and made it his capital. In December 1802, he was determined upon the reduction of the Bhangi *Misl* that still held power in Amritsar. In his design, he was greatly helped by the Ahluwalia chief, Fateh Singh, with whom he had exchanged turbans before the conquest of

Amritsar, thereby binding himself to an alliance with him. He derived a great deal of assistance from his mother-in-law, Mai Sada Kaur, who accompanied him on this occasion. After his marriage with Sada Kaur's daughter, he used to visit Amritsar cautiously and for fear of his enemies he was accustomed to put up with Missar Chajju from whom he received much assistance in the possession of the city.

In 1802 Ranjit Singh attacked the city of Amritsar at the head of an army consisting of Kanahya, Nakkai and Ahluwalia troops in addition to his own which according to Griffin, Cunningham and Latif was conquered in 1802 but the more reliable account of Sohan Lal, who wrote the diary of Ranjit Singh's camp, shows that Amritsar was conquered in 1805. Mai Sukhan was asked to surrender the fort of Lohgarh and to give up the famous Bhangi gun *Zam-Zama*. When the Maharaja reached Amritsar with his confederate armies, the Rani closed the gates of the town, and mounted the ramparts of the city with heavy ordnance, and offered the invading army a strong resistance. Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia began his operations in front of the bridge gate, and the Maharaja, opposite the Lohgarh gate of the town. At last the gates gave way before the heavy cannonade. The invading troops entered in triumph with the Maharaja at their head, and in a few hours, the Bhangi fort was reduced. The Maharaja had prevented his troops from plundering the holy city of Amritsar out of reverence for the place. The fort of Lohgarh was besieged and taken by assault. The besiegers had succeeded in finding an entrance through a wicket gate, which had been left open to act as an embrasure for an enormous gun. The place was taken in the midst of a storm in the cold month of December. It had rained heavily the whole day, and the dowager Rani, with her infant child, found herself utterly lost, not knowing whither to go. Sardar Jodh Singh gave them asylum. On the recommendation of the Ramgarhia Sardar, Ranjit Singh allowed a small *jagir* for the maintenance of the reduced Bhangi chief, and thus the Bhangi confederacy, which had had such a stronghold over the city of Amritsar, collapsed. Ranjit Singh occupied the fort, and secured by the conquest considerable material of war, including the *Zam-Zama*, and a territory yielding a handsome revenue. The possession of a city, of such commercial

and religious importance, increased his prestige and influence, and he celebrated his victory with a pageant of extraordinary splendour.

Ranjit Singh then entered the holy temple, bowed his head before the *Hari Mandir* and performed his ablutions in the sacred tank. He also increased the stipends of the great Sikh institution and, as was common with him on such occasions of conquest, gave away large sums of money as alms to the poor when he passed through the bazars of the town. At a grand review of his troops, he created a few Sardars and bestowed military honours on others. Some of these Sardars were made honorary commanders of the forces. The families who enjoyed the patronage of the Maharaja formed the aristocracy which maintained its influence in the town for generations to come. Ranjit Singh had appointed Missar Chajju Mall as the Collector of Customs of Amritsar who rendered valuable service to the Maharaja<sup>1</sup>. Chajju Mall was the first person in his family to be connected with the district of Amritsar and his eldest son, Raja Rallia Ram, a scholar of Persian, Sanskrit and Hindi, was Chief of the Customs Department and also the Governor of Jhang. Rallia Ram's more distinguished son, Sahib Dyal continued to follow his father in the Customs Department and in 1847 he received the title of 'Mushir-ud-Dawla Vir Bar' (Adviser and Warrior of the Court) and was created a Raja in 1851<sup>2</sup>. He became a member of the Legislative Council of India in 1864. Sardar Harcharan Dass, the younger brother of Sahib Dyal, was appointed under Sikh Government first as Assistant to his father and then to his brother in the Customs Department. During the Council of Regency (1848-49), he held the office of Adulator of Lahore with the title of 'Rukin-ad-Dawla' (pillar of the state) and in 1868 acted as the Vice President of the Municipal Committee, Amritsar. This public-spirited family from the time of Raja Rallia Ram in particular to its present representative, Sardar Maharaj Chand, has played a vital role in the life of the city by building *sarais*, temples and gardens, by setting up *chabils*, and carrying out assiduously in most cases the work in the Customs Department

1 Lepel Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, Vol. 1, p. 453.

2 Sahib Dyal's descendant, Thakur Ripudaman Singh, formerly a Member of the Legislative Assembly lives in Kishankot which Sahib Dyal had founded.

and by helping the British Government with recruits and money for which service it received appreciations.

Another family associated with Amritsar was that of Sardar Desa Singh Majithia who had been appointed as Governor of Amritsar and the adjoining territory. Desa Singh's son, Lahna Singh known as 'Hashmuddawla' (grandeur of the state) served the the Ordnance Department and controlled the foundaries at Lahore and Amritsar. He was placed in charge of *Darbar Sahib*. A man of literary accomplishments, he showed an extraordinary interest in mechanical knowledge<sup>1</sup>. Among other things, he invented a clock which showed the hour, the day of the month, and the changes of the moon. His son, Dyal Singh Majithia, had been connected with the Indian National Congress since 1888, and was the Chairman of the Reception Committee in 1893 at the Congress Session held at Lahore where he described Congress as the greatest glory of British rule in this country and added, 'We happily live under a constitution whose watchword is freedom and whose main pillar is toleration'<sup>2</sup>. He was also the founder of the Tribune, and the Dyal Singh College, which started functioning after his death, and the Dyal Singh Library, which had some rare books in English and in Oriental languages.

Bhai Surat Singh, who belonged to the Gyani family and settled in Amritsar, was appointed as Manager of the Golden temple. His son, Bhai Sant Singh, who was greatly liked by the Maharaja, wrote a commentary on the *Ramayana*, continued to hold the post of Manager of the Golden Temple, a position which was passed on to the descendants of his family<sup>3</sup>. Pandit Jawala Nand, who was admired for his skill in medicines, and his descendants, in particular, Pandit Dharni Dhar, a well-known physician from Ranjit Singh's time, rendered valuable service to the cause of medicine and education. Dewan Sukhdial, a resident of Amritsar, became the Governor of Multan during Ranjit Singh's reign<sup>4</sup>.

1 H.M. Lawrence, *Some Passage in the life of an Adventurer in the Panjab*, p. 46.

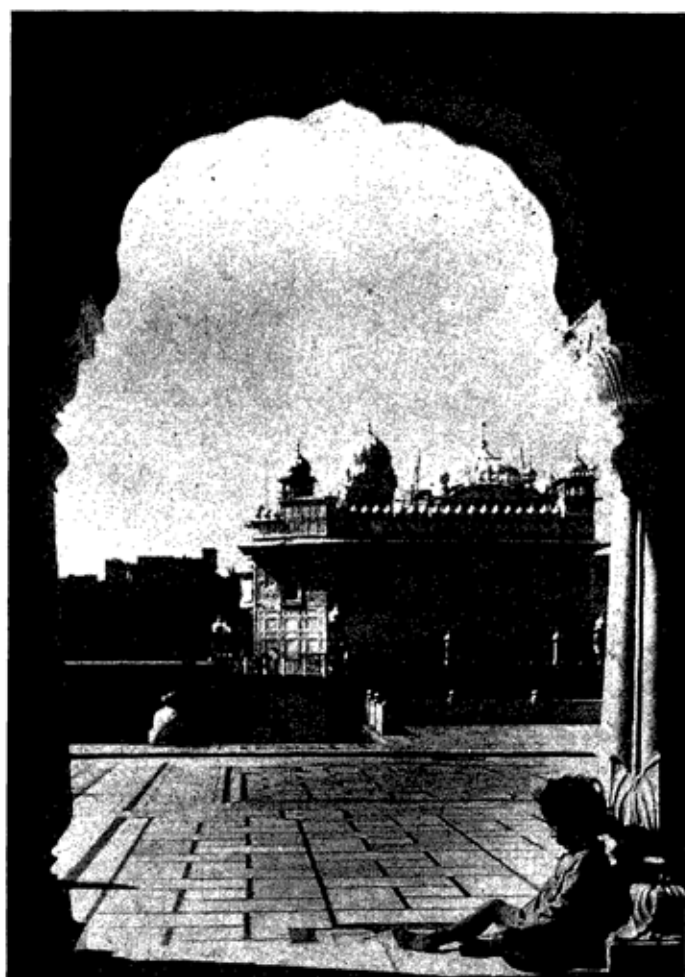
2 B. Pattabhai Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress*, Vol. I, p. 100.

3 Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, Bar-at-Law, a descendant of this family, remained for a long time as one of the oldest members of the Khalsa College Governing body and its Honorary Secretary.

4 Diwan Sukhdial's son, Lala Ghanaya Lal, was a prominent Advocate who for many years was associated with the Municipal Committee, Amritsar.

In 1805 Jaswant Rao Holkar had requested Ranjit Singh for help. General Lake, who was pressing the Maratha chief from every direction, wrote to Ranjit Singh, that if he offered help to Jaswant Rao Holkar, he would be responsible for the consequences. Ranjit Singh was undecisive, and in order to seek the benefit of the advice of some other important Sikh chiefs, he called a meeting the *Sarbat Khalsa*, which Malcolm confuses with *Gurmatta* to decide on the means to be employed to avert the danger created by the presence of the English or the Maratha armies. Most of those present in the meeting, particularly the chiefs ; such as Fateh Singh Ahluwalia advised Ranjit Singh not to spoil his relations with the English, which advice the Maharaja accepted. Some understanding was reached between the English and Holkar on December 24, 1805 about renunciation of his claims north of the Chambal and the restoration of his forts in the Deccan after eighteen months. On January, 1, 1806 General Lake signed an agreement with Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh jointly, which provided that Ranjit Singh would compel Holkar to retire from Amritsar and would not give him any help. Holkar retired from Amritsar after he had failed to win over Ranjit Singh against the English. After 1805, *Sarbat Khalsa* ceased to be a political institution, because Ranjit Singh took its political functions in his own hands : and its religious functions, he allowed to remain undisturbed.

Ranjit Singh interested himself in the improvement and beautification of Amritsar, among other buildings, of the Temple. He followed the Mughal tradition of constructing and renovating forts, of building chaste neat palaces amidst flowing water and fountains, and of laying out gardens. He gave the shrine its marble face and its golden look from which it received the popular name of *Swarna Mandir* (Golden Temple). From a small place, Amritsar was soon raised to a great and opulent city and it witnessed the splendour of Mughal courts. It was a city in his times where the Sikh and Hindu aristocracy lived. It was a city where the Maharaja repaired for rest and recreation, where distinguished visitors like Jaswant Rao Holkar, Charles Metcalfe, Lord Auckland came in his time and where the town was illumined on days of rejoicing over victories such as that of Peshawar. It was a city of the privileged where chiefs rode on their horses ; the priests in the



*The Golden Temple*





temple passed their lives expounding the *Granth* and the poor lived at the mercy of the rich and of pilgrims. In the age of Ranjit Singh, it provided a curious blend of elegance and vulgarity, culture and intrigue. Brawling on the streets alternated with formal dignity in the Rambagh where dignitaries assembled in the presence of Ranjit Singh. Childish squabbles about precedence and privilege went hand in hand with visits to the temple. Arrogance, sycophancy, excitement and display made up a part of the life of the town.

Amritsar looked like an open fortified city to visitors like Emily Eden (1797-1869), Lord Auckland's sister and author of several books, and C. M. Wade who visited the city in the early nineteenth century. The fortifications consisted of an immense rampart of earth at least 25 feet thick and a wide ditch. Beyond the ditch and in front of the twelve gateways built wholly of masonry (of which only the Ram Bagh gate has remained intact at present) large circular revelins were constructed and similar works were projected from intermediary points of the rampart. Captain C. M. Wade (1794-1861), who had a fairly long experience in the East India Company's military and diplomat service, thought that the design was unlike that of 'native forts' which showed substantial European influence that had come with the employment of French officers in Ranjit Singh's service.

Ranjit Singh decided to enclose the town of Amritsar with a wall of masonry and the work was entrusted to Sardars who were each allotted a portion to build. The work was carried out in great vigour in 1823 at an outlay of about Rs. 1,400,000. Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia sent a thousand masons from his territory, and Dal Singh, Desa Singh and other notable *jagirdars*, each furnished a quota of men and material, from their respective *jagirs*. Ranjit Singh strengthened the walls of both the city and fort, substituting brick for mud in the bastion. The whole of the decorative work in gold in the temple was executed under the supervision of Ranjit Singh, his son and grandson, Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh respectively. The total cost of the carving and beautifying places with gold was Rs. 6,411,000 of which the largest contribution was made by the Bhangi Sardars. A *jagir* yielding Rs. 25,000 as annual revenue

was granted to the Golden Temple to meet the needs of the the travellers<sup>1</sup> and the total amount of *jagirs* endowed was worth Rs. 175,000. Ranjit Singh also ordered before his death that the horses and elephants kept for his personal use should be sent to *Darbar Sahib*. Priests, who attended the temple, numbered 500 to 600<sup>2</sup> and thus erected for themselves houses from the contributions made by the visitors. Ranjit Singh built his summer residence in the centre of the garden, surrounded by fountains. His palace in the garden cost Rs. 125,000 and the *jal baradari* or bath, Rs. 20,000. The cost of the whole work completed under the guidance of Aziz-ud-din, Desa Singh and Lahna Singh came to Rs. 214,000. The *kothi*, just outside the garden proper, was built by the Maharaja perhaps for his guards, as the *Deori* of the Ram Bagh gate, a splendid building, had huge iron doors.

The walls of the garden, according to Emily Eden<sup>3</sup>, were all lined with 'splendid soldiers' and people dressed in gorgeous clothes with flowing beards and determined turbans. It had earlier been the sight of an old fort. The garden contained several large and neat buildings which were occupied by Sikh chieftains, when they visited Amritsar for religious purposes and the celebration of the festival of *Dussehra*<sup>4</sup>. Both for visiting the sacred shrine and for change of air, the Maharaja spent a portion of each year at Amritsar. Usually he arrived at Amritsar about the beginning of the periodical rains and took his departure on their cessation or after the festival of *Dussehra*. During his stay at Amritsar, he resided at Ram Bagh which was a little removed from the city. He held his *Durbar* in the Govindgarh fort built in 1805-1809 at the suggestion of Jaswant Rao Holkar for keeping his treasure. He visited the Golden Temple and sometimes went to 'enjoy the sacred sight' of the famous *faqir* Ganga Dhar<sup>5</sup>. The Hansli canal had been in operation in the Punjab since the times of Shahjahan in 1633. During his regime, Ranjit Singh extended it from Lahore to

1 Panjab Akbar, 24 June, 1839.

2 Walter Hamilton, The East India Gazetteer, p. 48.

3 Emily Eden, Up the Country, p. 218.

4 M'gregor, The History of the Sikhs, p. 234.

5 Panjab Government Record Office Publications: Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-17), Govindgarh Fort, Amritsar, p. 31.

Amritsar in order to fill the banks surrounding the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Charles Metcalfe, who went as envoy to the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the object of seeking an alliance in the event of a French invasion has given an intimate and, what is more, a colourful account of some of the incidents that took place during his stay at the city of Amritsar which he arrived on December 10, 1808<sup>1</sup>. He remained at Amritsar for nearly two months. When he met the Maharaja, he found him in the midst of a 'riotous career of self-indulgence'. The entire evening was spent in mirth and pleasure and in general good humour. Metcalfe was impressed by the spirit of cordiality shown to him and he entered into the spirit of the scene with diplomatic address, within the limits of becoming hilarity. A favourite Muslim dancing girl of the Maharaja was believed to have converted a Hindu to the faith of Islam<sup>2</sup>. This news spread like wild fire throughout the city and threw the entire town into a ferment of excitement. The shops of the city were closed. The priests collected together, held hurried consultations, issued their manifestoes and instructed people under the threat of extermination, to keep their shops closed and not to transact any business. As a retaliation against the whole race, the houses of the Muslim dancing girls were plundered by the outraged Hindus. There was thus a conflict between the temporal and spiritual authorities.

Again at the end of February 1809, sepoys in Metcalfe's service celebrated the festival of *Muharram* in honour of the death of Hussain and took out *Tazias* (elegant structures of tinsel work intended to be replicas of the tomb of the martyrs), the display of which gave offence to the priests of the temple. On February 25, a party of Sikhs who were described by Metcalfe as half soldiers, half devotees, marched out of the town with drum beating and colours flying, followed by a surging rabble with the object of attacking the British mission<sup>3</sup> with a fire of musketry. But Ranjit Singh, who was then at Govindgarh, observing the tumult, came

1 John William Kaye, *Life of Lord Metcalfe*, Vol. I, 1854, pp. 380-2.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 288.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 303.

out and shaking his *kummurband* as a signal for peace, proceeded to Metcalfe's tent. First of all Metcalfe endeavoured to persuade the crowd to desist. Ranjit Singh intervened and sent his own men to the protection of the British. The bravery of the little band, which repulsed numerous adversaries, made a deep impression on Ranjit Singh and convinced him that he had to deal with a party superior to himself in every respect<sup>1</sup>, especially in the excellence and discipline of its troops and was all the more determined to adopt the arms and discipline of the British. On April 25, 1809 the treaty of Amritsar was signed between Metcalfe and Ranjit Singh which left Ranjit Singh as master of the tracts he had originally occupied to the south of the Sutlej, but confined his ambition for the future to the north and westward of that river. This treaty has been regarded as the most important event of the period as it lasted until the First Sikh war in 1845 and brought stability to the whole of Punjab.

Ranjit Singh retained unbounded curiosity about the British method of warfare, and in 1812 he rode with the British Commander, Lieut. Col. David Ochterlony (1758-1825) to inspect the drill of the English Company, in the style in which they would behave in the field of battle, and he admired their performance<sup>2</sup>.

In Ranjit Singh's time there were occasions when the peace of the city was disturbed by intrigues and discontents. Phoola Singh (1761-1823), a bachelor and a gallant soldier, who was subsequently killed in the battle of Naushera, created many such scenes. Since 1800, the management of the sacred shrines, particularly *Akal Takht*, was vested in the hands of Akalis under the leadership of Phoola Singh. In 1815 Phoola Singh had arrived with his followers in Amritsar and out of Rs. 1,100 which formed the contributions to *Darbar Sahib* on the Baisakhi day, he claimed from the Akalis of *Darbar Sahib* Rs. 1,000 and a horse. He started fighting for his claims and in the encounter two or three men were killed and wounded on both sides. Mat Singh Nami reported the matter to Ranjit Singh in the Govindgarh Fort who ordered Hakim Imam-ud-Din to settle the dispute. Phoola Singh and his followers

1 Von Leopold Orlich, *Travels in India*, p. 165.

2 Panjab Government Record Office Publications : Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-17), p. 31.

were asked to take only the portion which was fixed as such since a long time<sup>1</sup>. When Metcalfe had visited the city, Phoola Singh had created misgivings about the British intentions in the minds of the people. In May 1820 he had met Mr. William Moorcroft (1765-1825), a traveller and a veterinary surgeon, to whom he complained about the British antipathy towards Sikhs. Tradition has it that Phoola Singh decoyed Ranjit Singh to uncover himself and get flogged on his naked body before *Akal Takht*. Such a distinguished person accepted the punishment awarded and thus the prestige of *Akal Takht* increased among Sikhs who came to gain pardon thereafter.

Sometimes by sheer integrity and duty towards the ruler, unpleasant situations were averted. An occasion arose when the Maharaja lay ill in Ram Bagh in 1825 and ambitious men thought of taking advantage of the situation. One such man, Sardar Budh Singh Sindhanwalia, anticipating anarchy in the event of Maharaja's death, and expecting the Maharaja to be dying, was determined to utilise the opportunity thus presented. He collected his force and went to the fort of Govindgarh where he demanded admittance in the name of the Maharaja. Daya Ram, the *jamadar* of the gate, declined to admit him. Budh Singh returned disappointed, bribed the Keeper of the Seal to draw out an order and affix his seal, and thereafter returned to the fort armed with the affixed order. The *jamadar* showed his presence of mind and declared that at so late an hour, he would not open the gate even to the Maharaja himself. The Sardar returned discomfited and in the morning, Imam-ud-Din, the *kiladar*, reported the matter to the ailing Maharaja who despatched Budh Singh to take over the Peshawar command. There were, however, occasions also when the immoderate use of spirits was the cause of calamity and a soldier named Goojar Singh, who went on a mission to Calcutta, got so heavily drunk that he fell down the bastion of the Amritsar fort and died.

As a result of the territorial expansion since 1799, Ranjit Singh's dominion suffered a huge deficit, and its revenue, amounting to nearly Rs. 3,000,000 per annum, had been mortgaged to Rama

1 Panjab Government Record Office Publications : Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-1817), pp. 37-9, f.127.

Nand, the rich banker of Amritsar, under whose supervision, Missar Beli Ram was transferred to work<sup>1</sup>. When Ranjit Singh had no regular State treasury, his account of revenue receipt and expenditure was kept by Rama Nand to whom the Pind Dadan Khan mines were leased. Ranjit Singh's rule brought about increasing stability to finances and Amritsar used to yield from Customs alone about Rs. 900,000 annually. He entrusted the collection of land revenue, the chief mainstay of his government to Rama Nand and Missar Chajju Mall. Rama Nand left Rs. 800,000 after his death which Ranjit Singh utilised on the improvement of the city of Amritsar. Sada Kaur died in 1832 at Amritsar. The Maharaja went to the deceased Rani's house at Amritsar to condole with the deceased Rani's relations and confiscated Rs. 200,000.

The *Koh-i-noor* which had adorned for long the throne of the Mughals was surrendered to Maharaja Ranjit Singh when he visited his captive, Shah Shuja in person early in June 1813. The *Koh-i-noor* after being acquired was sent for valuation to the jewellers of Amritsar<sup>2</sup> who said that the value of a diamond of such great size and beauty was far beyond all computation. The Maharaja desired them to set the diamond in a handsome and suitable manner and this work was executed in his presence, for he would not allow the precious jewel to be taken out of his sight. After its setting had been completed, Ranjit Singh fixed the *Koh-i-noor* in front of his turban, mounted his elephant and accompanied by Sardars and attendants, paraded up and down the principal streets of the city, so that his subjects might see the *Koh-i-noor*. Thereafter, the Maharaja sent for Tej Singh and fastening the diamond round his waist, desired him to repair with it at once to the fort of Govindgarh and deliver it to Missar Basti Ram, the Maharaja's treasurer. Attended by guards of infantry and cavalry, Tej Singh started on this mission, delivered up the diamond and returned with the Missar's receipt. This

1 Panjab Government Record Office Publications ; Events of the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-1817), p. 31.

2 Mss. Punjab Board Administration : General (4.5.1850), no. 58-60, (National Archives of India, New Delhi), Letter dated 20.4.1850, Major Mac Gregor to P. Melvill. See Baird, J.G.A., Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, p. 395.

diamond was produced and worn by Ranjit Singh on festivals and exhibited to visitors of distinction, especially the British officers when they visited his court and he took the diamond wherever he travelled. In 1826 the Nizam of Hyderabad sent a costly canopy to the Maharaja as a gesture of goodwill for strengthening the bonds of friendship between two rulers. Ranjit Singh offered this to the Golden temple which is placed at present in the *Toshakhana*.

In 1778 A.D. the Nanak Shahi rupee, the symbol of Sikh religion, was struck at Amritsar and passed into circulation. Coins had been struck in 1765 A.D. after the Sikh conquest of Lahore in that year with the inscription, *Deg o Teg o Fateh Nursrat Bedrang, Yافت از Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh*<sup>1</sup>. In Ranjit Singh's time, rupees were struck almost every year at Lahore and Amritsar. Those minted at Amritsar after 1803 A.D. show another sign. A few of these coins had a double branch, which probably represented a peacock's tail. According to Cunningham, Moran, a dancing girl, once laid a wager that, like the Empress Nur Jahan, she would get her name engraved on rupees. In this, she partially succeeded, as her mark only in the form of the tail of the peacock was imprinted on the coins. The word *Mor* means peacock. One feature of *Moran Shahi* (as they were called) rupees is that the first letter *Alif* was left out in the word *Akal*. *Moran Shahi* rupees were afterwards withdrawn owing to the unpopularity of Ranjit Singh with the priests of the Golden Temple.

In 1833 famine engulfed the beautiful valley of Kashmir. The manufacture of shawls came to a standstill and even fairly important firms went bankrupt. The streets of Amritsar and Lahore swarmed with bands of starving Kashmiris who moved about the streets crying for bread. The Maharaja ordered the depository of corn in fort Govindgarh to be opened for their benefit and this way many Kashmiri families, who have long lived in Amritsar, owe their existence to the scarcity which then took place. Khuda Baksh, the *kotwal* of Lahore reported daily the number of persons who had died of starvation.

1 This means that Guru Gobind Singh received from Nanak, Festivity (abundance) Sword and Victory without delay.



When foreign dignitaries visited Amritsar, the Maharaja made lavish arrangements for their welcome. In 1827 a British mission arrived in Amritsar led by Captain C. M. Wade, the Governor General's Agent at Ludhiana. *Faqir* Aziz-ud-Din and Raja Dhyani Singh were despatched to receive the mission on its way to the Court and to conduct it to the Maharaja. On his arrival at Amritsar on May 31, Rs. 5,000 in cash, 500 gold *mohars* and 200 trays of fruits and sweetmeats were offered as *ziyafat* to Captain Wade. The next day, the Maharaja had an interview with the distinguished members of the mission in Ram Bagh. The gifts from the Governor-General were presented to the Maharaja who was delighted to receive them. They comprised two fine horses, one elephant, with a silver *howdah*, a sword set with diamonds, a gun, a revolver, two pearl necklaces and a variety of *pashmina* and *kimkhab* garments. A sum of Rs. 1,100 was given to the bearer of these presents. Next day a review of Sikh troops was held and the guests were taken round the city and shown the Golden Temple. It was a pleasant surprise for them to notice that the Akalis of *Akal Bungah* were not inimical to the foreigners as they had been to Metcalfe when he had visited Amritsar.

The brilliance and the splendour of the Court also attracted C. M. Wade's attention. Rich carpets were spread along the ground. The Sardars, decorated with costly jewels and elegant dresses of yellow silk presented a most picturesque sight. It was impossible not to admire the order and elegance of the whole assembly. On the arrival of Sir Henry Fane (1778-1840), the Commander-in-Chief, the guns of Govindgarh fort fired a royal salute and the walls were enveloped in smoke<sup>1</sup>. The meeting of the two chiefs was the signal for the firing of cannon and musketry resembling that of a continuous peal of thunder. Sir Henry Fane met the Maharaja on March 6, 1837 in Ram Bagh. The Maharaja's elephant was followed by many others, in gorgeous trappings, on which were seated the Sardars of the State, dressed in resplendent robes and presenting to the beholder, a profusion of gold, silver and jewels. The meeting took place just in front of the Maharaja's house, under a canopy formed of beautiful Kashmir shawls, embroidered with silver and supported by silver poles.

1 M'gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, pp. 207-10.

The entire floor was covered with rich Kashmir shawls. The Maharaja was in an inquisitive mood and asked intelligent questions about the composition of British regiments. The presents for His Excellency were brought in and included jewels, other articles of value, and an offering of Rs. 5,000 in money. The Maharaja who had a passion for horses then ordered that his favourite horses, richly caparisoned, be paraded before the distinguished guest which was done and five horses of different kinds were presented to Sir Henry Fane.

On the occasion of the visit of the distinguished visitors to the city, troops were lined up for miles along the route, dressed in clothes of gold, and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's hospitality and confidence were unbounded. When the Maharaja passed through the narrow streets of the city, a large number of people would assemble with a spirit of reverence and call eagerly to the Maharaja and even try to touch him which was easy enough in those streets where the elephants reached to the roofs of the houses. Emily Eden, whose account of her stay at Amritsar shows keen powers of observation, was deeply impressed by the popularity of Maharaja Ranjit Singh among his people. The Maharaja also warned the citizens of Amritsar prior to Lord Auckland's arrival, that he would put to death anybody who maltreated any of the Governor-General's men or as he expressed it, he would 'cut open their stomachs'<sup>1</sup>. The Maharaja visited the temple where he is said to have consulted the oracle about his alliance with the English. An argument sprang up before the entrance to the temple on the subject of the Governor-General removing his shoes. It ended in the Governor-General drawing a pair of dark stockings over his boots and the Sikhs raised no objection. The party were admitted into the temple, where Auckland sat side by side with Ranjit Singh on the same carpet, listening to the lecture on the *Granth*, the Secretaries-General (including Miss Eden) sitting or standing around. Auckland was 'amused' by the sight of the temple which was illuminated for the occasion<sup>2</sup>. Thereafter Ranjit Singh threw open the gates of Govindgarh fort and led the party over the whole of it, pointing out the vaults which contained his treasures (reported to be 12,000,000 sterling).

1 Emily Eden, *Up the Country*, p. 215.

2 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, p. 4.

The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 which relaxed the vigilance of power exposed to his successors the debility of his kingdom and prepared to sustain two wars which left only the alternative of victory or servitude. The state of the Punjab was one of chronic revolution and all real power was in the hands of the Khalsa army. In those days Amritsar was to taste once again the full measure of the internecine strife and calamities, which followed, while the troops marched in haste, in turn setting up and deposing members of the Royal house, and people remembering the good old days of Ranjit Singh who had made Amritsar what it was—a peaceful and prosperous town distinguished for some of its beautiful and impressive edifices.

#### IV. THE BRITISH IN AMRITSAR

After the death of Ranjit Singh, the political condition in the Punjab became critical. Tumult and assassinations followed in quick succession. Anarchy and misrule brought about the rapid collapse of Sikh State and led directly to the First Sikh war which resulted in the defeat of the *Khalsa*. The Sikhs were shorn of some of their territory and the size of the regular army which they might maintain was reduced but they were given one more chance to retain their independence. According to the treaty signed in December, 1846, a Regency Council was set up with Henry Lawrence as its President. This Council which was assisted by a band of able officers like George Lawrence (1811-1879) and John Lawrence (1806-1857), James Abbot (1807-1896), H. B. Edwardes (1819-1868), W. S. Raikes Hodson (1821-1858), John Nicholson (1821-1857) and H. B. Lumsdon (1821-1896) entered upon that wonderful task of introducing reforms. Henry Lawrence took several such measures. He appointed Sardar Lahna Singh as Manager of the Golden Temple which had remained so far under the control of the *Panth* through local *Sangat*. Daily allowances and expenses were to be sanctioned by the Resident before they were spent.

In order to allay the strong fears spreading against the British, Henry Lawrence issued the following proclamation signed on March 24, 1847 :

'The priests of Amritsar having complained of annoyances,

this is to make known to all concerned, that by order of the Governor-General, British subjects are forbidden to enter the temple (called the *Darbar*) or its precincts at Amritsar, or any temple with shoes on. Kine are not to be killed at Amritsar, nor are Sikhs to be molested or in any way to be interfered with. Shoes are to be taken off at the Bhoonga at the corner of the tank and no person is to walk round the tank with his shoes on'.

This order on the brass tablet which is preserved in the *Toshakhana* was issued when Maharaja Dalip Singh was still on the throne of Lahore *Durbar*. From the nature of the order, it is clear that the British subjects, popularly known as Whites or *Feringhees*, used to enter the Golden Temple and its environs with their shoes on. Even in 1843, Major Mainwairing and Captain Knyvett had refused to take off their shoes. Cows which had been slaughtered for beef-eating British soldiers were given protection. Henry Lawrence ordered Sardar Lahna Singh to have the butcher's shops in the *ilaka* of Amritsar closed for five days during each month as was formerly the custom. He also forbade the establishment of spirit shops within a circle of twelve miles of the city of Amritsar<sup>1</sup>. In 1848 the riot between the *Shias* and *Sumis* was put down with authority and the rioters seized.

After the Second Sikh war, the Punjab was annexed outright by Dalhousie on March 21, 1849. A Board of Administrators was established in Lahore in March 1849, which was subsequently abolished by the appointment of Chief Commissionership in 1853. Sir Henry Lawrence, Mr. John Lawrence, Mr. Charles Mansel (1806-1886) who was replaced in 1851 by Mr. Robert Montgomery (1809-1887) and Sir Richard Temple (1826-1902) served on the Punjab Board. Amritsar was formed into a district. During the first year of the annexation, gang robbery rose to an alarming height in some districts, especially in Amritsar. Some of the roads were infested with bands of armed and mounted highway men. Houses of grandees were assailed in the open pace of the day<sup>2</sup>. The Board was determined to suppress the nefarious activities of those daring criminals and thus the police was adequately armed to

- 1 Panjab Government Records, Political Diaries of the Agent to the Governor-General, North Western Frontier and Resident at Lahore (1 Jan., 1847-4 March, 1848), Col. Henry M. Lawrence, p. 88, ff. 125-8.
- 2 General Report upon the Administration of the Punjab (1849-50), and (1850-51), p. 38.

apprehend robbers. During the first year of its operation, 37 decoits were condemned in Amritsar<sup>1</sup> and in the second year, the number fell to 7. Baba Lachman Singh, the agent of Sardar Lahna Singh, brought to Amritsar several highway men and was directed that in mode of punishment he should follow the Lahore practice. On the local side, Raja Rallia Ram, son of Missar Chajju Mall, showed great energy in the suppression of dacoity and highway robbery.

Montgomery suggests in his Report of December 29, 1852 that roads in the times of Ranjit Singh were in an appalling state, broken, unsafe and unsheltered. The Government's enabling measure was to provision the good roads. A line of road covering 18 miles from Amritsar to Batala was made; an old road of 12 miles was traced out from Amritsar to Majitha. Rs. 5,000 were voted for repairing the Amritsar road which was in a bad state<sup>2</sup>. In 1851 a direct route from Amritsar via Eminabad to Wazirabad was surveyed by Col. Napier and the construction was begun by the City Magistrate, Mr. C. B. Saunders. This road was built purely for the march of troops at a cost of Rs. 200 per mile. The road from Amritsar was extended to Dinanagar. The first train linking up Amritsar, Lahore and Multan was completed on February, 8, 1859<sup>3</sup>. With the opening of the roads and railways, the fame of Amritsar spread as a commercial city. Due to the exertions of Mr. Saunders, the city of Amritsar was metamorphosed from a sanitary point of view, and though it may have lost in the process, something of the charm and picturesqueness of an Eastern city, the health, cleanliness, and well-being of its inhabitants improved considerably<sup>4</sup>. In certain cases Sir John Lawrence granted exemptions of the land revenue, as was the case with the land attached to the *sarai* and *deori* of Raja Rallia Ram. The recommendations of the Board were approved by the Governor-General for the support of *Darbar Sahib* on June 9, 1853. The amount in hand was estimated at Rs. 45,619 and Rs. 1,784 in money assignments<sup>5</sup>.

1 R. Bosworth Smith, *The life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I, p. 297.

2 Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of my Time in India*, p. 114.

3 Bosworth Smith, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 297.

4 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 311.

5 Mss. Foreign Consultations (1853), 10, June, no. 217 (National Archives of India, New Delhi).

The feudal nobility of Ranjit Singh, the pillars of his State were tending towards inevitable decay. Their picturesque retinues were a thing of the past; their city residences were less gay with equipages and visitors and their country seats were completely neglected<sup>1</sup>. Sorely pressed as they were in the changing times, they still found a warm advocate for their hereditary claims in Sir Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner, and began to be treated with consideration and received handsome pensions. Their *jagirs*, which had been made for military service or religious purposes, were upheld by the Government with certain modifications. Despite this recognition of the aristocracy's status, the atmosphere was tense with suspicion and excitement and Amritsar continued to be for sometime an object of great anxiety. Messengers were passing to and fro between Atari, Sialkot and Amritsar where the 'fallen Sardars' were living and the rumour spread that 'treasonable commanders' had come from Gulab Singh in Kashmir and from Dost Muhammad at Kabul<sup>2</sup>. Some Sardars were arrested and arms were recovered from various places<sup>3</sup>. At the end of 1849 and the beginning of 1850, the belief prevailed that the fort of Govindgarh had been seized by Indian soldiers. Charles James Napier (1782-1853), the Commander-in-Chief, shared this belief, but it seems that the case had been overstated. Henry Lawrence arrived on the spot, and the affair though bad enough, wore a less serious complexion than had at first been supposed<sup>4</sup>.

From Lord Auckland onwards, the Governors-General visited Amritsar and its temple. After Hardinge, Dalhousie spent some time in the city. In his private letters, Dalhousie, who was largely responsible for the annexation of the Punjab, has graphically described interesting facts about the town. On his second visit to Amritsar, he found the city flourishing. He thought that the abolition of the Custom line, an invariable source of cruelty and oppression, was really productive of infinite good, and that is why people were pouring into the city, especially from the territories of Gulab Singh

1 J.G.A. Baird, Private letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, pp. 165-6.

2 Bosworth Smith, The Life of Lord Lawrence, Vol. II, p. 333.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Sir Richard Temple, Men and Events of my Time in India, p. 114.

in order to settle down there<sup>1</sup>. The imposition of revenue on salt made up for the loss incurred by the abolition of Custom line. But sickness was rife, though the rains went far to allay the prevalent sickness. One of the most brilliant sights that Dalhousie saw was the illumination of the city and the holy shrine and tank. A man of the 10th Regiment unfortunately got drunk, and, when stopped at the gate of Govindgarh cut down Colonel Jewan Singh whose sudden death threw the whole city into confusion. In 1849 Rs. 5,000 were given to the temple and a similar grant was made in 1850 by Lord Hardinge. Dalhousie mentions that he gave the same amount to the poor for charity and not to the shrine and this amount he took out from the Treasury rather than from his own pocket<sup>2</sup>. But this contribution was misrepresented by the Court of Directors as an example to encourage local beliefs and practices<sup>3</sup>.

During the revolt of 1857, the importance of Govindgarh, the military stronghold of the city of Amritsar, had been realized. Govindgarh's real value did not lie in its occupying any commanding position from a strategic point of view like the Gwalior fortress deemed universally impregnable or in containing any arsenal like the forts of Phillaur and Ferozepur, nor in the strength of its construction (though that secured for it a European reputation) but essentially in its 'national religious character'<sup>4</sup>. It was invested in the minds of the Sikhs with the holiest associations as it had been named after Guru Gobind Singh. The British authorities felt that if the fort, which was close to the holy temple, were wrested from their hands, their prestige would be imperilled in the eyes of the Sikhs<sup>5</sup>. Realizing the seriousness of the situation at Amritsar in 1857, J.W. Kaye (1814-1876), the distinguished historian notes, 'In no place throughout the Punjab was the influence of the priesthood so powerful, and in no place had the spirit of nationality so largely survived the subjection of the people. There the Sikh inhabitants were more likely to rise than in any part of the country and to that centre, more than to any other

1 J. G. A. Baird, Private letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, pp. 145-7.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 165-6.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 497.

4 Rev. Cave Browne, The Panjab and Delhi in 1857, Vol. I, p. 102.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

point were the Sikhs likely to turn in their eyes for a given signal of general insurrection<sup>1</sup>. On the morning of 12th May, 1857, Montgomery wrote to Mr. Fredrick Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar who remained out on patrol duty every night for many weeks, urging upon him the immediate necessity of 'caring for Govindgarh'<sup>2</sup>. He added that the feelings of the city ought to be ascertained by every source at his command. Mr. Cooper was advised that in case of danger, he should go to the fort and defend it himself. Montgomery hinted that there was a rumour that the disarmed sepoy from Mian Mir were coming in a body to help the regiments at Amritsar to occupy Govindgarh<sup>3</sup>. In his letter to Herbert Edwardes dated 9th June, 1857, John Lawrence compared Amritsar with Peshawar, Multan and Lahore—places it was necessary to hold if the Punjab was to remain in the hands of the British<sup>4</sup>.

The force in Govindgarh and the adjacent cantonment was small. The stronghold at Amritsar was garrisoned mainly by sepoy troops—a detachment of the 59th Native Infantry with only 70 European Artillery men which caused much uneasiness to the authorities. Europeans were the gunners of a weak company of Artillery. In view of insufficient European force, it was decided to despatch a body of Europeans to Govindgarh. One Company of European Artillery under Captain Macleod, occupied the fort; the guards having been supplied by a detachment of the 59th N. I from the station, where a company of fort artillery (native) and a light field battery was also stationed<sup>5</sup>. The company of H.M. 81st despatched by the Brigadier in *ekkas* under Captain Chichester entered the fort before daylight on May 12 after covering a distance of about thirty miles from Lahore in a single night. For its greater security, the company of European artillery destined for Phillaur was detained by the Amritsar authorities while Captain Waddy's battery was moved from the cantonment within the fort walls which made Govindgarh safe<sup>6</sup>.

1 Kaye, History of the Sepoy War in India, Vol. II, pp. 434-5.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 435.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Bosworth Smith, The life of Lord Lawrence, Vol. II, p. 138.

5 Cave Browne, The Panjab and Delhi in 1857, pp. 102-3.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 103.



On July 5, Nicholson reached Amritsar in order to offer immediate aid, in case of emergency either to Lahore or the Jullundur Doab and at the same time to overawe the Manjha and render hopeless any attempt to mutiny on the part of the 59th Regiment<sup>1</sup>. On the 7th morning, he received the news of the mutiny of the Fourteenth at Jhelum. With great reluctance, he proceeded to disarm the 59th. It was feared that the disarmed sepoys at Lahore had revolted and were marching down on Amritsar. A small force under Macnaghten went out on the Lahore road to raise a body of villagers to check the advance of the rebel sepoys.

On July 9, a punishment parade took place. All the troops, European and Native, were ordered out to witness the ceremony on the ground between the city and the fort about a mile from the cantonment and there the guns and the regiments were drawn up on parade and the ghastly ceremony was duly performed. This done, the Sepoys of the 59th who only two days earlier had been praised for their loyalty were ordered to lay down their arms. Though chagrined by this unexpected order, they obeyed without a grudge. Many men of the Regiment were not present on parade and therefore a quantity of arms was still left in possession of the sepoys who testified their sincerity of obedience by surrendering them voluntarily<sup>2</sup>. Nicholson justified it by writing that he had disarmed this regiment as a precautionary measure, though he had complimented them earlier on their general conduct. Kaye observes that there were no grounds for this Regiment committing in any way<sup>3</sup>. Thereafter Govindgarh became a 'trustworthy bulwark'<sup>4</sup> of British power which it had not been hitherto. The soldiers were placed and seated in little chaises drawn by ponies. These vehicles were driven all day under the scorching sun and eventually the mutineers were confronted to their dismay by British infantry which they had thought was far away<sup>5</sup>. Sir Richard Temple notes that few commanders save Nicholson could have taken such strong steps.

1 John William Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War in India*, Vol. II, pp. 434-5.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 636.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 635.

4 *Gazetteer of the Amritsar District (1883-84)*, p. 12.

5 Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of Time in India*, p. 133.

In the city of Amritsar, the relations between the Sikhs who greatly predominated and the Mohammedans who formed a powerful body, were not cordial and the embers of religious animosity were continually smouldering. The Sikhs were without a leader, unity or aim<sup>1</sup>. The son of Ranjit Singh was not in the land of his fathers. About twelve years of British rule had seen all their leaders vanish one by one, except Teja Singh, the last idol of their *Panchayats*<sup>2</sup>. Many Sikh Sardars had reasons to be well-disposed to the British for their having conferred on them favours. The Sardars suspected to be disaffected found an opportunity of rehabilitating themselves in British favour and they offered their service at this stage and 'if the ruling house had been despoiled, British diplomacy had taken good care to safeguard the interest of the individual chiefs'<sup>3</sup>. During 1857 movement, the British acted on the principle that in the jealous rivalry of both Sikhs and Mohammedans lay the British security<sup>4</sup>. The British diplomacy at such a crisis was to prevent these 'embers' from being entirely extinguished and at the same time to guard against their bursting out in open rebellion. To keep the two classes in mutual check, to counterbalance race by race and creed by creed was the real aim of Mr. Fredrick Cooper on whom the responsibility lay for the maintenance of law and order<sup>5</sup>. This is one of the neatest examples at local level to rule over a city on the maxim of 'Divide and Rule'. Cooper's personal influence, tact and unremitting exertions secured the co-operation of leaders of both the classes without shaking the confidence of either, and thus peace in the city was secured. By July 10, the Column took a firm possession of Ram Bagh and encamped under the walls of the city.

Henry Lawrence visited Amritsar a number of times. On one such occasion, he received summons to repair to Amritsar, preparatory to taking charge of the newly acquired trans-Sutlej territory. At another time the event was of more personal significance. When Henry Lawrence reached the house of the Deputy

1 Cave Browne, *The Panjab and Delhi in 1857*, p. 133.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 334.

4 Cave Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

5 *Ibid.*

Commissioner, he was received by a new group of admirers and there followed a further demonstration of the grief which was felt on the occasion of his departure from Punjab where he had earned the gratitude of such a large number of people. At this time those who greeted him included Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant Governor, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Donald McLeod (1810-1872), the Financial Commissioner and Mr. Arther Roberts (1818-1868), the Judicial Commissioner.

From October 29 to 31, 1853 a meeting was held at Amritsar with a view to abolishing female infanticide and framing rules for the regulation of expenditure on marriage ceremonies<sup>1</sup>. The holding of this conference at Amritsar was in line with the early policy of the British administrators. Where they encountered customs detrimental to the life of the community, they would call together the local chiefs, discuss the problem and decide on appropriate measures. The gathering at Amritsar was both representative and impressive. Rajahs, especially of Suket, Chamba and Noorpur, many gentlemen of rank and position in the Punjab, Members of the late *Durbar*, Chieftains from the Kangra Hills, the *Bedees* of Dera Baba Nanak, Commissioners and landlords and merchants attended. Rajah Dinanath and Rajah Sahib Dyal presided over the deliberations of the Brahman and Khatree committees.

It was strongly felt that the heinous crime of infanticide must be abolished. The causes for the perpetration of the crime were traced. The performance of certain rituals, the expensive dowry system and the large wedding parties made the marriage of daughters a costly affair, not to mention the handsome rewards claimed by *Bhats*, *Raes*, *Bhands* and *Nais* on these occasions. It was considered desirable to fix a ceiling on expenditure for marriage celebrations and to limit the marriage party to ten persons. A fairly comprehensive resolution was adopted in open *darbar* declaring that any person who committed the crime would incur the same penalty as for murder.

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The account of the meeting is based on the unpublished documents in the series of the Foreign Department Political Consultations, 28 April, 1854, Nos. 243-8, and 26 May, Nos. 208-11 B [National Archives of India, New Delhi].

The venue of the meeting was the Ram Bagh. Tent space capable of accommodating about 3,000 people had been prepared for the occasion in the Amritsar jail. Numerous chiefs with their followers were encamped outside the city. The meeting was probably held deliberately at *Diwali* so as to gather as many people as possible. The order prevailed both in the city and in the camp, though naturally there was much excitement due to the influx of so many dignitaries into the city.

It was hoped by P. Melvill<sup>1</sup>, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner for the Punjab, that the meeting would be a great success and the moral effect lasting. The motives of the promoters of the conference were widely and deeply appreciated. The fame of the Amritsar meeting spread far and wide and wherever meetings took place on the same theme whether in Multan or Jhelum division, Sialkot, Gujranwala or Jammu, reference was made to the 'great conference' at Amritsar. Mr. R. Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner, Punjab observed that owing to the 'moral demonstration' at Amritsar in many districts, a most marked change was taking place in the several customs of the people. A report of the meeting was drawn up by Mr. Montgomery and Mr. G.F. Edmonstone (1813-1864) Financial Commissioner, Punjab, and submitted to the Governor-General, Dalhousie who described on 20th January, 1854 the results of the meeting at Amritsar as the commencement of a 'new social era among the people of the countries beyond the Jamuna'.

When Dalhousie paid a visit to the Punjab as early as 1850, he was greatly pleased with the work of the city *Panchas*—'The Court of Five', who were chosen invariably from among the best, and he appreciated their work at the *Durbar* held in the city in 1850. There is sufficient evidence to show that the institution of the *Panchayat* worked quite adequately in the forties of the nineteenth century when the tax on carts and *hackeries* entering and leaving the towns of Lahore and Amritsar was remitted at the representation of the *Panchas*<sup>2</sup>. The Council of Regency established in the Punjab after the First Sikh war regarded the administration of

- 1 Series of the Foreign Department Political Consultations, 28 April, 1854, No. 243-8 [National Archives of India, New Delhi].
- 2 Panjab Government Records, Political Diaries of the Agents to the Governor-General, North Western Frontier and Resident at Lahore, Col. Henry M. Lawrence (1 January, 1847—4 March, 1848), p. 88.

justice by the *Panchas* as so satisfactory that they entrusted to them the task of drawing up Customary laws as regards marriage, and inheritance. In 1847 when the dispute arose between the sons of Bhai Ram Singh and Bhai Govind Ram about the right of possession to large sums in jewels, Bhai Nidhan Singh was requested to place the matter before the *Panchas* at Amritsar<sup>1</sup>. Montgomery mentions in particular, Ravi Kishan Dass as a highly prominent member of the city *Panch* and regards the Corporation as the most influential and respectable body of men he had met in the Punjab. The Corporation worked out details of the method of collection of 'Customs and their management'<sup>2</sup>. These enlightened men, and among them the most notable was Raja Singh's son, Kalyan Singh, the *Panch* of the city, who helped the authorities in the collection of house tax, were capable of taking a larger view of things<sup>3</sup>.

The civic administration of the town was carried out by the *Panchas* till the outbreak of 1857 when it was taken over by the Civil and Military officers in September, 1858 under Mr. Fredrick Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner as President and Mr. Car Stephen as Secretary.

The beginning of the present Municipal Committee can be traced to 1858 when a local District committee functioned in a small way discharging a few of the Municipal duties recognised today. Some of the measures undertaken were as follows:—

Houses in the city were numbered, streets were formerly named in May, 1859 and trees were planted on road sides. In the Civil line area, Indians were not allowed to build any bungalow. Street lights were provided by hurricane lamps. In 1868 Municipalities were established with the Deputy Commissioner as an Ex-Officio President, a practice which continued till 1919. Thus on an official basis, the Amritsar Municipality was first formed in April, 1868 under Act 1867 by the Punjab Government Notification No. 950 of the 6th April, 1858. This notification which constituted the

1 Panjab Government Records, Political Diaries of the Agent to the Governor-General, North Western Frontier and Resident at Lahore, Col. Henry M. Lawrence (1 January, 1847—4 March, 1848), p. 311.

2 Mss. Foreign Consultations, 29th December, 1852, no. 144, [National Archives of India, New Delhi].

3 *Ibid.*

Municipality into that of the first class also contained a provision that the Committee for the purpose of the Act (XV of 1867) 'shall consist of ex-officio members of whom six shall be nominated from the European residents of the station, six from the native residents and twelve appointed by election'. The following members were nominated by the Lieutenant Governor of the Panjab: Executive Engineer, Bari Doab Canal; Chaplain or Senior Missionary: Agent, Bank of Bengal; Mr. Munro, Railway Staff; Mr. Bijix, French Merchant; Officer Commanding, Fort Govindgarh; Garrison Surgeon; Rai Duni Chand, Khan Muhammad Shah, Bhai Kalyan Singh, Muhammad Jan, Ghulam Hussain and Gagarmal. In modification of the same order, the Lieutenant Governor issued General Department Notification No. 1595 dated the 4th June, 1868 which related to the appointment of the following eleven (instead of twelve as provided for in the Act) individuals as members of the Municipal Committee by election: Rai Hardyal, Rai Babu Mohan Lal, Sardar Harcharn Dass, Mahant Brahm Buta, Lala Panna Lal Nowhria, Mian Assadullah, Jowhar Lal, Durana Mal, Sheikh Allah Bux, merchant, Lasyu and Sada Sukh.

The circular No. 16 of 1867 made provision for the appointment of ex-officio members of the Municipality. They were six in number, viz., the Deputy Commissioner (President), the Civil Surgeon, the Secretary to the Local Fund Committee (Secretary), the Executive Engineer, the District Superintendent of Police and the Educational Officer.

The proceedings of the Municipal Committee Records<sup>1</sup> show that at the meeting held on April 1868, besides the English representatives, Khan Muhammad Shah, Muhammad Jan, Ghulam Hussain, Kalyan Singh and Gagarmal took part. At that time distinguished citizens notably Bhai Kalyan Singh, a lucrative trader, Gagarmal (after whom two streets are named), Harcharn Dass (who belonged to the well-known family of Raja Rallia Ram) and Sada Sukh (a descendant of the famous physician family of Pandit Dharni Dhar) took a lively part in the meetings. Khan Bahadur Muhammad Shah was elected the first Vice-president and R.B. Raja Kalyan Singh (who was also appointed as Manager of Golden

1 The Municipal Committee Records, File No. 38 A, The Municipal Committee, Amritsar.

Temple) the second Vice-president. The meeting place of the committee was in the Ram Bagh *jalsaghur*. Usually it met once a month and the main item of the business was the defining of the boundaries of the Municipal area by erecting a sufficient number of suitable pillars. It also took up conservancy within the city, public works, education, especially in providing modest facilities in the beginning to teachers for training in the method of teaching, and the allotment of small sum of Rs. 2,600 for that purpose was made in June 1868.

The failure of the monsoons in 1868 and 1869 caused much distress and as the city was regarded as a place of wealth, it naturally attracted the distressed both from the British territory and from various States. Thousands of immigrants poured into the city and its neighbourhood to seek work and livelihood and subsisted mainly on charity for sometime. The price of wheat rose to 9½ seers for a rupee. There were many families in the town which could not count on more than one meal a day. Again in 1878, prices began to rise on account of the Afghan war and in 1879 prices ruled highest owing to draught. Houses which provided food to the poor were opened to meet this emergency and railway communications facilitated import of food stocks into Amritsar from other places.

Since the slaughter house at Rai-Takht by the Deputy Commissioner outside the city, relations between Hindus and Muslims were growing rather tense. The beef began to be sold openly in the streets and culprits were either released or fined nominally. By 1871 bitter feelings developed into altercations, quarrels and open fights between Hindus and Muslims. A rumour spread that one of the shops would be opened adjacent to the precincts of the holy tank of the Golden Temple and it was believed that a beef-bone was found thrown in the Golden Temple. Bhai Deva Singh, who had placed it before the holy scripture on April 1871, was arrested by Sardar Bahadur Mangal Singh Ramgarhia, Manager of the Golden Temple. A few Kookas<sup>1</sup> living in the city were enraged and at a meeting decided to sacrifice themselves for the purpose of stopping cow-killing. On June 8, 1871 Kookas killed some

1 Sardar Nahar Singh, A Short Account of the Kokas or Namdharries, Delhi, p. 11.

butchers inside the slaughter house. Many *Raises* and *Sahukars* of the city were suspected of having a hand in the plot and were ill-treated for this. On their own confession, 4 Kookas were hanged on September 15, 1871. Raja Sahib Dyal's advice and assistance was found to be of much value to the local authorities in having the innocents released for which he earned the gratitude of Sir Lepel Griffin, the distinguished historian and the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar.

Amritsar, situated in a depression, was traversed by numerous irrigation channels drawn by the Bari Doab Canal, which passed within two or three miles of the city. It was enclosed by a wall pierced by 13 gates and a deep ditch or moat which had served the double purpose of providing an additional defence in the Sikh period and of affording material to build the city walls. It also became an instrument for breeding mosquitoes and caused much pestilence and misery due to the dumping of refuse from the town. The city had a large number of offensive swamps which were situated in the crowded part of the city. It was strongly felt that the *dhabbs*, especially the Ahluwalia *dhab*, a morass in the centre of the city, Santokh Sar and Bazar Thali should be filled and nearly a hundred thousand of labourers were employed in filling them up. The work was brought to a close in April 1869 but had subsequently to be recommenced. Amritsar was then a low lying area where water collected which spread epidemics and created unhygienic conditions. The streets of the town were dirty both in the civil lines and near the city. Stray dogs prowled around and stringent measures were taken to destroy them. The drainage was so bad that in rainy weather the gutters were swamped and the pavements became filthy.

From 1872 the local public opinion grows somewhat impatient at the slow progress in the development of the city. On March 6, 1872 in their representation to the Deputy Commissioner, the Indian members of the Municipal Committee, pointed out that they had not been consulted on the larger public works during earlier years. When they expressed the hope that their funds were in a flourishing condition, they were informed by the Deputy Commissioner that they were a hundred thousand of rupees in debt which provoked heated discussion. It was emphasised on their behalf



that they were prepared to forego the budget allotment for the completion of the Clock tower and other, 'useless expenditure,' which had led them into debt, but they were most anxious to concentrate on improving roads, on filling *dhabs*, thus eradicating epidemics and on repairing of historical buildings. These were the small beginnings of the growth of public opinion and civic ideas.

In 1873 the Town Hall was taken over by the Municipal Committee from the Public Works Department. Pandit Sarb Sukh, a descendent of Pandit Jawala Nand's family, was the first physician who, despite severe opposition from orthodox people, introduced smallpox vaccination in 1875, and vaccinated at his own expense.

A Clock tower of red brick gothic structure, designed by John Gordon, was completed in 1873-4. The Hall Gate was built in 1876, and named after Col. C. H. Hall, the Deputy Commissioner. The area inside the gate was occupied by the jail up to 1875 when the land and belongings were purchased by the Municipal Committee. At Amritsar a grand *darbar* was held in 1877 on the occasion of the celebration of the assumption of the title of the Empress of India by Queen Victoria. In 1877 an English band began to entertain people in the evenings near the present Kotwali and its expenses were borne by the Municipal Committee until 1st December, 1877 when this service was discontinued owing to the paucity of funds but was maintained till about 1922 by donations from leading citizens.

Mr. E. Nickol, one of the ablest of officers, was appointed Secretary of the Municipal Committee in 1875. He caused the moats of the city to be filled in with earth and a garden planted thereon. In spite of his multifarious duties as the Registrar of Amritsar and the Secretary both of the District and local Board, he took a keen interest in the sanitary arrangements of the city. In 1896 a large number of famine-stricken people migrated from Bikaner to Amritsar and he opened a Famine Relief fund. He transferred the 'Annual Cattle Fair' from the District Board to the Municipal Committee, and for a long time thereafter the Municipal Committee has collected a profit of about Rs. 70,000 annually from the proceeds of this fair. He established a Municipal technical school at Amritsar. He laid out gardens, the Quaisar-i-Bagh, and

another garden which later on came to be known as Nickol Park (now Seth Radha Kishan Park). He was honoured with the Presidentship of the Municipal and District Conference held in Delhi. During his tenure of office, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated with great éclat, and later on the marble statue of Her Majesty was installed in the Quaisar-i-Bagh which was unveiled by Sir D. Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant Governor of the Panjab<sup>1</sup>.

Nickol was a man of idealism and constructive ability which was employed in effecting improvements in the city. In a way, he can be regarded as a pioneer in the task of embellishing the city which became a ruling passion with some of the officials later. The Punjab Government duly appreciated his valuable services by bestowing on him the title of C.I.E. and granting him a number of squares of agricultural land. His death on 9th November, 1897 was deeply mourned. He was extolled by the newspapers as the greatest of all the benefactors of the city and the 'uncrowned King of the poor'. Mr. Nickol as a Secretary was succeeded by J.A. Aeslop during whose period Lord Curzon visited Amritsar on April 25, 1899 and held a *darbar* in the town hall. In 1900 Lord Curzon presented a clock to the Golden Temple which is installed in the main hall. During J.W. Danier Gardiner's tenure as Secretary, the Sarahgarhi Memorial was built which was unveiled on the 14th of February 1902. The new building of the Islamia school was also opened in 1902 by Sir W.M. Young, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. On December 1, 1902 Mr. Gow was appointed as Secretary and in his time, the Municipal Waterworks and the Victoria Jubilee Hospital were commenced and their opening ceremony was performed by Sir C.M. Rivas, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. The Prince of Wales (the late George V) visited Amritsar in his time. Mr. P.J. Rust in his turn established the Municipal Tax Department on a sound footing. Another important development took place in the time of Mr. P. Marsden, I.C.S., who as Secretary in 1915 witnessed the opening of the Electric Supply Plant by Sir Michael O' Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. Mr. A.C. Bandnok followed Mr. Marsden and concentrated on the eradication of corruption.

1. Under the order of the Punjab Government, this statute has been removed to the Punjab Government Museum, Patiala.

Raja Kalyan Singh's son, Lala Rattan Chand, a member of the Municipal Committee and later a member of the Punjab Legislature helped the authorities in the suppression of communal riots during the *Muharram* in 1891 and the severe malaria epidemic. In 1914 an epidemic of cholera broke out which carried off 747 persons. There were epidemics of plague in 1918, 1924 and 1926, of smallpox in 1918 and 1924 and of cholera in 1929. Until the events of 1919 disturbed the even tenor of the life of Amritsar, the progress of the city had been encouraging. What is clear from the official records is the growing interest of the citizens in the development of the town on principles of modernity.

Houses of ill fame existed within the bounds of the city. Quite a large number of prostitutes lived in Katra Kanahya leading to Ram Bagh. Firstly, there were houses of assignation. Secondly there were houses for those who became prostitutes. Thirdly there were houses for prostitutes by birth or professed prostitutes. Of the first class, there were 27 and of the second 210 but there is no record of those belonging to the third category. The first class were classified under brothels. It was recommended that the most stringent measures for their removal should be taken. With regard to the second, it was not considered advisable to interfere with them. About the third category, it was suggested that these houses, which were situated in the new bazar, leading to the Town hall, should be immediately closed. For houses situated in other parts of the city, it was recommended that notice be given to the occupants that immediate prosecution would follow, should their trade be pursued in a manner likely to offend public morals. Later in June 1913, when Mr. C. M. King was the Deputy Commissioner and the President of the Municipal Committee, a proposal was submitted to him that the prostitutes living in the city should be compelled to quit the Municipal area. Again in 1921 the Municipal authorities were keen on throwing out prostitutes but on Mr. King's suggestion that quarters should be found for them in a specified area of the city, no further action was taken in the matter. Eventually in 1947 during the communal disturbances, the prostitutes shifted to other places and thus the city was rid of the immoral traffic.

Funds in the hands of the Municipal Committee were limited and to raise them it was first necessary to reorganise the Taxation

Department and to check the leakage. Raising of buildings and clock towers was thought to be unnecessary and it was emphasised that particular attention should first be given to things of necessity such as education, the filling in moats, the laying out of gardens on uneven ground and the building of roads, schools, etc. The experiment of holding meetings in the Municipality led to the development of a civic sense among the citizens who began to take a leading part in the Social Welfare schemes. Kalyan Singh had rendered valuable service in the assessment and collection of Income tax and House tax.

The period before 1919 is primarily a period of growth of civic duties when officials and non-officials sat together, reviewed items, argued, and ultimately in a spirit of amity, arrived at decisions. There was then no appeal to the platform or discussion of these issues in the press. The main interest of Government in Municipal administration was that 'politics' should be kept out and men favourably disposed towards the National movement were frowned upon. The non-officials who were leaders in public life were in general men of wealth, broad outlook, temperate in their demands, cautious in their methods and more mindful of the benefits of reciprocal compromises. Elections were contested and a lively competition ensued. The work of development and expansion went on and Amritsar furnished a large number of troops in England's hour of trial. In the process she was drained of men and resources and after the war, Amritsar underwent a metamorphosis in which Jallianwala Bagh became a reality. Due to the First World war, conditions were unfavourable for the initiation of any schemes and immediately after the war, the city was gripped by one of the most painful experiences that ever befell the lives of a people.

#### V. JALLIANWALA BAGH

In general people felt frustrated when they found that the termination of war did not usher in an era of prosperity. There was apprehension on the part of the politically-minded classes in India that they might be left out in cold, now that the moment of danger was over<sup>1</sup> but this feeling was not confined to educated

1 Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during 1919, p. 22.

classes. Since the signing of the Armistice, a notable change had come in the attitude of the European community towards Indian aspirations generally and towards political reforms in particular. As a result of the failure of B. G. Tilak's action for libel against Sir Valentine Chirol, people feared that the unquestioned existence of the revolutionary movement in India might be made an excuse for the postponement of political reforms. The iniquitous methods of the recruitment of soldiers and the raising of war loans had sown seeds of discontent among the people. The misfortunes which had befallen Turkey had caused widespread disquiet in the minds of the Muslims who were agitated over the *Khilafat* and the holy places of Islam. The advanced Mohammedan opinion in India feared that their views were not sufficiently regarded by the British Government and the Allies. A considerable number of immigrants came to the Punjab from the United States, Canada and the Far East and they were infected with revolutionary ideas. The continued high prices of food stuffs and of clothing, intensified by the failure of the monsoon in 1918, exposed the middle and lower classes and made them feel that Government was in some way to blame for their miserable condition<sup>1</sup>.

The Delhi Congress which closed the year 1918 had condemned the Montagu Chelmsford Reform Scheme as totally unsatisfactory and insisted on the grant of provincial autonomy at once but as a concession to moderate opinion, suggested the reservation of law, justice and police to the existing administration for a period of six years. The Congress passed a resolution on the despatch of a deputation to England in connection with the Reforms scheme, a clause binding delegates to confine negotiations in England within the limits of the resolutions passed at Delhi. This action coupled with Tilak's election and of few others as independent delegates to the Peace Conference and with the abandonment of the resolution welcoming the Prince of Wales served to exacerbate feelings between educated Indians and the existing British administration.

At the time when the two Rowlatt Bills (named after Sir Sydney Rowlatt, the High Court judge who headed the Committee appointed to investigate and recommend methods of dealing with

1 Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during 1919, p. 22.

sedition) were proposed by the administration, a feeling of resentment pervaded over the country. The intention of the Government was to replace the Defence of India Act which would curtail the liberty of the people in a drastic measure.

The first of the two Bills which was actually passed into law, namely the 'Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919' was framed, to enable 'anarchical offences' to be tried expeditiously by a strong Court consisting of three High Court Judges, with no right of appeal and also provided for the continued detention of 'dangerous characters' already under control or in confinement. In order to ensure that the powers of the Government were not exercised unreasonably, the Bill provided a safeguard in the constitution of an investigating authority, which was to examine the material upon which orders against any persons were framed<sup>1</sup>. The Provincial Government was also given powers to search a place and arrest a suspected person without warrant and keep him in confinement in such place and under such conditions and restrictions as it might specify. According to the second of the Rowlatt Bills, the possession of a seditious document, with the intention to publish or to circulate the same, was to be punishable with imprisonment and promise of official protection against violence was to be allowable in the case of an accused person willing to turn King's evidence. There was no appeal from the decision of this Court which could meet in camera and take into consideration evidence not admissible under the Indian Evidence Act. Furthermore persons convicted of an offence against the State might be ordered by the Court to execute a bond of good behaviour for a term not exceeding two years after the expiration of their sentence. The Government decided tacitly to drop the Second Bill altogether but passed the First Bill.

This Act was denounced by the most vocal section of the educated classes as a proof of the determination to deprive India of her legitimate due, as an 'iron fetter upon her future progress', the imposition of which would be intolerable for any patriot to contemplate. The masses identified the Act with their own sufferings, regarding into it all their deep-seated disappointments and frustrations. In fact this measure had become a sort of *sinulacrum*

1. Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress, and Condition of India during 1919, p. 22.

which represented to every class the embodiment of the particular class from which it suffered<sup>1</sup>.

Since his stand on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, M.K. Gandhi commanded among his countrymen the traditional reverence, and in the urban and rural population of many parts of the Bombay Presidency, his influence was unquestioned. Edwin Montagu notes that the impact of his personality had begun to be felt over the length and breadth of the country<sup>2</sup>. Gandhi toured the whole country extensively and was received with great respect. His method of non-violence and truth in its unbounded simplicity appealed to the imagination of masses. *Hartal, faryad, dharna* were techniques known to the Indian mind over centuries which Gandhi put to use with utmost skill, steady application and sense of time. On February 24, he announced that he would lead a Satyagrah movement.

To Gandhi, Satyagraha movement meant a fight for truth. No matter what others might think or do, Gandhi was determined to follow his course of action fearlessly, irrespective of the results which his struggle might produce. The fact remains that his movement ceased to be merely political and assumed a moral and spiritual character. Eventually he took up the leadership of the Satyagraha movement which was gradually worked up in different parts of the country and he expressly condemned any resort to material force. Meetings were arranged throughout the country in sympathy with this movement (except of course in Bengal) at first as agitation against the Rowlatt Act. On March 18, he published a pledge that in the event of these Bills becoming Law and until they were withdrawn 'we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee hitherto to be appointed may think fit'<sup>3</sup>. Gandhi started publishing an unregistered Weekly from April 7, 1919. Thus not merely what he wrote but even the manner of his publishing partook of the quality of civil disobedience. The first serious trouble occurred in Delhi on March 30 when a collision arose between the party which desired to secure the suspension of all business and the police of the city. The procession was led by Swami Shraddhananda.

1 Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during 1919, p. 22.

2 E. S. Montagu, *And Indian Diary*, p. 207

3 B. Pattabhai Sitaramaya, *The History of the Congress*, Vol. I, p. 275.

These events were bound to evoke far-reaching consequences where the iron hand of the administration of Michael O'Dwyer had especially embittered the educated classes whom he suspected of being a danger to the stability of British rule in India. One of the devices adopted by him was to force 'lambardars' to furnish recruits on the penalty of forfeiting their rights to the land. He had gagged the vernacular press and prevented the nationalist papers published outside the Punjab from entering the province. He was disliked by the people for his arbitrary method of collecting funds. Montagu notes that O'Dwyer was determined to maintain his position as the ideal of the reactionary forces and to try and govern by the iron hand<sup>1</sup>.

In 1919, Amritsar was still educationally a backward place. It had then a population of 160,000, and political activity was mainly confined to a handful of educated people of the city, local lawyers and a few business men. A few public meetings used to be held in Babu Kanheya Lal's 'Bande Mataram Hall' whose foundation stone had been laid by Surindernath Banerjea. Loud-speakers were then unknown. There were, however, two debating clubs in the city, the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharam. For sometime Amritsar remained an important centre of the revolutionaries. In January 1915, Rash Behari Bose arrived in Amritsar and took over the general direction of the revolutionaries. His close associates were Sachin Sanyal and the Maharashtrian, Vishnu Ganesh Pingley. Their chief liason with the Panjabis was through the youthful Kartar Singh Saraba. Bose spent a fortnight at Amritsar and then shifted his headquarters to Lahore. Ajit Singh, who was called the 'Bepin Chandra Pal of Punjab', visited Amritsar quite a number of times and delivered lectures which were attended by thousands of people. In those days, posters were displayed but without names of sponsors. People assembled regularly at the *Do Mohin* canal for exercise in the morning, and a sense of fellow feeling gradually developed among them. For the holding of conferences, the business community offered financial help. A branch of All India Congress had been in the existence at Amritsar since the end of 1917. Local leaders like Dr. Satya Pal, a Medical practitioner, Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, Bar-at-law, Babu Kanheya

1 E.S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, p. 207.



Lal Bhatia, a prominent advocate, who had been associated with the Congress since 1880, Khwaja Yaseen, Mr. Badrul Islam Khan, Bar-at-law, Pandit Kotu Mal, the mill owner, Mr. Girdhari Lal, Mahasha Rattan Chand and Chowdry Bugga Mal went to attend the Congress session of Delhi. They invited the Congress to hold its 1919 session in Amritsar and the invitation was accepted. The citizens of Amritsar then started preparing in advance for the Congress session.

Swami Satya Dev, a prominent leader, was due to visit Amritsar in March 1919 to address a public meeting. For his lecture, Mahasha Rattan Chand, known popularly as Ratto (now about 89), suggested Jallianwala Bagh as the venue for his lecture. He sought the permission of the owner of the open space to hold a meeting and this was given. That was perhaps the first time when a public meeting was held at Jallianwala Bagh and it was thus that this hitherto unknown place came into prominence.

Both Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Pal played a most decisive role in the growth of public consciousness in Amritsar. Politics meant in those days the organisation of public opinion among the masses through lectures, conferences, writings and processions. In order to popularise the principles of Congress, it was felt to be imperative to hold frequent mass meetings and thereby maintaining an intimate and continuous contact with the people and to diffuse political ideas among them.

In England Gladstonian Liberalism had been challenged by the new forces of the Trade Union Congress at Bradford. Keir Hardie, a rugged Scot, founded the Independent Labour party, and his character, both private and public, had impressed itself on the minds of the people, especially those belonging to the younger generation. Along with other young students, Dr. Kitchlew was impressed by Keir Hardie and aspirations of the Irish movement and these associations and movements started a chain of interaction stimulating others to take up the cause of Asian nationalism versus Western Imperialism. With his Cambridge background, Dr. Kitchlew had imbibed the creed of Western Liberalism. Those revolutionary ideas set people thinking. Kitchlew knew Madan Dhingra, another resident of Amritsar, who had shot Sir William Curzon Wyllie,

Aide-de-Camp to the Secretary of State for India<sup>1</sup>. On July 1, 1909, Sir William was assassinated, whilst attending an entertainment given to Indians by the National Indian Association at the Imperial Institute, London. Curiously enough Dr. Kitchlew was also present in the same building where the incident took place. Reaching India, he decided to organise the youth, foster Hindu-Muslim unity and take such steps as would ultimately result in the liberation of India from British control. Agitation against the Rowlatt Act provided him with a suitable opportunity for winning the confidence of people and organising them politically. In those days, besides Amritsar, Dr. Kitchlew's centres of political activity were Lahore, Gujranwala and Jullundur, which he visited on numerous occasions and he delivered eloquent speeches which his vast audiences squatted to listen to him. There came forth a band of followers, admirers and volunteers, who welcomed the ideology expounded and gave him tumultuous support. Dr. Kitchlew's speeches were couched in simple, homely terms. He spoke mostly on the following theme: 'Look at me. I am a Kashmiri Brahman. My blood, my bones all belonging to this soil where the foreigner rules. This is my home but who is its master? Not I, not you but ....' Quoting Iqbal's poems, he would then tell the cheering crowd that once a people were determined to assert themselves, nothing—jails, show of arms or oppression of any kind—would cow them. His words had roused the crowds to a high pitch of excitement.

Kitchlew had studied law which had given him a sound understanding of the concepts of rights and liberties. When he returned to Amritsar in 1915, he worked with great flair for the unity and organisation of youth—a mission in which he met with an amazing success. He realized the depressing state of Municipal affairs and the deplorable condition of the city, and therefore stressed the need for returning real representatives of the people to the Municipal Committee. Hitherto the Deputy Commissioner had been the Chairman of the Municipality. At the first meeting, he proposed the name of a Hindu candidate for the Presidentship of

1 Sir William's duties included advising the Secretary of State on political questions relating to 'Native States' and making arrangements for the reception of Indians at Court.

the Municipal Committee which made the official circles uncomfortable. The voting was closer and the Deputy Commissioner was elected ex-officio by 13 votes to 8, in the new Committee of 26 non-official members (18 elected and 8 nominated). Dr. Satyapal too had gained popularity in the platform ticket agitation which he had started at Amritsar Railway Station. The Railway authorities had refused to issue platform tickets owing to the congestion caused by the crowds which used the station as a promenade. Dr. Kitchlew also became the President of Satyagraha Sabha and Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Bashir, its Secretary. These political workers held secret meetings, and formed their plans, the C.I.D. meanwhile keeping a strict watch over their activities.

Because of the large number of recruits supplied by Amritsar during the First World war, Sir Michael O' Dwyer evinced a soft corner for the place and at a recruiting *darbar* held at Kasur, he solemnly suggested transferring the seat of Government from Lahore to Amritsar as a reward for the distinguished war services of the latter and as a punishment to the former for its slackness in providing recruits. On February 17, 1919 Sir Michael held a *darbar* at Amritsar and greatly admired the loyal martial tradition for which Amritsar was famous and he said that he found from people of Amritsar a 'prompt and practical response.' Yet less than four months later, Sir Edward Maclagan expressed his surprise at the outbreak of violence at Amritsar in the following words :—

"The city of Amritsar used to be one of the most peaceful cities in India and it was known in Punjab for its religious association, its commercial activity, its municipal development and its educational institutions. Then suddenly two months ago it became the scene of rebellious outrage."<sup>1</sup>

As a part of the general movement of agitation against the Rowlatt Act, people began to hold large political meetings and to take out processions. The sequence of events from the end of March 1919 indicates that there was frenzied excitement in the city of Amritsar. The 'Waqt' of Amritsar on the 22nd March published a cartoon showing, 'the Secretary of State in the act of handing

1 Pearay Mohan, An Imaginary Rebellion and How it is suppressed, p. 4.

the order of liberty to India when a black cobra, released from a basket by Mr. Rowlatt, bites her'. On March 23, a protest meetnig was held in support of Gandhi's movement in the Bande Mataram Hall. On March 29 another meeting took place in order to explain Gandhi's plans and a hartal was decided on for March 30. The Government took the first positive measure at 11 A. M. on March 29 when they prohibited Dr. Satya Pal from speaking in public under the Defence of India Act. March 30 was observed as a day of complete abstinence from work. People took to fasting as a means of self-purification. The main meeting was held at Jallianwala Bagh at which, according to official accounts, between 30,000 to 35,000 people were present. Dr. Kitchlew presided and the speakers at the meeting emphasised in unequivocal terms the peaceful character of the movement. Their speeches were within the bounds of law. Pandit Kotumal, Swami Anubhavanand and Mr. Dina Nath addressed the meeting. Dr. Satya Pal attended the meeting but did not speak. He kept to himself the news that he had been forbidden to speak in public.

On the 3rd April, Swami Satya Dev was sent to Amritsar by Gandhi. On April 4 Dr. Kitchlew was served with an order (though the order was dated April 3) similar to that issued against Dr. Satya Pal and he too was prohibited from addressing or attending public meetings. Pandit Kotumal, Pandit Dina Nath and Swami Anubhavanand, a religious recluse, were similarly restrained. In the course of his conversation with the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Miles Irving, Dr. Kitchlew assured him that the object of the movement was the attainment of self-government under the aegis of the British Crown. Restraint on Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew did not excite people to any untoward incident. On 5th April the Deputy Commissioner was assured by some leading citizens loyal to the authorities that the hartal would not take place on the 6th April. Nevertheless, even though some Magistrates and Municipal Commissioners took measures to discourage this step, hartal was decided on for April 6 at a private meeting in which Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Pal participated and preparations were made for conducting it in a successful manner. The observance of the hartal on April 6 had been much more general and a greater success than that of the 30th March and crowds collected, as is

usual, with an inconceivable rapidity. Observers who later on recapitulated the entire tragic story and apportioned blame to the chief actors pointed out that the show of police force on the 6th April was a tactical mistake on the part of authorities which precipitated matters. In the Bazars, there were about 12 to 14 thousand people moving about and all classes were affected by the prevailing sentiment. The hartal on April 6 perturbed the Deputy Commissioner and showed the authorities the depth of influence and power that Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew possessed. Mr. Badrul Islam Khan presided at the meeting attended by 50,000 people where two demands were made that the orders against Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew be rescinded and the Rowlatt Act be repealed. Gurdial Singh Salaria seconded a resolution praying the King Emperor to withhold his assent to the Rowlatt Act. On the 8th April, the Deputy Commissioner pressed the Commissioner and the Punjab Government for an immediate increase in the military forces as he thought that the existing garrison was not sufficient to defend the civil lines. He wrote 'If a riot occurred, we must abandon nine-tenths of the city, holding only the Kotwali (the chief police station) and communications'.

On the 9th April was *Ram Naumi* day, a Hindu religious festival which assumed a larger significance in the context of events that were then taking place. Large processions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs passed through the crowded streets. People came from outside Amritsar and extraordinary scenes of fraternization occurred. Hindus publicly accepted water from the hands of Mohammedans and vice versa, and the large processions by Hindus and Muslims, which made their appearance, indicated both by their slogans and banners, which they bore, that Hindu-Muslim unity was a watchword. This symbolic manifestation of Hindu-Muslim unity greatly upset the authorities. Dr. Hafiz Muhammed Bashir, the medical practitioner, was seen leading the procession on horse back, followed by cyclists and pedestrians. Chowdhry Bugga showed his remarkable capacity for organisation by making suitable arrangements for leading processions in an orderly fashion through crowded streets. And when Mr. Miles<sup>1</sup> Irving witnessed the scene from the Allahabad Bank in katra Ahluwalia, the actual entrance to the

1. The Congress Panjab Enquiry (1919-20), p. 5.

impressive and rich interior of the city, he seemed deeply disturbed over the Hindu-Muslim accord and was seen going in and out of his room, his hands shaking with excitement, whilst drinking soda. People were shouting slogans like, *Gandhi Maharaj ki Jai*, *Kitchluji ki Jai*, *Satya Pal ki Jai*. Loyalty was shown to the Deputy Commissioner by the playing of 'God save the King'. The Deputy Commissioner felt uncomfortable, especially when the last batch in the procession of Muslim volunteers came up with a flag, and began clapping and shouting which sounded to him like a note of disloyalty as the demonstrators seemed somehow to represent the Turkish army. At Amritsar, the demonstration of Muslim students dressed like Turks, was considered to be a challenge to the King. This was organised by Dr. Hafiz Muhammed Bashir. By and large, crowds were under control, and showed a degree of discipline unknown on such occasions. And no one really anticipated that within the brief space of a day, the happy town would be converted into a scene of sorrow and violence.

On the evening of 9th April, Gandhi was stopped at a small station, Palwal, in the Punjab, and an order banning his entry into the Punjab was served on him and he was escorted back to the Bombay Presidency. The rumour spread that he had been arrested. On the morning of 10th April, Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew were called to the Deputy Commissioner's residence, shown the orders of deportation received from the Provincial Government and removed from Amritsar in motor cars to Dharamsala. These orders had reached the Deputy Commissioner on the evening of the 9th April. The ostensible reason for those orders was that 'their presence at Amritsar was prejudicial to public safety'. The news of the arrest of these two leaders, who had so influenced the public mind, spread like wild fire throughout the city, and in a few minutes, the entire business was suspended. People collected in small excited groups at first, which later swelled into a crowd in their thousands—bare-headed, unshod and without sticks. There was a great noise and clamour in the streets. This multitude passed through the principal streets of the city, by Katra Jaimal Singh, the National Bank and other buildings on which wrath of the public fell later, finally reaching the carriage bridge. The crowd moved in this direction with the precise object of

entreating the Deputy Commissioner to cancel the orders for the deportation of their leaders and to voice strong feelings of protest over this grave injustice inflicted on the people of Amritsar.

Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Pal by their actions had become heroes; they had won over the masses; they had inspired people by their message and forthright statements, and they had kindled hope for better times ahead. Their unexpected arrest had worked strongly on public feelings and the crowd, excited, fervent, earnest, shouting slogans, marched towards the carriage bridge. The crowd took no notice of the Europeans it met on the way. The authorities deemed it advisable to call out the troops and stationed a picket of mounted troops so as to check the crowd from entering the civil lines. It consisted of a non-commissioned officer armed with sword and revolver, four mounted British soldiers, two with lances and two with rifles and three Indian *sawars*. The authorities fully realized the strategic importance of the bridge which was the last line of defence for holding the crowd and preventing them from entering the civil lines. They also felt that the guarding of the Railway lines was important. Here was, therefore, a predicament, a jam that exasperated both the sides. The authorities were afraid that the crowd would enter the civil lines and thus create a situation difficult to handle. On the other hand, the crowd was excited, and wanted to know where their leaders were, and they felt they had every legitimate right to move forward and place their grievance before the Deputy Commissioner. The shouting of cherished slogans further excited them and the whole issue became, as often it happens on such situations, entangled with questions of prestige.

The crowd, after assembling on the carriage bridge, pushed onward and the pickets fell back. The mob had no sticks or *lathis*. It is likely that someone in the crowd may have waved his turban near an officer's steed whereupon the horses backed a little. A soldier may have fired without receiving any order. Different versions are given and here some speculation may be unavoidable as the behaviour of a mob cannot be measured by even the most precise arithmetical calculations. But what is certain is that the people pushed on, the pickets fell back a little slowly down the slope and took up fresh positions at the end of the carriage bridge. The officers galloped away over the bridge

and the mob followed them. While Irving and Captain Massey were galloping to Ram Bagh to bring up the reserves, Mr. Plomer, with his police reserve of twenty five men, was hurrying to the railway foot bridge. Some people by then had reached the foot of the carriage bridge, and a mounted officer fired towards the mob causing 3 or 4 deaths. By then it was no longer a peaceful crowd. It had armed itself and it clapped and was in a mood to retaliate. A military guard had been posted near the foot bridge and the towns people were on the top of the bridge<sup>1</sup>. The military then took up a position on the bridge. A shot was fired from the Telegraph Office which excited the mob. In the meanwhile, another part of the crowd swarmed into the Railway Goods Yard, assaulted the Station Superintendent who was saved from death. By 1 P.M. the crowd was holding on. It had armed itself with sticks forcibly collected from shops outside Hall Gate and the situation became grave when people started throwing stones lying there for road metalling and pieces of wood at the pickets. At this stage, tempers were beginning to run high and there was a predisposition to violence. In spite of the earnest entreaties made by members of the Bar, conspicuous among whom were Gurdial Singh Salaria, Bar-at-law and Maqbool Mahmood, who tried to reason with the crowd, and asked the authorities not to resort to firing, a volley of fire was opened by the mounted soldiers. Some persons in the crowd also threw stones and pieces of wood at the military who again fired. Dr. Dhanpat Rai tried to get stretchers for the dead and wounded but he and others, who accompanied him, were turned back. The bodies were taken away on *gharries* and *charpays*. A boy of 16 or 17 years lay wounded with his entrails protruding, having been hit in the belly. When Dr. Dhanpat Rai and Salaria approached him, he whispered, 'I am dying. Attend to my brethren. Hindu Musalman ki Jai.' The next moment he died. According to official versions, the casualties numbered between 20 to 30. Lala Duni Chand, accompanied by prominent citizens, succeeded in checking the crowd for sometime in Aitchison Park where it had by then swelled to about 30,000.

The above account shows that there were crowds to be seen almost everywhere, crowds on the carriage bridge, crowds on the

<sup>1</sup> The Congress Panjab Enquiry, (1919-20), p. 25.



foot bridge, crowds near the Railway godown, crowds in Aitchison Park, and crowds coming out of the Hall Gate, Hathi Gate and Lohgarh Gate. There was a rapidity in the movement of the crowd. Young, old, and children, were on the march. The crowd were shouting slogans, gesticulating, clapping, and, singing. The sight of the dead and wounded silenced the crowd for a while, and sent a wave of consternation to their hearts, but immediately afterwards, regaining a little balance, they began to shout, *Maray Gaye, Maray Gaye*<sup>1</sup>. The carrying of dead bodies and the wounded, through the bazars, roused sentiments of revenge. Smoke was coming from the side of the carriage bridge and the foot bridge. Emotions reached fever pitch. Though it is not possible to describe in exact sequence the course the disturbances took, it will be sufficient to recount in the barest outline the acknowledged facts of these lamentable occurrences. The mob violence, which began by being anti-Government, had soon developed into anti-European hostility. The mob, which had been forced back from the railway crossing, scattered in all directions and was bent on violence, in the words of Miles Irving, into the city. The crowd streamed back into the city, estimated to number 40,000. Some of the rioters rushed back to the city, others turned aside to attack the Railway Goods Yard and the Telegraph Office. In intensity and depth, the attack on the National Bank of India about 1.30 P.M. prepared the way for much that followed. As crowds passed near the bank, a person threw a stone at a glass window and then wave upon wave of men in succession attacked the Bank. All eyes were riveted on the spot. Quite a large number of persons carried away goods from the bank godowns at the rear which had been broken into. Goods were taken in open day light with confidence as if they really belonged by right to those who took them. The National Bank was set on fire and gutted. Mr. Stewart, the Manager, and Mr. Scott, his Assistant, were beaten to death and their bodies burnt. The Alliance Bank was attacked and its Manager, Mr. G.M. Thompson was flung from the balcony into the street. The Chartered Bank was also attacked and panes of glass were broken and some property smashed but the Manager, Mr. J.M. Thompson and his Assistant, Mr. Ross were saved owing

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<sup>1</sup> It means, 'we are being killed'.

to the loyalty of their clerks and later rescued by a posse of police from the neighbouring Kotwali.

When the crowd had been induced to withdraw from the fort and road bridge, it rushed towards the Telegraph Office where telephone instruments and fittings were smashed to pieces. The whole telephone system was put out of order, but Mr. Pinto, the Telegraph Master, was however saved. Eighteen rounds were fired. The goods yard was stormed, and the Guard, Mr. Robinson was beaten to death. Telegraph wires were cut, and Mr. Bennet, the Station Superintendent, escaped, though injured. Sergeant Rowlands, Electrician to the Military works, was murdered. Miss Marcella Sherwood, who had been for nearly fifteen years in the Amritsar neighbourhood, working for the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, and was Manager of the City Mission School, was pursued by a mob, whilst cycling down a narrow street in the city on her way to one of her schools. She was knocked down, and was left for dead in the street. She was later picked up by some Hindus, who provided her with adequate medical aid. A crowd went in search of Mrs. Isabel Mary Easdon, a doctor at the *Zenana* Hospital who made provocative remarks, being reported to have said, that those who had been killed or wounded, had got that they deserved. This hospital was twice ransacked in a vain bid to find her. She owed her life to the loyalty of her *chaprasi* and when the crowd left, she was smuggled out in disguise and taken to the house of a police constable. The Indian Christian Church and the Religious Book Society's Depot and Hall were burnt down. An attempt to burn down the Church Missionary Society's Girls' Normal School failed due to the timely aid given by a police picket under Inspector Marshall. The sub-post offices, at the Golden Temple, Majith Mandi and Dhab Basti Ram, were looted. By 2 P.M. all Railway telegraph wires were cut in many places. The station building of Bhagtanwala was burnt, and the goods shed and a wagon, were looted. The point locks and the telegraph wires had been cut by 2 P.M., and during the afternoon, several goods yards were looted.

In the light of the incidents on the 10th April, the deportation of the two leaders would appear to have been untimely, and,

judged in political terms, the step of deportation caused grave provocation, and drew people together in a common purpose. Gurdial Singh, an eye witness, observed that such firing, as was resorted to, was unnecessary but the Hunter Committee thought that the order to fire was rightly given because the determination to do violence was more obvious. Though ifs in history are dangerous, yet it is perhaps not too unreasonable to hazard a guess that the intermediary states of humour, parley, tact, mature consideration of the local problem, and mutual confidence would have mitigated, if not wholly averted the crisis. Assurance from the authorities that their leaders were safe would perhaps have allayed the fear of the people who had suspected foul play. The mob had no previous intention to commit excesses but after the firing, the people lost their heads and were seized with mob frenzy. Earlier Mr. Jarman, the Municipal Engineer, had passed by the crowd and was not molested. The crowd were determined to cross the carriage bridge and the authorities were equally determined to resist. Hence the clash. Firing was opened. Some people died on the spot and others were wounded. The dead bodies and the wounded were taken in a procession in the bazars. This kindled a frenzied excitement which burst into retaliation and violence. A discomfiting feature of the whole episode is that the scene of the worst outrages was very close to the Kotwali—within about three hundred yards, which had in its reserve an adequate armed police force of about seventy five men and twenty five detectives, stationed under two officers, Khan Sahib Ahmad Jan, Deputy Superintendent, and Muhammed Ashraf Khan, City Inspector. The police did not prevent the mob outrages and they allowed the Town Hall which adjoined the Kotwali, to be burnt down under their noses. The lack of initiative displayed by the police arose from personal animosity, confusing orders and ill-defined seniority<sup>1</sup>.

The total number of those killed on the 10th April was approximately 10 and the number of wounded must have been larger. Murder, arson, death and destruction had their sway. On the 11th and 12th April, the city was quiet and those who visited the Railway station found it a grim and deserted place. Excite-

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<sup>1</sup> Rupert Furneaux, Massacre at Amritsar, p. 59.

ment ebbed, the cutting edge of slogans was blunted by over-use and people felt disillusioned. On the 10th evening, A.J.W. Kitchin, the Commissioner at Lahore, told Major MacDonald that the situation was beyond civil control. The relief force, consisting of a hundred British soldiers of the 1-25th London Regiment and two hundred Indians, a hundred more Indians than Brigadier-General R. E. H. Dyer had been asked to send, left Jullundur and reached Amritsar at five o'clock on the morning of the 11th and was handed over to Major MacDonald<sup>1</sup>. On the 11th morning the Deputy Commissioner informed several people, including Maqbool Mahmood, that the city was under military occupation, and the city, as it was, looked like a regular military post with soldiers and guns scattered all over the place and policemen guarding the line. Officials like Colonel Smith suggested the bombing of the city. Permission was secured for the disposal of the dead up to 2 P.M. and dead bodies were taken in the streets and were followed by thousands of people to the city gates and small parties only accompanying them to the burial and burning ground. Rumours floated that Lahore fort had fallen into the hands of the Indians, and people were streaming out of the villages. It was also believed that *Jats* and *Pathans* were moving around the city. Patrol duty was performed by the people themselves for its protection. Many of these volunteers belonged to respectable families and they did their work satisfactorily. No untoward event took place, but the atmosphere was tense. No British official and no Indian policeman could venture into the city without a strong escort. Meetings were held in defiance of repeated proclamations. According to Sir Michael O' Dwyer, emissaries were sent to incite the rural population, and on the morning of the 13th April, the main railway line near Amritsar was torn up by skilled hands and a train derailed. The Deputy Commissioner said it was freely proclaimed that it might be the *Raj* of the *Sarkar* outside but inside it was *Hindu Mussalman ki Hakumat*<sup>2</sup>. To avoid rush in the city, third class bookings to Amritsar were stopped on account of the *Baisakhi* festival. Visitors were still pouring in for *Baisakhi*, and *langars* had been opened for them. Chowdhry Bugga Mal was

1 Rupert Furneaux, *Massacre at Amritsar*, p. 69.

2 It means 'Hindu-Muslim rule'.

the organising spirit. Electric connection all over the city was also cut off till the 18th or 19th April, if not later. The water supply was curtailed or was disconnected up to the 15th or 16th April. People were utterly confused. Some arrests had taken place which made the people nervous. The British residents in Amritsar and the vicinity, including one hundred women and children, had been sheltered in the fort for safety, and later after 19 days stay, were removed to the hills. On the 13th April formal Martial Law was expected ; the telegram sanctioning it was despatched at midnight.

The proclamation of the 11th April required permits for travel and imposed a curfew at 8 P.M. It was announced that persons leaving the city in groups of more than four would be fired on. All third class bookings to Amritsar from neighbouring stations were stopped in order to discourage 'innocent strangers' from coming into so grave a situation. There was one day of active Martial Law before the Government of India moved under Regulation X of 1804. On the 13th April, with the concurrence of the General Officer in Command of the 16th Division and the Chief Justice of the High Court, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab moved the Governor-General in Council to suspend the functioning of ordinary Criminal Courts in Amritsar and Lahore districts, to proclaim Martial Law therein and to direct trial of offenders under the Regulation of 1804, *i.e.*, by Court Martial. The Government of India, of which Sir Sankaran Nair was a member, at once sanctioned the Lieutenant Governor's proposals for Martial Law which were made before Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh. But sanction was not received till the 14th April—the day described by Sir Michael as the high watermark of rebellion—due to the cutting of communications. Martial Law was not formally proclaimed in Amritsar and Lahore till the 15th April, though *de facto* Martial Law was in force since April 10. To save time Lieutenant Governor's wireless message of the 13th April had been sent *en clair*. The Bolshevik wireless station at Tashkent used it to show that the British were fighting for their very existence in India. On the 12th April a meeting had taken place at Hindu Sabha School (Dhab Khatikan) where Hans Raj announced that another meeting would be held in Jallianwala Bagh on the 13th April under the

chairmanship of Lala Kanheya Lal, an old and respected resident of Amritsar. Next day much publicity was given to this meeting, though Lala Kanheya Lal in his evidence later denied his having been approached. It would seem that his name was perhaps advertised with the object of attracting a larger audience in Jallianwala Bagh.

On the 11th April Brigadier-General R.E.H. Dyer arrived at Amritsar and transferred his headquarters from the Railway Station to Ram Bagh. The troops at his disposal consisted of 475 British and 710 Indian soldiers. He was informed that the city was in a state of lawlessness and open revolt, 'impenitently hostile' as Miles Irving had described it. On the 12th April, a strong column under General Dyer marched round the city as crowds were reported to be collecting outside it. On the 13th April, Dyer went through the city accompanied by the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police and others, and a proclamation was read out in Urdu and Panjabi which took two to three hours. It is clear that Dyer's proclamation was not read in many parts of the town. The number of people who could have heard the proclamation is estimated at 8,000 to 10,000 people; the total population of the city was 160,000 to 170,000. No attempt was made to put up printed copies of the proclamation, not even at the entrance to Jallianwala Bagh. The proclamation read was as follows :—

"It is hereby proclaimed to all to whom it may concern that no person residing in the city is permitted or allowed to leave the city in his own or hired conveyance or on foot without a pass. No person residing in the Amritsar city is permitted to leave his house after 8 P.M. Any person found in the streets after 8 P.M. is liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city or any part of the city or outside of it at any time. Any such processions or any gathering of four men would be looked upon and treated as an unlawful assembly or dispersed by force of arms, if necessary."

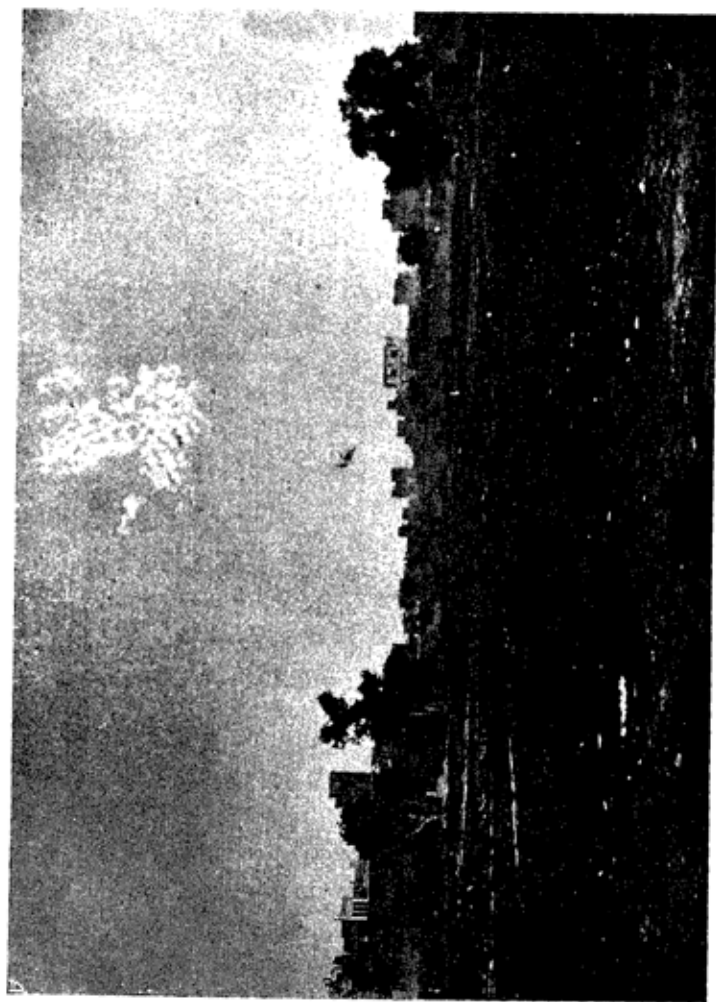
The other counter proclamation (drum beating) asking people to assemble at Jallianwala Bagh that afternoon was made some time before Dyer's proclamation.

As no effort was made to seal off the Jallianwala Bagh, the meeting was held, as arranged. 'Jalle<sup>1</sup>' is the caste name of the owner; wala is the genitive termination; and 'bagh' means garden. The Bagh was an open uneven space, a kind of irregular quadrangle, indifferently walled and in most parts, the black walls of the houses enclosed it. At that time it was used as a dumping ground and not even the oldest citizen of Amritsar today has any idea whether it was ever a garden. About 50 years ago there could be seen a few mounds of broken earthenware. It was at that time a private property owned by several people and had three trees, a dilapidated *smadh* with a dome and a well. The entrance was a narrow passage which was too small to admit Dyer's armoured cars. There was no other regular entrance save at 3 or 4 points through which people could pass without much inconvenience.

About one o'clock, General Dyer heard that the people intended to hold a big meeting at 4.30 P. M. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he received definite information that a meeting was being held at Jallianwala Bagh. According to the report sent by General Dyer to the Adjutant General, Sir William Beynon after the occurrence, the crowd numbered about 6,000. It is probable that it was much more numerous and that from 10 to 20 thousand people were assembled. Some people in the crowd were in a relaxed mood and were playing cards. The picture of Kitchlew had been put up and it was said that his portrait would preside. Gopinath read a poem about the *faryad* of the people not being heard. C. I. D. people were also on the spot. Hans Raj, whom C. F. Andrews described as informer<sup>2</sup>, who arranged meetings, addressed the crowd, assuring them that they need have no fears and that the meeting had been called to pass two resolutions. The first resolution called for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act, and the second condemning the firing on the 10th of April extended sympathy to the relatives of the dead. An aeroplane with a flag was

1 Originally this area belonged to Bhai Hamit Singh Jallawalia, a courtier of Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, who also had served as *wakil* in the service of Ranjit Singh.

2 1919. Government of India. Home Department, Political, Deposit. Proceedings, January 1920, no. 77. A. J. W. Kitchin to J. B. Thompson, [National Archives of India, New Delhi]. Miles Irving stated that before his arrest, Hans Raj was never used as a confidential agent.



*The Jallianwala Bagh in 1919*





seen hovering over Jallianwala Bagh about 4 P.M. It was believed that the aeroplane was a signal for the C.I.D. people to disperse themselves. The people got panicky and frightened and began to move, but the speaker assured them that there was no cause for fear or panic. When they had begun to settle down again, they saw soldiers standing with guns on a raised platform, not far from the meeting. At this time, Durga Dass was moving the third resolution and Gurbakh Rai intervened, whilst exhorting the people to sit down and not be panicky. Fire was instantly opened. The ground at the entrance was on a higher level, which placed the soldiers at an advantageous position from which to fire on the crowd. There were shouts like 'they are blanks', but the crowd was soon disillusioned.

Dyer had collected his available striking force, which was about ninety, and marched to the scene of meeting with men manning the armoured cars. Dyer stationed 25 troops on one side of the higher ground at the entrance and 25 troops on the other side. The Deputy Commissioner was not there. About 1,650 rounds were fired and the time of shooting was 5:5.15 P. M. 'The men did not hesitate to fire low and I saw no man firing high', states Captain Briggs, Dyer's Brigade Major. Some people lay flat on the ground, others rushed in the direction of the firing and then turned towards the *smadh*, and took a cover there. Others were killed either at the exits or on the walls, which they tried to cross. Many fell in the well and died there. It was a horrible sight. Everybody was for himself, pushing and trying to save his life. Firing continued incessantly at least for about 10 minutes without any perceptible break.<sup>2</sup> It was directed towards the gates through which the people were running. There were three or four outlets in all and the bullets actually rained over the people at the exits. Shots were also fired in the thick of the meeting and there was not a corner left in the garden where people did not die in large numbers. Many died of bullets through their hearts, chests and bellies. Many died for a drop of water. Others escaped by jumping over the walls and forgot where they were going. Many died for lack of medical aid. Many got trampled under the feet of the rushing

1 The Congress Punjab Enquiry (1919-20), p. 70.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10

crowds. The majority of the crowd had not understood the implications of Dyer's proclamation. Those who grasped it knew not whether they would survive. Those who ran knew not where they were running to. Fear and terror seized them and it seemed that iron had entered into their souls and they felt as heavy as lead. The crowd was concentrated at or near the gates. Some had their heads cut open, others had their eyes, nose, chests, arms and legs shattered. The Bagh presented the look of a battlefield with corpses scattered everywhere in heaps and the wounded crying out for water. The troops, having fired, dispersed.

At 10 P. M., accompanied by a small force, Dyer visited his pickets and marched through the city in order to make sure that his curfew orders were being obeyed. He found the city absolutely quiet and not a soul was to be seen on the roads. At the Bagh the panic-stricken people remained to turn over the dead bodies in a desperate search for friends and relations. Many had to leave the dead and the wounded, because they were afraid of being fired upon again after 8 P.M. But there remained resolute women like Rattan Devi and Utter Kaur. Rattan Devi sat the whole night beside the corpse of her husband. The whole locality was submerged in darkness. Accidentally, she found a bamboo stick which she held in her hand to keep off the dogs. She saw three men writhing in agony, a buffalo struggling in great pain, and a boy, about 12 years old, entreated her not to leave the place. She sat mute and dumb. To her nothing save the barking of dogs or the braying of donkeys was audible. Like many others, she declined later to accept the money as compensation offered to her by the Government. Utter Kaur<sup>1</sup> found her husband Bhag Mal Bhatia's dead body and boldly took it home with the help of another person. She was offered Rs. 25,000 which she declined. Miss Sherwood also refused to accept the sum of Rs. 50,000 allotted to her by the Government for the injuries received. She would accept only the price of the wrist watch which she was wearing when attacked<sup>2</sup>.

Next day the piles of unclaimed shoes were collected. The number of casualties was not counted, nor was any care taken to save the injured. Dyer's estimate of the killed between 200 and

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<sup>1</sup> She died on January 31, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> The Tribune, Lahore, 21 February, 1920.

300, which he sent to the Lieutenant Governor, was based on his experience in France where for one man killed, six shots were fired<sup>1</sup>. Without awaiting the military report, the Lieutenant Governor had informed the Government of India that 200 persons had been killed. On the basis of the Chief Secretary, Panjab Government Mr. J.B. Thompson's calculations, it was estimated that not more than 290 died in the Bagh, but Sewa Samiti's figures show that about 500 lost their lives. The official figures were 379 killed<sup>2</sup> and over 1200 wounded, though previously it was thought that it could not be more than 200 killed. Swami Shardhanand went to Amritsar and calculated that on the 13th April in Amritsar not less than 1500 persons must have been killed<sup>3</sup>. At the meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council held on September 12, 1919, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said that over 1,000 were killed was nearer the truth. According to him, the number of boys killed was 42, the youngest 7 months old<sup>4</sup>. Eighty-seven were ascertained to be residents of outside villages. But out of the assembly of 15,000 and 20,000<sup>5</sup> people, which Dyer estimated only 5,000, it is not improbable that about 700, even if not exact, is the nearest possible estimate. The wounded were at least twice as great as the number killed. It is conceivable that the few of the wounded reported the fact for fear of being arrested as participants in the unlawful assembly.

It is clear from the above account that most of the people who were at Jallianwala Bagh had not heard Dyer's proclamation which was read only in certain parts of the town on the 12th April. It is also evident that those who had heard this proclamation had no conception of what it meant. For some, it would have meant a mere threat, and for others, light punishment. But none of them thought that matters would take such a serious turn and so many lives would be lost. The city had remained quiet on

1 Home Poll. (Dept. 1919), No. 23 D.R. 2. J.P. Thompson to H.D. Craik, 14 August 1919, p. 2. [National Archives of India, New Delhi].

2 Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, 1919, p. 36.

3 The Amrit Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, 7 August, 1919. 'An Appeal from the Punjab' by M.K. Gandhi.

4 Pearay Mohan, 'An Imaginary Rebellion', p. 417.

5 Pattabhai Sitaramayya, The History of the Congress, p. 229.

the 11th and 12th April and no untoward incident had taken place to warrant any stern measure. Dyer also noticed within 30 seconds of his arrival, that the crowd appeared to be mixed one, consisting of city people and those from outside villages, whom he recognised by their dress, and who had no idea of the agitation that had taken place in the city of Amritsar. According to the official version 87 were ascertained to be residents of outside villages. In the Bagh, the crowd was not armed and there was no evidence for its resort to violence. As a matter of fact, Dyer could earlier have prevented the holding of this meeting and surely he could have dispersed the meeting by other ways than by his order to shoot.

But Dyer felt that his orders had been flouted when he learnt that a meeting was going to be held at Jallianwala Bagh against his orders. He was charged with the responsibility for restoring law and order and was determined to strike terror into the heart of the people all over the province. His mind, as he said, had been made up as he came along to Jallianwala Bagh in his motor car to open fire. He had received disturbing news on the 12th April about the cutting of telegraph lines near Harbanspura, and the wrecking of Khemkaran, *etc.* He thought that it was his duty to suppress a widespread pre-meditated conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India by force. There seemed a definite design and careful planning behind the events taking place. He had made no attempt to prevent the meeting being held and it appears that he allowed them to collect at one place so that he could deal them a blow. His object was to destroy the morale of 'the rebels'. He had arrived with his armed men and machines and he seemed to have assumed that the crowd before him consisted of the persons guilty of the crimes on the 10th April. He could not take the armoured car inside the Bagh due to the narrow entrance. In his evidence before the Hunter Committee on the 19th November when he was asked by Mr. Setalwad, "Would you have opened fire with machine guns," he answered 'I think probably yes'.

1 The Hunter Committee, which published its report on 28th May, 1920, was composed of Lord Hunter as Chairman, Mr. Justice G. C. Rankin, Mr. W.F. Rice, Major-General Sir George Barrow, Sir Chimanlal Harilal Setalwad, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad, Pandit Jagat Narain and a non-official Englishman, Mr. Thomas Smith.

Dyer started firing without giving people a chance to disperse and he continued firing for not less than ten minutes after the crowd had commenced to disperse. In his statement submitted to the General Staff 16 (Indian Division) on the 25th April, 1919, Dyer wrote, 'It was no longer a question of merely disposing the crowd, but one of producing a moral effect from a military point of view not only on those who were present but more especially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity'.<sup>1</sup> To a question by Justice Rankin, whether his act was not a form of frightfulness, Dyer replied, 'No, I don't think so. I think it was a merciful act that I had given them a chance. The responsibility was very great. I thought that I should fire well and strong, so that it would have a full effect'. When it was suggested to Dyer that the crowd could have dispersed without firing, he replied, 'I think it is quite possible I could disperse them for sometime, but they would all come back again and laugh at me and I considered I would be making myself a fool'.<sup>2</sup> To be laughed at—it is this curious phenomenon that presented itself to Dyer's mind and it is this indeed to which George Orwell refers with his usual perception. He says, 'Every whiteman's life in the East was one long struggle not to be laughed at and in order to impress the natives, he resorts to violence'.<sup>3</sup> Emphasising the need for forthright action, Dyer said, 'I realised that my force was small and to hesitate might induce attack. I immediately opened fire and dispersed the mob'.

When General Beynon, Divisional Commander asked him why did he resort to firing, Dyer replied, 'I started firing because I had to. I went on firing because when I opened fire, they spread out on both sides. Those on the right came surging back, and I thought that they were going over me'. Beynon understood and approved. On return from the Bagh, Dyer told Miles Irving that he never knew that there was no way out, though this plea would not mitigate his responsibility as he was accompanied by the Superintendent of Police, who could have given him the necessary information; and while standing on the platform, he could see

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1 The Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. I, p. 123.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

3 George Orwell, Shooting an Elephant, p. 10.

that there was no large exit. A few days later, he confided to F.G. Puckle, 'I haven't had a night's sleep since that happened. I keep on seeing it, all over again.' His statements to Irving, Beynon and Puckle show that after the event, Dyer presented a pathetic picture, though subsequently he was so lionized by the British residents in India that he had to justify the ways of Empire and appear an unrepentant officer who did his duty.

It has been suggested that Dyer was suffering from the early symptoms of Arterial sclerosis which had a retrograde effect.<sup>1</sup> The blood flowing to his brain became congested, when he stood up on the platform. Though he found the crowd still, he thought they were massing to attack him. He might have misjudged the situation, thinking that the two waves, as they surged, were going to rush him. His mind became confused and he resorted to firing. This contention is open to question. Dyer was active and was directing his troops to fire in the thick of the crowd and his statements, both before and after the event, show that he was a dashing officer who could not forget to what straits his people had been reduced.<sup>2</sup> As it appears from his evidence, Dyer remained conscious throughout of a high sense of 'duty' and the question of his having been under the strain of sickness would not arise. It would be normal for anyone in Dyer's position to be a bit excited in view of the experience that the city of Amritsar had had for two three days, and also the thousands of people holding a meeting in the Bagh, while his orders had been flouted.

Lieutenant Governor, Sir Michael O' Dwyer strongly supported Dyer's action and argued that Dyer's force was dangerously small for the execution of his imperative duty, and that if he had delayed in order to give further warnings, in addition to those that he and the Deputy Commissioner had given for 'four hours' earlier, his small force would probably have been swept away like chaff before the wind; and then what could have happened to Amritsar, to Lahore and the Central Punjab? Both Sir Michael and General William Beynon thought that Dyer's action crushed the rebellion at its source, Amritsar and prevented its spreading

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1 Rupert Furneaux, *Massacre at Amritsar*, p. 177.

2 Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 418.

elsewhere. By 16 April Dyer received the following message from Beynon, 'Your action correct and Lieutenant-Governor approves.' As a matter of fact, after the 18th April when the news of Jallianwala Bagh spread over the province, it was not considered necessary to fire another shot. Outside the Punjab, the immediate effects of quelling the rebellion were equally marked. The Government of India endorsed the findings of the Hunter Committee which described Dyer's conduct as amounting only to a 'grave error of judgement which exceeded the reasonable requirements of the case' and was an honest but mistaken conception of duty.<sup>1</sup>

If the object was to disperse the crowd from the Jallianwala Bagh then this could have been achieved without shedding blood. He could have prevented the meeting being held. His proclamation

- 1 The House of Commons censured Dyer's action and Dyer was to be relieved on half pay with no prospects of employment. On the contrary, the House of Lords approved of his action and in England his friends presented him with a jewelled sword and a purse of \$ 150,000. The Morning Post (London) opened a fund for the 'Saviour of India' and was overwhelmed with contributions which within a few weeks had reached the huge sum of £ 26,317.

In a recent work by Rupert Furneaux, *Massacre at Amritsar* (p. 91) it is mentioned that General Dyer and Captain Briggs were invested with the five *kakas*, the sacred emblems of the Sikh Brotherhood. For this no documentary evidence is available beyond Colvin's biography of Dyer. From discussions with some of those, who worked as *granthis* in 1919 in the Golden Temple, and who were expected to present *sarapahs* and had at least some knowledge as to whom they had been offered, it appears, while taking them at their word that the above incident did not take place. After the Jallianwala Bagh episode, the Indian public opinion was hostile and the British were rather too cautious to risk any further odium for their actions. It must also be mentioned that the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee had not come into existence then, and the Golden Temple was managed by its Manager (the Deputy Commissioner's nominee). The struggle was directed against the control of the Sikh shrines by priests who were careerists and sycophants seeking only wealth and power. It is conceivable that the religious prestige of the Darbar Sahib may have been used to whitewash the crime of General Dyer who was given *khilat* at the Golden Temple by the official manager, Sardar Arur Singh. Lord Finlay turned this event to the best account in the House of Lords when he said that the Sikhs had approved of Dyer's action and had even made him a Sikh. See Patabhai Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress*, p. 446. See the British viewpoint in Rupert Furneaux, *Massacre at Amritsar*, p. 91.



touched few places in the city. To fire and to continue firing on a crowd without warning shows a criminal error of judgement on the part of Dyer, who was determined to kill people without discrimination. Not only did he fire without warning but he fired for long. He infringed the principle of the use of minimum force. His force was not small and the risk involved was not great. To fire in the air and give adequate time for the crowd to disperse never entered into the calculations of this over-zealous and audacious general.

When the painful episode is viewed in perspective, it is apparent that the whole tragedy could have been averted. It was not realized what the consequences of the episode would be. Among other things, papers, plans and estimates connected with the improvement of the city shared the fate of destruction by fire in the disturbances and hence interrupted the process of improvement of the city<sup>1</sup>. At Amritsar a thriving trade had been ruined. The octroi receipts there, which amounted to twelve or thirteen thousand rupees per day, had declined, on a certain day, to something under four rupees.<sup>2</sup> The tragedy of Amritsar had a disquieting effect on the whole of the province. C.F. Andrews who had been arrested at Amritsar in May 1919 described this episode as 'cold-blooded, deliberate murder, comparable only with the Glencoe massacre<sup>3</sup>'. In Parliament Mr. Asquith called it 'one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history'. Churchill, who was Secretary of State for War, suggested a disciplinary action against Dyer. He thought that what had happened in Amritsar was foreign to the British way of doing business. In the course of his speech in the House of Commons on July 8, 1920, he said, 'It is an extraordinary step, a monstrous event which stands in singular and sinister isolation'. Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India wrote to Chelmsford on July 17, 1919, 'It was the savage and inappropriate folly of the order which rouses my anger'.

In a letter dated April 10, 1920 addressed to the Editor, Amrit Bazar Patrika, which was intercepted by the Intelligence Department

1 The Amritsar Municipal Committee Records, File No 626.

2 Indian Mirror, 17th July, 1919.

3 Home Poll. (1920). January 1920. Deposit. No. 5. (National Archives of India, New Delhi).

of the Government of India, Lenin conveyed his reactions on the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. The letter reads<sup>1</sup>:

Mr. Lenin read the dreadful account of massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in your esteemed paper and he has authorised me to make this known to the people of India that the Soviet Government are in full sympathy with the just cause of their Indian brethren.

Yours eternally,

M. Alexief

Chief Agent to Bolvshevik  
Bureau for Northern India.

The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh inspired the Soviet poet, Nikolai Tikhonov to compose in 1920 a moving poem, 'Indian Dream.'<sup>2</sup> He finds himself transported to the crowded square of Jallianwala Bagh where he moves among Indians freely as if he had known them for ages. He finds that 'Amritsar is smouldering and smoking before me', and recollects the 9th January, 1905 of Czar's Russia, when men and women, in order to seek justice, had been mowed down by bullets in front of the Czar's palace. Tikhonov writes :

'When similar blotches congealed not in vain  
Then just a mower to India came,  
And mowed people down,  
eyes riveted.....'

In his conversation with Field Marshal Montgomery, Jawahar Lal Nehru remarked that he thought that Amritsar had been a turning point in Anglo-Indian relations<sup>3</sup>. As a matter of fact, the determination to fight the British hardened as a result of General Dyer's action in Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. The national leaders could and did use it to paint afresh in lurid terms the oppression which was taking place all over the country. The Jallianwalla Bagh created for Dyer, as the distinguished journalist B.G.

1 Home Poll. (1920). April 1920. (Deposit National Archives of India). See Amrit Bazar Patrika, 18 April, 1965.

2 I am grateful to Dr. D. Kaushik who drew my attention to this poem. See Patriot, December 11, 1966.

3 Sunday Times, London, January 29, 1961.

Horniman wrote, 'a special niche in the gallery of frightfulness, Addressing a public meeting in Lahore on October, 8, 1920, Dr. Kitchlew asked whether in view of the Jallianwala Bagh, the public was still prepared to co-operate with men who had shed the blood of children<sup>1</sup>. It showed the people the nature of British rule that prided itself on force, and thus aroused discontent, resentment and suspicion of British motives. It is on the foundation of this resentment and mistrust that the national movement gained strength. It became the greatest 'recruiting poster' for Congress ever to be waved before the Indian people who joined up in their thousands<sup>2</sup>. The pride which was felt in British justice received a rude shock. In February 1921 the Duke of Connaught, who had been brought to India to inaugurate the Reforms, quite appropriately said that the shadow of Amritsar lengthened over the fair face of India.

"The time has come", declared Rabindranath Tagore, renouncing his Knighthood, "when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I, for my part, wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings." As a protest, Gandhi also relinquished the title of 'Kaisar-i-Hind'.

On the 14th April, a meeting was called at Kotwali in the Public Library Hall and about 100 to 150 people attended, including local *Raises*, Magistrates, merchants and Municipal Commissioners. Speeches were delivered by the Commissioner, Mr. A.J.W. Kitchen, General Dyer and the Deputy Commissioner. These speeches were mostly threats, warnings and expostulations. General Dyer announced, 'For me the battlefield of Flanders and Amritsar are the same...You people talk against Government. I shall uproot Thee all'. Mr. Miles Irving pointed out in clear and precise terms that the whole city was in General Dyer's charge and that his orders must be obeyed and the shops opened without delay. Dyer had been appointed its Administrator on the 15th

1 Government of India. Home Department, Political A, Proceedings, October 1920, no. 203, 16 (National Archives of India, New Delhi).

2 Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 75.

April. When Lala Kesho Ram suggested several measures to facilitate the opening of the shops, the Deputy Commissioner reacted favourably, but when Khan Bahadur Ghulam Sadiq was about to say something, the Deputy Commissioner interrupted, and remarked, 'Keep quiet, Khan Sahib, it is all the result of wrong information given to me by you'.<sup>1</sup> But the shadow of misery hovered over the city, and in their houses men retold the story of the tragic happening, and much time was spent in removing the wounded and burying or burning the dead. On the 15th April all shops were opened and thus the *hartal* came to an end. The courts opened for the first time on the 22nd April. Lawyers were punished for their real or supposed interest in politics and on the 23rd April, they were enrolled as special constables, a step which had been taken as a vindictive measure. They were insulted and made to witness public flogging and to carry furniture like ordinary coolies. Their roll call was held twice a day. They were discharged of their irksome duties on the 12th May. Indiscriminate arrests continued. On major charges, 298 people were brought before the Martial Law Commissioners. Of these, 218 were convicted, 51 were sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 7 for seven years, 10 for five years, 13 for three years and 11 for lesser periods. This does not take account of the cases dealt with summarily by military officers, numbering 60 persons, of whom 50 were convicted, and 105 persons convicted under Martial Law by Civil Magistrates. About 193 persons were arrested in the first instance and released without being brought to trial. Flogging was freely practised.

Kutchia Kaurianwala Khu, where Miss Sherwood had to hide, was chosen for punishing the offenders and all men, who passed that way, had to crawl. Dyer placed two pickets at different exits of the street with instructions that no Indians (women exclusive) were to pass between these two points but added that if they did pass, they must go on all fours. Even a blind man was to do this and was kicked when he failed to do so. Any one remonstrated, as Labh Chand Seth testified, was knocked down and compelled to crawl.<sup>2</sup> In all, according to Dyer, fifty Indians were made to crawl

1 The Congress Punjab Enquiry, p. 13.

2 Rupert Furneaux, Massacre at Amritsar, p. 94.

through the lane. None of the residents were able to go out to obtain the necessities of life for a week. Closing the lane resulted in the accumulation of filth and rubbish for no sweeper would come to clear it. This order was issued on the 19th April and continued in force until 25th April when it was withdrawn on the instruction of the Punjab Government who disapproved of it. This order punished mostly the innocent and subjected them to great humiliation. All citizens had to *salam* every Englishman they saw and those who refused were brought to this lane for creeping with their ballies, touching the ground. Disobedience on this score resulted in arrest and detention in the lock-up. Some were ordered to stand up in the sun. Handcuffing of respectable persons was the order of the day. Special tribunals were set up for trying offences, and witnesses appearing for the accused were threatened, harassed and asked to tear up their statements. Lashing, after tying the hands above the head, was common. Abusing, slapping, pulling of peoples' moustaches and beards were a daily occurrence. One man was forced to drink wine and sticks were thrust into the anus of others. No one was allowed to leave Amritsar without a special pass which was obtainable only with the greatest difficulty. Martial Law remained in force up to 9th June. People were arrested without charges being preferred. They were asked not to give evidence or to give such evidence that helped authorities. Sukha Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, who persuaded politely and even threatened those around him to give false evidence, said that 'nobody had a conscience in those days'. Many became orphans and widows. Due to legal proceedings, many were involved in debt. Some like Muhammad Akram were transported for life due to fabricated evidence. Mahasha Ratto, a cloth broker, Maulvi Muhammad Sadiq, a *mazdoor* in the cloth market, Mir Mohamdi, *nanbai*, Mian Sindhi, *zargar*, Lala Wallaiti Ram, milk-seller, Lala Karam Chand, jeweller, Mian Jalal-ud-din, proprietor, Iron Factory, and Sardar Jairam Singh and Chowdhry Bugga, the glass-seller, were transported for life in the first instance. Hans Raj, a man of dubious character, induced people to act according to the dictates of the police. For days sweepers did not appear in the locality so that the refuse of the houses was not collected, nor were the latrines cleaned and soldiers polluted wells by using them as latrines. The approximate estimate of

damage done to property in the Amritsar district was Rs. 1,697,511.

The indemnity for the damage in the city of Amritsar was imposed. The estimated assessment was Rs. 2,056,000. The Amritsar Municipality was to recover it by taking temporarily certain higher rates of terminal taxes and by imposing higher rates on the sale of immovable property. At the initiative of Raja Narendra Nath, the issue was discussed in the Punjab Legislative Council on 24th February, 1921 and the sum imposed was remitted by a majority of 43 votes.

## VI INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the next event of importance was the Congress session in Gol Bagh at Amritsar during Christmas 1919 which was presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru and attended by a galaxy of nationalist leaders, including B.G. Tilak, Annie Besant, B.C. Pal, C.R. Dass, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gandhi, Srinavas Shastri and Jinnah. The session was attended by about 36,000 people of which 6,000 were ordinary delegates, and 1200 tenant delegates. The rest were visitors. The Ali Brothers—Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, also came to the city and were given a tumultuous welcome by thousands of people. The site was fixed at Amritsar, with the idea of focussing attention on the Punjab troubles. Jawaharlal Nehru has described the Amritsar Congress as the first Gandhi Congress.<sup>1</sup> Tilak took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt that the majority of delegates looked to Gandhi as their leader who had by now emerged as a challenging force. At the Amritsar Congress, C.R. Dass had moved a resolution which declared that the Reforms were inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing but Gandhi's amendment to the working of Reforms was accepted and the compromise effected. Gandhi declared at the Amritsar session, 'I agree that there was grave provocation given by the Government in arresting Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Pal. These troubles would not have arisen. But the Government went mad at the time; we went mad also at the time. Do not return madness with madness but return madness with sanity and

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 44.

the whole situation will be yours<sup>1</sup>. Fifty Resolutions were passed which covered a variety of topics, ranging from a demand for the recall of Lord Chelmsford to the request for an investigation of the Land Revenue system, and labour and peasant conditions, third class travel, the removal of General Dyer from his command, the repeal of the Rowlatt Act, and Press Act, the cancellation of the indemnities, and the release of prisoners who were still in jails, despite the Royal proclamation. The Congress, for the first time, explained why it was forced to boycott the Hunter Commission. The following is the full text of the Resolution ; as amended, which was passed at the Congress Session held at Amritsar :

- (a) That this Conference reiterates its declaration of last year that India is fit for full responsible government and repudiates all assumptions and assertions to the contrary wherever made.
- (b) That this conference adheres to the resolution passed at Delhi Congress regarding constitutional reforms and is of opinion that the Reform Act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing.
- (c) That this Congress further urges that Parliament should early take steps to establish full responsible government in India in accordance with the principles of self-determination.
- (d) Pending such introduction, this Congress trusts that so far as may be possible, they so work the reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government.

At the suggestion of Gandhi, a resolution was passed which, while recognising the grave provocation, expressed the deep regret of the Congress at the excesses committed in certain parts of the country, particular in Punjab and Gujarat.

Mr. Reginald Neville, the London solicitor, was in Amritsar during the Congress week. The room in his hotel was broken into at dead of night on 25th December, 1919 by some 20 European soldiers from the garrison at Jullundur and he was insulted and asked how, being a white man, he could bear to work against Dyer. Later on the soldiers were made to apologise to Mr. Neville.

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1. Pattabhai Sitaramayya, The History of the Congress, Vol. I, p. 307.

During the Congress session, there was much excitement in the city, and the visitors from outside who looked on Jallianwala Bagh as a sacred place received a warm welcome from the citizens who spared no pains in providing facilities for their guests. Some of the visitors took away with them the 'sacred clay' of Jallianwala Bagh as a token of respect for the martyrs. The Muslim League also met in Amritsar in 1919. Various social and political activities were organised from time to time, especially when political leaders visited the city. The National Industrial High School was set up in 1921 and technical education was given to students in order to make them self-sufficient, but for inadequate funds the school lasted only for about two years. Shri Rattan Lal Bhatia was its Headmaster. Swaraj Ashram was built outside Chatiwind and some of the revolutionaries of Bengal stayed there and gave training to the youth in the ideology of revolution. Bhagat Singh, who subsequently became the hero of the Punjab, was one of the early trainees. Gandhi stayed there for a few days. Dr. Kitchlew was also associated with the activities of this Ashram and some businessmen of the city were financing it.

After the annexation of the Punjab, a Resident supervised over the management of the Golden Temple and this arrangement continued till Amritsar District was placed under a Civil officer in 1859 when its management was entrusted to a Committee of Sikh *Sardars* and *Raises*. The Committee was dropped in 1881. A Manager or a *Sarbarah* was appointed to look after the temple with the consent of the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar. The Committee met rarely; and about 1883 the entire responsibility devolved on a Manager (*Sarbarah*), and want of control, bred irresponsibility and corruption. On 15th and 16th of November, 1920, a meeting was held before the *Akal Takht*, and a Committee was appointed of 175 members and named as Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar whose object was to manage, reform and control the Sikh shrines and gurdwaras. In its meeting of December 12, 1920 the Committee found elected Sunder Singh Ramgarhia. Subsequently it became a legally constituted body, and Baba Kharak Singh was elected its first President. The agitation waged by the Sikhs in order to gain control of the Gurdwara at Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, where gruesome tragedy



occurred, damaged the spirit of cordiality which had existed between the Government and the Sikhs. They had already taken over the management of the Golden Temple and of *Akal Takht*. Soon after another clash occurred on 7th November, 1921 when the District Magistrate of Amritsar took away the keys of the *Tosha Khana* of the Golden Temple. This led to the further trouble which came to be known as the 'Keys Agitation'. Under the provisions of the Seditious Meetings Act, many Sikh leaders, including Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Mehtab Singh were sentenced to imprisonment. About 200 persons had been arrested. This made the agitation more violent. The Congress and the Khilafat Committee supported the Sikhs. The Government, however, subsequently modified its policy and returned the keys to the Sikhs on February 12, 1922. The deposition of Maharaja Ripduman Singh of Nabha on July 9, 1923, who had sympathies with the Akalis, produced widespread resentment among the Sikhs, and as a result, *Akhand Path* was held at a Sikh Gurdwara at Jaito in the Nabha State. As the Nabha police entered the Gurdwara and arrested the Akali workers, the *Akhand Path* was interrupted. This was taken as a challenge by the Sikhs. About 500 Akalis marched from Amritsar towards Jaito to hold an *Akhand Path* in the Gungesar Gurdwara. Military force was used on armless and peaceful Sikhs moving towards the place of this religious worship. About 100 Sikhs lay dead, but this did not deter them. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal were declared unlawful bodies and almost all important Sikh leaders were arrested. Ultimately in 1925 the Gurdwara Bill was passed by which all the important Gurdwaras, which numbered about 625 in the Punjab, passed into the hands of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

On April 11, 1923, Amritsar suffered a serious communal trouble between Hindus and Muslims. At this time thousands of stalwart villagers who had come to Amritsar to pay their homage at Darbar Sahib further added to the confusion. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee organised Akali Jathas to patrol the streets for the maintenance of peace. About 2000 students of Khalsa College volunteered their services for patrolling in the city. The Congress and Khilafit leaders also

offered their help. In a communique the Government acknowledged the services rendered by the Akalis. Several of the injured persons were admitted to the Golden Temple Akali hospital. J.M. Dunnet, the Deputy Commissioner was greatly impressed by this timely local assistance in 'a delicate and difficult situation'. The 13th April, a critical day, when most of the shops were closed, and the whole of the town bore the appearance of the dead, passed off quietly but for a few isolated cases of beating and stone throwing. As soon as things had settled down, the S.G.P.C. called a conference of about 60 leading Hindus and Muslims on the 14th April. Sardar Teja Singh Sumaundari was unanimously elected its Chairman and steps were taken to undertake the work of combating false and mischievous rumours. Rai Bahadur Gopal Dass Bhandari, President, Municipal Committee Amritsar, Khawja Ghulam Sadiq, Vice-President, Municipal Committee, Amritsar and Sardar Tara Singh also attended this conference and supported the cause.

The S.G.P.C. has been concerned with the welfare of the Sikhs, their educational and industrial development, the management of their Gurdwaras, which were enlisted in the Sikh Gurdwara Act, and the propagation of the ideals of Sikh religion. By the Gurdwara Act amendment in 1945, local Committees were abolished and the direct management of Gurdwaras was taken over by the S.G.P.C. At present S.G.P.C. has 160 members of which 140 are elected; other 5 are representatives of big shrines like *Akal Takht*, Amritsar; *Takht Kesgarh*, Anandpur Sahib (Hoshiarpur); *Takht Patna Sahib* (Bihar); *Takht Hazoor Sahib* (Andhra) and Golden Temple (Amritsar) and 15 seats are reserved for those from outside Punjab. The age of eligibility for its membership is 21 years and the total voting strength is 15,000 to 20,000. Donations and offerings and rent form the main source of income. The shrine of Amritsar has retained a large number of endowments lavished on them by Ranjit Singh and his successors. Before Partition, it was necessary that whenever the rulers of Patiala, Nabha and Jind State visited the temple, they had to offer their fixed homage to the temple; for instance the Maharaja of Patiala offered invariably the sum of Rs. 1100. The

budgeted income of the S.G.P.C. for (1962-63) was Rs. 5,212,347 and the items on which money is spent are hospitals (Rs. 400,000 to Rs. 500,000 annually), Education (including one Engineering College at Ludhiana and many High schools), Guru Ram Dass Sarai, Kitchen (Rs. 60,000 a year) libraries and the decoration of temples.

When Mr. C. H. Rogers was Secretary of the Municipality from May, 1918 to May, 1919, the Town Hall offices were burnt and the records destroyed and he resigned his post, whilst the city was under Martial Law ; and he was succeeded at a crucial time by Rai Bahadur Gopal Dass Bhandari who came to exercise considerable influence in the city. Up to 1921 only a Deputy Commissioner could hold the office of the President, and Gopal Dass became the first non-official President on March 4, 1921, a position he occupied until his death in 1927. An eloquent speaker, he was a scholar in Persian and Arabic, and showed high administrative qualities and a breadth of outlook. During the communal riots in 1923, he exercised a steadying influence over the contending parties and handled the situation tactfully. He officiated as Secretary till the appointment of Mr. B. C. Chatterjee on 8th July 1920 (except for the interval of 8 months when Mr. Pearce took over the Secretaryship) who filled the office of Secretary for 12 years. On the 25th July, 1932, Mr. P. C. Bhandari, son of Sir Gopal Dass, succeeded Mr. B. C. Chatterjee as Secretary of the Municipal Committee. Trained at Cambridge, he possessed a sound knowledge of social developments in English and local public affairs. In 1931, he submitted a report on the Amritsar Municipal Administration, a work of merit and industry. He was appointed as Secretary of the Dobson Committee for the investigation of Lahore Municipal affairs. He was officer-in-charge, Census Operation (1941). He was also for sometime Honorary Lecturer at the Local Self-Government Institute of Lahore. He concentrated on the increase in Municipal revenues and was entrusted with the Voluntary Evacuation Enquiry which was carried out in Amritsar in December, 1941. As the Executive Officer of Amritsar Municipality, he played a vital role in the development of the city and its expansion, especially after the city had been damaged by the communal disturbances in 1946 ; the bridge connecting the city with the civil areas has been named after him for his distinguished public services to the city of Amritsar.

Another well-known family connected with Amritsar is that of Sardar Bahadur Sardar Arur Singh who performed important Civil and Judicial duties and was the Honorary Manager of the Golden Temple (1902-1921). He collected war loans, furnished a thousand recruits and was the first senior Vice-President to be elected to the District Board. His son Col. Sardar Sir Buta Singh, was a member of the Defence Consultative Committee. He went to England as a representative of India on the Commonwealth Relations Conference and is the senior Vice-President of Khalsa College, Amritsar since 1954. He is the senior Vice-President of the Punjab Farmers' Forum.

Raja Kallian Singh's descendents, Lala Labh Chand, Lala Parkash Chand and Lala Lal Chand have carried on the family tradition of social welfare and service. Lala Labh Chand, Honorary Magistrate since 1920, was a member of the old Punjab Legislative Assembly and is the President of various public and charitable institution and is the Provincial Scouts Commissioner. For over twenty five years, Lala Parkash Chand has been associated with the Municipal Committee and was elected twice its President. Under his Presidentship, in the teeth of opposition in 1939, a welcome address was presented to Shri Subhash Chandra Bose, President of the All India Congress Committee. He is a member of the Town Improvement Trust almost for the last twelve years.

By Resolution No. 2 of 9th April, 1937, the Municipal Committee resolved that the office of President should be for one year and should be open to every community. In 1934 the construction of a *Satta* platform in Namak Mandi Bazar created a storm of resentment. Violent controversy arose in the newspapers, which brought to light some of the evils of *Satta* trade. Due to strong public opinion, the *Satta* Bazar platform was demolished and the Engineering Department strongly criticised.

At the suggestion of Dr. Satya Pal, Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha was founded in Lahore in March, 1926 with two main purposes : to infuse a spirit of patriotism among the youth of the country, and to organise labourers and peasants. Its activities were limited until the Punjab Political Conference at Amritsar in April, 1928 put

a new life in it. Under the joint auspices of the City Congress Committee and local Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha, a public meeting was held on the 30th June, 1929 in the Jallianwala Bagh presided over by Dr. Kitchlew in sympathy with the hunger strike, observed by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, as a protest against the bad treatment accorded to political prisoners in jails.<sup>1</sup> In July 1928, the bond between the Kirti party and the Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha was strengthened by the election of Sardar Sohan Singh Josh as President of the Amritsar Branch of the Sabha. Sheikh Hasam-ud-Din, Sikander Khizar, Ahmad Hasan, Rattan Chand and Gurdit Singh were some of the prominent members of the Sabha.

In 1935 the branch of the All India Trade Union Congress was founded in Amritsar due to the efforts of Sheikh Hasam-ud-Din, and Pandit Amar Nath Vidyalankar also, who organised the activities of the 'Servants of People' Society, which re-affirmed extreme views in politics. The Ahrar movement of Ata-Ullah Shah Bukhari, which was to fight Hindu and Muslim communalism, acquired prestige in the city, and local leaders like Sheikh Hasam-ud-Din, Ghazi Abdul Rehman and Maulana Daud Ghazni were its prominent members. In August, 1942 when the Quit India Movement was launched, the Congress activities at Amritsar gained a furious speed. Mahasha Parmanand was the President of the District Congress Committee and Pandit Amar Nath Vidyalankar (who became the Education Minister, Punjab and is at present Member of Parliament) was its Secretary. A large number of meetings were held and processions taken out. In the struggle for India's freedom, local leaders—Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Satya Pal, Choudhary Bugga, Sikandar Khizar, Amir Chand Gupta, Ahmed Hasan, Radha Kishan Seth and Amar Nath Vidyalankar deserve special mention as they suffered many imprisonments and privations.

With the stricter measures of control employed during recent years, the collection of revenue has shown marked improvement. In 1939 at the initiative of Mr. G. R. Sethi, the well-known journalist, the Roster system was introduced by which *Moharers* were transferred from one octroi barrier to another, which resulted in

1 1919. Government of India. Home Department, Political, 1930, K.W. File No. 130 (National Archives, New Delhi).

an increase in revenue and also facilitated the detection of corruption. This system was naturally unpopular with the Department.

Amritsar has been plagued with mosquitoes and the official reports from 1881 make it clear that this menace affected the whole city. From time to time the Municipal authorities looked into this question and took definite anti-mosquito measures. The main causes of the spread of this epidemic have been : excessive canal irrigation around the city where buildings have been erected, the rise of the water table in Amritsar, leading to water logging, the silting up of all storm water channels, lack of proper drainage in *abadies* outside the city walls, the existence of a lot of *dhabs* and depressions, old tanks and ponds, the digging of earth within Municipal limits and paddy cultivation in Municipal limits near inhabited localities. After the partition in 1947, the Municipal Committee sanctioned a sum of Rs. 10,000 for anti-mosquito measures and provided a permanent staff for anti-malarial works in Amritsar. The results have been encouraging. In December, 1949, the Government came forward with a proposal for spending Rs. 30,000 for extensive anti-malarial operations. The area for these anti-malarial operations was divided into six zones. Intensive D.D.T. measures were carried out once a week ; excessive vegetation was removed, water channels were welded and pits filled up. Anti-parasitic measures were taken. As anti-malarial work was mainly an engineering problem, efforts were made to improve the drainage of the city. Statistics show a greater reduction in the mosquitoes caught per man per hour as compared to previous years.

New roads were constructed ; old historical foundations were dug up ; old bridges were renovated ; and more lights were introduced into the city. Beautiful and circuitous lawns were laid out at Ram Bagh. In the late thirties, the Prince of Wales Zanana Hospital was constructed and inaugurated by Sir Henry Craik on October 11, 1940. A loan of Rs. 5,00,000 was raised from the Punjab Government and cement concrete roads were constructed in the congested areas of the city. The encroachments on roads and *koochas* were removed. A loan of Rs. 2,500,000 was raised for the purpose of drainage and the paving of *koochas* which were consolidated. The moat around the city was turned into a fairly

well guarded storm water drain, which with due care to its cleanliness, began to serve as a useful outlet for flood water.

Once again the city which had manifested historic Hindu-Muslim unity in 1919 became a city divided against itself in 1946 when the fires of communal violence spread. Communal tension had been on the increase ever since the end of 1944 and had led to grave outbreaks of disorder in Calcutta and Noakhali. Bloodshed and arson in the eastern part of India had thrown the Punjab into a dangerous state of communal frenzy. At Lahore the 'Direct Action' movement had excited the Muslim community to unite and agitate against the Khizar Ministry which had declared the Muslim-League National Guards as an unlawful body under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Feelings had run high and excitement was prevalent. Processions of Muslims marched through the streets of Lahore. Even the effigy of the Chief Minister, Mr. Khizar Hayat Khan was burnt in public. The whole atmosphere was charged with passion and anything could have happened, though the magnitude of the impending crisis was never realized even by the most astute of politicians. With Khizar's resignation on March 3, 1947, the pent-up excitement of the past weeks broke loose. The rumour of a League Ministry inspired demonstrations by the minority communities. All the three major communities—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—were collecting arms and getting ready for an open conflict. Events were moving fast and on the steps of the Legislative Assembly in Lahore, Master Tara Singh whirled his sword round his head, and shouted '*Raj Karega Khalsa, agi rohe na Ko!*'.<sup>1</sup> This spectacular act excited people all the more and the first outbreak took place in Lahore on March 4th. News of political agitation, unruly processions, the drawing of the sword and the death of a Hindu reached Amritsar in more exaggerated terms which touched off violent communal rioting in the town.

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1. The pure (Sikhs) will rule ; No resister will remain.

Amritsar has always shown awareness to things and events. The people living there are mostly sensitive and sometimes passionate. Sensitivity, being a part of intelligence, has developed in them a sense of security and made them aware of the danger around them. They may not solve their problems or settle their disputes, but they have an uncanny sense of smelling danger wherever it exists. Towards the end of December, 1946, Mr. P.C. Bhandari, the Executive Officer was to be found repairing the Municipal hose-pipe. When questioned, he replied 'The city will soon be in flames. I am making such preparations as I can'.<sup>1</sup> Knowing what had overtaken Lahore, people anticipated troubles on a large scale in their own city. Panic drove them into groups in the streets; public meetings and private discussions were held and they began to take steps to meet all eventualities. Nerves were raw, and temperatures running high. Excitement seized their mind and blinded them to consequences. It resolved itself into a question of prestige and of safeguarding oneself. The element of sanity was over-ruled by blind passion. The voice of reason was lost in the din of heated slogans and long processions. A vague uneasiness pervaded the population but nothing was definitely known, for rumour was rife and people were ignorant of the events occurring in other cities. Suspicion lurked in the minds of the people occasioned by the movements of troops. The areas, where the population was mixed, were affected most. The shops in the bazar were deserted, many of them half-burnt; there was nothing in them but rubbish and fragments of smashed goods. Fear was uppermost and violence, a constant threat. In the actual city of Amritsar, the Muslims were the largest single community and the Sikhs only a small minority. But those areas, where either Muslims or Hindus predominated, remained for the most part quiet. The Katra Ahluwalia, the Lohgarh area and the Sharifpura remained safe localities where practically no damage was done. On the whole, the civil lines, where the professional classes resided, remained peaceful. But Katra Sher Singh, Chowk Farid, Hathi Gate, Bazar Bakarwana and certain portions of Hall Bazar were partially destroyed. Mr. Penderal Moon (afterwards Sir) notes that not a shot was fired by the police, while this destruction was in progress,<sup>2</sup>

1 Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 74.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 78.



and for twenty four hours riotous mobs raged through the city and the finest bazars were burnt, but the District Magistrate, who had besides the police, 144 men of the Inniskilling Fusiliers, made no effective use of his force.<sup>1</sup>

Besides organised rioting, isolated incidents of looting, stabbing and arson were frequent in many parts of the city. Stabbing was developed into a fine art—so stealthily was it done. Unfortunately most of the victims were children or the old people. It was difficult to detect the 'doers' in such cases, for they were organised and were given knives and training for the 'job' in order to save the honour of their community. In certain localities, a large number of people participated with a view to wiping out the other community, "the enemy of their religion". The slogan of "*Nara-i-Taqbir*" and of "*Har Har Mahadev*" was often heard during those long nights. Houses were burnt, property looted, streets blocked and men and children killed. Anarchy was the order of the day. At times from a distance, it seemed as if the whole city was on fire. Flames and dense smoke could be seen rising above the roof-tops of Amritsar and at night shrieks were heard. People could not sleep peacefully for more than a few minutes. Some streets were guarded, and men stood to attention the whole night to protect the inhabitants. But the situation was fast deteriorating. A curfew was imposed. Areas, which had a mixed population, were guarded and the police patrolled the city. A night a police guard drove through the town. The joint appeal made by Gandhi and Jinnah at the instance of Lord Mountbatten failed to produce results. The lawless element, the professional goondas, which works underground in most cities, was ready at hand to exploit the explosive situation in the city. The cry of the dispossessed for revenge was loud and was swelled by extremist groups.

In the meantime, events in West Punjab were taking a tragic turn. Gandhi, the Congress leaders and Master Tara Singh had appealed to the Hindu and Sikh minorities to stay in their homes and to face the situation with fortitude. But soon after the announcement of the Radcliffe Award on August 17, 1947 a determined campaign to drive out Hindus and Sikhs was initiated in West Punjab and the North Western Frontier Provinces. There

1 Penderal Moon, Divide and Quit, p. 80.

were serious disturbances in the Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot and Gujranwala districts. Massacre on an unprecedented scale took place in Sheikhupura in West Punjab. Refugees were pouring into the city of Amritsar with heart-rending tales of woe and misery. They had been uprooted and knew not where to go. They had been subjected to terrible indignities. They had no choice but to seek safety in flight. Trains from Lahore brought very disturbing news about the tragic acts which had been perpetrated there and these news, grossly exaggerated, excited the people. At the Amritsar Railway station, trains were to be seen full of passengers, hacked to pieces and drenched in blood, coming from Lahore which instilled in the minds of the people a spirit of vengeance which manifested itself in violent acts. Gandhi passed through Amritsar and exhorted people to abandon the use of force and afford protection to Muslims but people expressed their strong resentment at his policy of appeasement towards Muslims. In those days Sardar Patel visited Amritsar and delivered one of his most powerful speeches in Ram Bagh where he appealed to people to stop killing the Muslims. This speech produced the desirable effect and the situation improved considerably by his tactful handling.

The picture of the city was that of a disturbed camp. The refugees, who came to Amritsar, were a cross section of the community. There was, first of all, the rich who had been reduced to poverty overnight; there were, petty businessmen and ordinary office workers, who had lost practically all they had and felt bewildered. Though appeals were made to them to remember that retaliation was no solution, yet retaliatory steps were taken against the Muslims who were eventually evacuated from the city and taken to refugee camps. The frenzy of slaughter subsided, for victims were no longer available. The city was denuded of its entire Muslim population. There were, however, many cases where Muslims were given protection by the Hindus at the risk of their own life. Long processions of those, who once lived in Amritsar and had contributed so much to the social and cultural development of the city in various ways, passed through the streets amidst bitterness and suspicion, leaving behind them their homes. They were temporarily lodged in camps and the authorities

afforded them safe transit across the border. It was in those days that Shrimati Miridula Sarabhai was stationed at Amritsar with the object of rescuing abducted women and helping the authorities to restore law and order.

The tempo of the city's life had been disturbed. Trucks, tanks and bull dozers had caused extensive damages to the roads. The cost of road repairs was estimated at Rs. 2,00,000. The damage to drains was also extensive, amounting to Rs. 2,50,000 and to the water supply still larger, Rs. 4,00,000. The Municipal gardens had also been laid waste by the military and refugees. Extensive street lighting system was severely damaged with the result that several areas in the damaged quarters of the town were plunged into darkness. The business of the city suffered and was closed down for a few days. Even mails ceased to be delivered for a time. Telephones worked fitfully. The influx of refugees raised socio-economic problems of a serious nature, while the withdrawal of Muslims, who followed certain essential professions vital to the need of the city, left a lacuna in the life of the people at least for sometime. About 400 refugees were employed by the Municipal Committee and out of this number about 200 left for other destinations. Meanwhile measures had been taken by the authorities to restore law and order.

Our city licked its wounds and gradually emerged from the shocks of communal rioting to take up the threads of life once more. The first task, which engaged both the Municipal Committee and the Administration, was the replanning and reconstruction of the walled city. Effort was directed to rebuilding the damaged part of the city in such a way as to make it less congested and insanitary than before. Thus much good came out of the evil that had befallen the city. The area was surveyed by technical experts and preliminary proposals were made. Debris which had collected was removed; roads were widened; shops wholly destroyed or damaged were built anew and houses provided with modern amenities. Street lighting had to be improvised in most of the area.

Sanitation was a major problem which loot and arson had aggravated. The influx of refugees had added to the difficulties.

The inhabitants of different localities organised volunteers who engaged themselves in cleaning up congested areas and dirty roads. Due to the determined efforts of the authorities and of the local people, the city was saved from the danger of epidemics. Arrangements for food distribution were made on an elaborate scale. The most urgent of all the problems was to provide them with food and shelter. The houses first vacated by Muslims, attracted their attention and they cast covetous eyes on them. Large camps for refugees were organised. Arrangements for food, filtered water, sanitary and medical facilities were quickly made. A loudspeaker system was introduced to offer directions to the refugees.

In spite of all this suffering and sorrow, Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and warm homage was paid to those who had laid down their lives at Jallianwala Bagh about 30 years earlier. Triumphant arches were erected in the city; there was much cannonading and haranguing along with other cheerful manifestations of the people's enthusiasm on this day of their Independence. Local leaders addressed large meetings and recapitulated the sacrifices which had been made for freedom. This ardour for the newly won freedom was somewhat damped by the memory of recent events which cast its shadow on many and created a curious hush in the city. But with the passage of time, things began to settle down and both the authorities and people embarked on a plan of improving the structure of the city. The help of engineers was sought in the preparation of elaborate plans and in their execution. The attention of authorities was directed towards giving the town a new look and in spite of limited funds, no efforts were spared in that direction. Most of the refugees found homes elsewhere and life became quieter and more peaceful. Wealth created and accumulated was expended for purposes of health and recreation. Streets were rebuilt. In Hall Bazar, Pasham Wala Bazar and Katra Jaimalsingh, new shops and houses sprang up. The Municipal Committee made determined efforts to improve the conditions of the new *abadies* by providing them with water supply and drainage. The look of these areas has changed for the better and one no longer finds over-crowding or congestion of any kinds in these bazars, but the streets of Amritsar have not yet lost their picturesque appearance.

The proceedings and activities of the Municipality show the growth of public consciousness and sense of citizenship and an anxiety to improve the living conditions of the people. Expansion of the Municipal limits was the only remedy for the avoidance of over-crowdedness in the streets and steps were taken in this direction. The Municipal Committee functioned effectively in the discharge of its responsibilities. Despite the loss of foreign markets, the reduction of railway freight, petrol rationing and commercial deadlocks, greater vigilance was exercised by the Municipal Committee and by 1952-53, the income rose to Rs. 8,39,477-6-7. The Amritsar Municipal Committee is the richest in the State with an annual revenue of about fifteen million rupees. The comparative statement given below shows a progressive improvement in the finances of the Municipal Committee, Amritsar.

Income				Expenditure		
Year	1936-37	1951-52	1962-63	1936-37	1951-52	1962-63
Total	2,916,067	6,520,598	15,160,765	2,446,215	7,385,417	14,652,042

From the above table, it would be clear that the total income of the Municipal Committee, Amritsar by 1962-63 has increased more than five times as compared to 1936-37, an evidence of the growing prosperity of the industry and commerce of the town. During the last decade, income has more than doubled. The expenditure on the beneficent activities has increased considerably. However, the incidence of municipal expenditure per head comes to about Rs. 39/- per annum only, which is quite low especially in view of the tremendous rise in prices, that has taken place.

The taxation structure of the Committee is rather inflexible. It does not sufficiently respond to meet the civic needs of the town which are growing faster due to the changing outlook of the people. This, coupled with the reluctance of the tax-payer to pay more taxes, enhances the importance of economy in expenditure and plugging of all leakage of revenue. The main heads of the income of the Municipal Committee are house tax, octroi, tax on

vehicles, fees for vehicles licences, rents of lands and buildings, gardens and roadside.

For sometime several opposition parties have been demanding fresh elections as they feel that the Municipal Committee is no longer representative of the people. The Congress is in a majority in the Municipal Committee. The Punjab Municipal Corporation Bill envisages the establishment of a Municipal Corporation in Amritsar. Under the new legislation, the minimum number of councillors in the corporation will be 25. The number of oldermen will be not more than one-fifth of the total number of councillors. The statutory term of the corporation will be four years and the corporation will have an 11-member standing Committee.

The Municipal Committee was not in a position to take any positive action for dealing with the problem of overcrowding and congestion in the city, because its role was purely regulative and restrictive as far as the enforcement of the building bye-laws and the town planning scheme was concerned. The city became overcrowded and congested due to an increase in population and a good many people lived in unhygienic conditions. The Amritsar Improvement Trust, the principal planning authority within the municipal area, was however better equipped to deal with the situation. So far as the development of the damaged areas inside the walled city was concerned, the activities of the Trust were greatly hampered by the complex problem of the acquisition of evacuee land, but with the promulgation of the Punjab Development of Damaged Areas Ordinance, the way was cleared for the Trust to go ahead with its development and housing schemes.

The Amritsar Improvement Trust has played a significant role in the development of the city. Amritsar is densely populated. Before partition, 2,40,000 people were living in an area of 11½ square miles and though during the communal disturbances in 1947, 19,000 houses were demolished, the density had not decreased, as quite a large number of displaced persons from other districts had settled in the town. 2,20,000 persons lived in the city and the density varied from 250 to 350 persons per acre. It was the intention of the Improvement Trust to develop some of the

damaged areas so that they might succeed in reducing this density to about 200 persons per acre.

The Improvement Trust framed a number of development schemes, which related among other areas, bazar Bakarwana, Katra Sher Singh, Katra Jaimalsingh, a portion of Hall bazar-cum-Katra Sher Singh, Islamabad area, bazar Jaimalsingh and bazar Pashamwala. Wider concrete roads have been laid out. In bazar Bakarwana a new road near Ghee Mandi has been opened up which has linked up the outer city with the heart of the city near the queen's statue (now removed) and the Town Hall. The by-lanes of the city have been widened, and houses and shops built in the damaged areas. A House Accommodation scheme for the (Harijan) community colony has been initiated. Old buildings are being demolished and steps for slum clearances are being taken. The foundation-stone for the accommodation of Harijan families was laid on 23rd April, 1952. These and many improvements have added to the cleanliness and beauty of the city. Since the creation of the Trust, it has framed nearly 60 schemes, both within and without the walled city. During 1960-61, the Trust framed nearly ten schemes including the widening of the road from Chowk Phowara to Jallianwala Bagh. As bulk of the damaged areas within the city wall has now been tackled, and the schemes relating to the same are followed, the Trust has directed its attention to areas in the Civil Lines and suburbs. The most important of these schemes are development schemes for the Industrial Area outside Sultanwind Gate, scheme for a residential colony near the District Courts and the shifting of the grain-market in an area outside Chatiwind Gate.

The following expenditure details from the year 1959 throw light on the expanding activities of the Trust.

1959-60	Rs. 1,211,128
1960-61	Rs. 4,315,750
1961-62	Rs. 5,472,035

The activities of the Shiromani Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh attracted so much notice in 1961 that a few observations may be made here. The Regional Formula which has been in operation had not satisfied the Sikh aspiration, and the

demand for a Punjabi Suba became persistent. Under this Formula, the Punjab was linguistically divided into two parts: the Punjabi Zone and the Hindi Zone, with the proviso that in the Punjabi Zone children must start their education in Punjabi with Gurmukhi script and in the Hindi Zone in Hindi with Devnagri script. The scheme was submitted to the Central Cabinet, and the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, added a proviso that where in a class at least ten children or forty in the whole school wanted to be given instruction in Hindi in the Panjabi Zone and in Punjabi in the Hindi Zone, their demand should be complied with, and the declaration of the parents should be considered as final regarding the children's mother-tongue. This Formula gave recognition to the Punjabi language and script hitherto not given anywhere save in a part of the Sikh State of Patiala. But this did not satisfy the Sikh leadership. Sant Fateh Singh undertook a fast but was prevailed upon eventually to break it due to the successful outcome of the negotiations with Congress leaders. On the 28 June 1961 the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal repeated the demand for a Punjabi Suba and proposed that 'a Panjabi Linguistic State for the preservation and development of Punjabi culture and language is the only solution of the Panjab problem'.

On 15th August Master Tara Singh undertook his fast unto death in support of Punjabi Suba, and Surya Dev made a counter-fast. Meetings started at the Golden Temple and were addressed by Sant Fateh Singh and others. Once again this 'heart of the city', which has transformed so many lives and quietened the passions of so many pilgrims, began to attract the attention of the political pundits to the need of a settlement of the Sikh question. Initially persuasions and requests failed to dissuade the Sikh leader from continuing his fast. Sant Fateh Singh was called to Delhi for negotiations but the talks broke down. Jai Prakash Narain, Ashoka Mehta and M. S. Aney called on the Sikh leader at Amritsar but he was adamant. Eventually the Maharaja of Patiala and Hardit Singh Malik brought about an understanding between the Government and the Akali Dal. Thus on October 1, at 7 p.m. Master Tara Singh ended his 48th day fast. Since then there has been a split in the Akali party and now Sardar Fateh



Singh has virtually gained the control of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. But the Sino-Indian conflict riveted the Sikh thoughts to problems of greater magnitude. During emergency Amritsar contributed liberally both in terms of money and gold to the Indian National Defence contributions and evoked the memory of those magnificent days at Jallianwala Bagh when at the call of Gandhi, women took out their bracelets and earrings and placed them at his disposal to fight for India's freedom. The same passion and the same spirit of sacrifice was shown during Emergency. The Municipal Committee donated Rs. 5,00,000 in cash and Rs. 1,50,000 towards the purchase of gold. The Municipal employees also contributed one month's provident fund and Rs. 19,205.51 Ps. in cash towards gold. Details of contributions towards the National Defence Fund up to 25th February, 1964 in Amritsar District were as follows :—

Cash Panjab Accounts	General Accounts	Gold in grams	Silver in grams
Rs, 33,17,169	Rs. 47,962	64,471	855

People have shown a keen interest in several Home defence and Military training schemes.

When Pakistan put its signatures to the Kutch Agreement on June 30, 1965, it was organising and planning a stealthy and secretive attack on a big scale across the cease fire line in Jammu and Kashmir, and even before the ink was dry on that Agreement, thousands of recruited raiders called '*Mujahids*' launched a massive attack. It is calculated that since August 5, 1965 several thousand infiltrators camouflaged as civilians fully equipped with modern weapons—signal equipment, large quantities of ammunition and explosives—and trained under the direction of General Akhtar Hussain Malik, General Officer Commanding, 12th Division of the Pakistan Army dribbled into Kashmir and carried on their nefarious campaign of destroying bridges, vital roads, police stations, strategic installations, inflicting casualties, and, what is more, extending their influence among the local population in the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir. They followed an 'Algerian type of struggle'. Pakistan inducted troops of regular army also along certain sectors

of the cease fire in Kashmir; a wing of the Pakistan Army, trained in the guerrela warfare was sent to the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. When Pakistan's original mission to spread rebellion in Jammu and Kashmir and thereby to capture Srinagar failed, she mounted a heavy attack on the 1st September, 1965, in brigade strength with heavy armour and aircraft in the Chamb-Jaurian sector. On the same day, the Indian Air Force went into action, and for a few days, both sides found themselves locked in this region while trying to push the other side back. On the 5th September evening, the Pakistan Air Force Sabrejet first attacked our defence installations at Amritsar thus escalating the war further to a new front. The slumbered elephant rose to the occasion and attacked its tormentor. On the 6th September, the Indian army crossed into West Punjab in a three pronged offensive along a thirty mile front.

In the twenty-two day war, Amritsar showed a marvellous spirit of dauntless courage and steadiness of purpose; it became an embattled city, a front line post like Jammu, Srinagar and Ferozepur in India's war waged for national defence. Due to its geographical position, it was naturally exposed to Pakistan's air and land attacks. The fall of Amritsar could mean a general demoralization for a whole nation. As noted above, the rocket fired by a Pakistan fighter aircraft into a thickly populated city of Amritsar on the 5th September compelled the Indian Government to order the Army to cross the cease fire in West Punjab. In their first aerial attack on Amritsar, the attackers were driven away. The second attack on these installations was made on September 8 and this time, the battery shot down the enemy planes. On the 10th September 4 Sabrejets raided Amritsar for 10 minutes, but 3 Pakistan's planes were shot down. Again on the 15th September, Amritsar faced 10 air attacks between 6 a.m. and 12-30 P.M. at short intervals but the battery did not allow them to drop any bomb. The most dastardly attack, however, was made on the 22nd September in broad daylight at 4.15 p.m. when 5 Pakistan's Sabrejets dropped several 1000-pound bombs in part of Partap bazar and the neighbouring labour colony, strafed the labour colony and their residence. This happened at a time when President Ayub was speaking on the Pakistan Radio of cease-fire and the acceptance of the U.N. Security Council's resolution calling on Pakistan and India to stop fighting. 55 persons died

including 7 women and 4 children. 100 dwellings and shops were damaged of which 77 were razed to the ground. The Defence Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, described it as a barbarous act. By the time the hostilities ended, the ack-ack battery at Amritsar had shot down 10 Pakistani aircrafts, including quite a few B-57 bombers.

Amritsar's favourite heroes were the ack-ack gunners, especially their darling, Raju who guarded their city against attacks from the sky and shot down planes. People brought the gunners milk, the choicest eats and 'killed them with kindness'. They were ready for every eventuality and took an active part in the voluntary civil defence organisations. There was a spontaneous outburst of joy when every plane shot down came slithering in flames. Thousands of them came later on to see the wreckage. Black-out curfew regulations were observed meticulously.

In the midst of air-raids and the constant boom of shelling and rattling of windows from gun blast, life in the city went on normally, though some rich people went over to Delhi and other places with their possessions. Women and children left for sheltered places. But in general, people stuck to their post in Amritsar. The railway track was guarded by villagers. The security forces were not disturbed for civil defence. Private buses and trucks were placed at the disposal of the army, and civilian drivers and local voluntary organisations did a magnificent job in maintaining the supplies to the front.

A shining example of Amritsar's patriotism was furnished by an official disclosure which mentioned that although the economy of Amritsar depending mainly on trade and commerce stood crippled due to the grim fighting close to the border, frequent air attacks, bombing and shelling, the city still contributed about Rs. 10,000 daily to the National Defence Fund. Since the cease-fire on September 23 up till September 30, people raised Rs. 50,000 from the city and nearly Rs. 200,000 from the district and have been spending another Rs. 7,000 daily since September 7 on the 50 odd canteens opened at various places on several highways and by-passes for the *Jawans*. Most of the money came from the

common man and was absolutely spontaneous, and canteens were run by groups of people living in nearby localities.

Another vital event which created a widespread tension all over the country, especially in Amritsar was Sant Fateh Singh's declaration of 'Fast unto Death'. Sant Fateh Singh and Master Tara Singh were pitted against each other in a political battle. After emerging from the self-imposed banishment, Tara Singh pronounced that nothing except a separate homeland, would satisfy the Sikh aspiration. On the other hand, Fateh Singh who captured Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee which controls the Sikh Gurdwaras announced on the 16th August, 1965 at the *Akal Takht* before 25,000 people that he would go on fast unto death from September 10 in support of Punjabi Suba which should be purely on the basis of the language; and in case the *Suba* was not conceded within 10 days (by September 25) he would adopt the path of self-immolation by burning himself on the 16th day. He called 60 other followers of the Panth to make similar sacrifices. On the 23rd December, the Sant entered on the 1st floor of the *Akal Takht* to ensure his safety from the hands of Civil and Military authorities. It is unfortunate that the political battle was intervoven with the linguistic problem on the one hand and Sikh religion on the other.

The Golden temple turned into a fortress. The Sant's trusted followers stood at guard at the main gates, and scrutinized almost every visitor. Hundreds of 'Sewadars' from all over the State collected there. A sufficient quantity of kerosene oil had found its way into the temple. The whole atmosphere was tense and was reminiscent of 1960-61 when the Akalis had launched a campaign for Punjabi Suba. But this time, due to the Indo-Pakistan war, the situation became grave. The Sant's fast and the threat of self-immolation began to be criticised as an anti-national act. The Pakistan Radio further stimulated the Punjabi Suba demand, admired the Sant's 'just stand' and incited the Sikh army personnel not to pander to the designs of the 'Hindu imperialists'. It would have looked funny if the Sant did not join in the national endeavour to oust the enemy. The public became excited and eventually on the 9th September, the Sant postponed his fast. On the 23rd September after cease-fire, a three-member Cabinet

Committee was constituted to find a 'co-operative solution' to the demand for a Punjabi Suba which had been revived by Sant Fateh Singh. Its members were Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Mr. Y.B. Chavan and Mr. Mahavir Tyagi who were to be assisted by the Parliamentary Committee headed by Sardar Hukam Singh to go into the question of the reorganisation of the State. This Committee recommended that Punjab should be reorganised on a linguistic basis and that the boundaries should be those of the 'regions' mentioned in the scheme of 1956. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that a 'Punjabi Speaking State be carved out of the existing Punjab State'. The Union Government appointed a Boundary Commission to demarcate the boundaries of the State. The Union Government accepted in substance the recommendations of the Boundary Commission with modification that *tehsil* Kharar which the Commission had wanted to go to Haryana should be bifurcated, a part of it going to Punjab and Chandigarh becoming a Union territory in which could be located the capital of both the new States of Punjab and Haryana.

The Union Government's proposals, however, did not satisfy the Sant whose demands were that the common links between Punjab and Haryana should be snapped, Chandigarh and other areas in Haryana transferred to Punjab and the control of Bhakra and Beas projects entrusted to the Punjab State Government did not concede his demands. The Sant once again sought refuge on the top floor of the *Akal Takht*. The eight Akali leaders also volunteered for self-immolation, 24 hours ahead of Sant Fateh Singh. Curfew was imposed from the 25th December in the walled portion of Amritsar city and the Circular Road area for 24 hours in view of the apprehension of serious disturbances. The situation in the Golden Temple resembled a 17th century war camp inside a fortress. Heavily armed men were in complete occupation of the temple and they were set even for a long seige. All approaches to the *Akal Takht* were guarded by sturdy men to deter the authorities from 'lifting the Sant' from there. On the 26th December, the eight Akali leaders had a bath in the holy tank, donned orange-coloured robes and were getting ready to offer their last prayers—the '*Ardas*'. It was 3.20 p.m. forty minutes short of the deadline that Sardar Hukam Singh accompanied by Akali leaders arrived at

the Golden temple. Sardar Hukam Singh had brought certain proposals and self-immolation was thus postponed. In the meanwhile, the proposals were considered by the Sikh leaders. Mr. Harcharan Singh Hudaria, General Secretary of the Dal, conveyed to the congregation assembled in front of the *Akal Takht* that an agreement had been reached after two hours of talks with Sardar Hukam Singh, to refer the dispute on Chandigarh and the Bhakra Dam complex to arbitration by the Prime Minister. The Union Government was to appoint a Committee to consider the question of other areas disputed by Punjab and Haryana. The Akali Dal Working Committee put its seal of approval to the proposals brought by Sardar Hukam Singh. Thus the unhappy chapter in the life of the New Punjab was over, and the communal mistrust which must have prospered in the tension created was not allowed to grip Punjab.

In view of its proximity to the border, the question that agitates many minds is whether Amritsar will regain the importance which it has lost. The answer to this question depends on a number of factors. As a religious centre, Amritsar will retain pride of place and continue to draw innumerable followers of the Sikh faith to the precincts of its Golden Temple to offer their prayers. Even Sikhs living abroad in countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, and Malaya view Amritsar with veneration, the cradle of their faith. At *Baisakhi* and *Diwali*, the temple will be visited by hundreds and thousands of people, who will enjoy the illuminations and fire-works which have remained for centuries part of the celebrations. In spite of its position near the border, the religious character of Amritsar is not likely to suffer and the thoughts of Sikhs and others who cherish an admiration for the Sikh religion will keep the candle of faith burning in the temple for centuries to come.

The resumption of Amritsar's role as a commercial emporium, constitutes a challenge to the resourcefulness of the people of Amritsar, in which they have never yet been found wanting. Business activities, which are now restricted to East Punjab and Kashmir, were considerably reduced by Partition. Partition bred insecurity and in the first shock of living under uncertain conditions people of Amritsar set their feet on a path of retrogression and

caution, when the times called for a spirit of boldness and faith in the future. This was a natural reaction to the first shocks of Partition, but with the passing of the first decade, they may well begin to display the resilience of their forefathers after the invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali, and adjust themselves to the new condition which Partition has imposed on them. Our sister city, Ludhiana, faced with a different set of problems, is currently setting Amritsar an example by the rapidity of her progress as an industrial centre. The fact is that the foundation of the capital at Chandigarh, the growth of a new rival in Ludhiana as a trading centre and its proximity to the border have brought a diminution in its commercial importance, yet in resilience and capacity to adjust to any new situation, it maintains its traditional peculiar savour, which has given it a distinct individuality, respectability, enterprise, initiative and boldness. After all, a city is what its citizenry makes it. It may spread the flame of its ancestors—in the words of Nanak, who, lives still in the hearts of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike, 'There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman' and may yet bring to the sub-continent a renewed vision of the universal brotherhood of Man.

## CHAPTER II

### PEOPLE

The first inhabitants settled down in the vicinity of the Golden Temple, the heart-beat of the city. Pilgrims and other visitors flocked thither. Houses, shops and streets were built to provide facilities for these travellers. In the times of Ranjit Singh, charity helped in improving the conditions then obtaining. Chiefs, belonging to different Misls, built *Katras*, with rows of mansions and houses round the temple. Besides the priests, who attended to their religious duties, *faqirs* and visitors also found shelter in the temple. Outside the temple developed the business centre, which eventually became the hub of the city. When Ranjit Singh was in the city, people assembled in large numbers eager to catch a glimpse of the Maharaja, who enjoyed those occasions as much as his people enjoyed acclaiming him. The rock salt of Lahore, which passed through Amritsar in enormous quantities to be exported to British India, had its own quarter in the town which is known to-day as Namak Mandi. Timber and firewood had another quarter called Lakar Mandi. The wool spinners, the cotton weavers and the Kashmiris usually occupied distinct quarters known as Pasham-wala Bazar; the prostitutes had theirs. At intervals along the streets were gates which were shut at night and cut off all communication between different parts of the town. Maharaja Ranjit Singh often stayed in the Ram Bagh which was then quite removed from the city and from there he would ride towards the Gurdwara, accompanied by his Sardars, some of whom stayed in different quarters in the Ram Bagh. Time bridged the gulf between the Gurdwara and the Ram Bagh, which indicates the measure of the progress of the city's building activity since the time of Ranjit Singh. By 1868 *Goojars* lived in the area close to Hathi Gate, Lahori Gate and Chatiwind Gate. In Ranjit Singh's times, the troops lived in Govindgarh fort, but later during the British period, they moved outside into the cantonment.



Edward Thornton noted in his *Gazeteer*<sup>1</sup> that in the early years of the 19th Century, the population of the city of Amritsar ranged between 80,000 and 90,000. The first official census<sup>2</sup> was taken in Amritsar on January 2, 1855 when people stood waiting with a light at their doors for the arrival of the enumerators, and the streets and alleys were half illuminated. According to this Report, Amritsar was a thickly populated district, with an average density of 436 persons per square mile. In Amritsar city, there were 112, 186 people living against 94,143 in Lahore. While the Report<sup>3</sup> on the Revised Settlement indicates that in 1868, the town contained 100,466 inhabitants, the average being 4 persons to a house, another Report<sup>4</sup> of the Census of the Punjab<sup>4</sup> of the same year shows that the numbers of people living in Amritsar town in 1868 were 135,813 as against 98,924 in Lahore and its environs. The percentage of Sikhs on total population in Amritsar city was 241 as against 151 of Lahore. Though census operations were carried on earlier, but it is from 1881 that census figures are taken as accurate and sufficiently reliable. The census statement from 1881 about Amritsar city is as follows :

Year	1881	1891	1901	1911	
Persons	1,15,896	1,36,766	1,62,429	1,52,756	
Year	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Persons	1,60,278	2,64,840	3,91,010	3,25,747	3,76,295

A comparative study of the census figures of 1855, 1868 and 1881 indicates that in numbers, Amritsar was the largest city in the Punjab until 1881 when it yielded first place to Lahore. In 1881 a terrible outbreak of malaria occurred in the town when the annual rate of mortality rose in October and November to 356 and 211 per 1,000 respectively. The years 1901-1911 showed a downward trend due to the epidemics of plague and malaria. In the decade ending 1931, the population showed a startling increase of

- 1 Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*, p. 117, 1854.
- 2 Report of the Census taken on the 1st of January, 1855, p. 19.
- 3 Report on the Revised Settlement of the Umritsur, Sowrian and Tarun Taran Purgunnahs of the Umritsur District, pp. 64-5.
- 4 Report of the Census of the Punjab, 1868, p. 11.

1,04,622 for which artificial causes, like immigration were largely responsible. Between 1921 and 1941 the growth of population, showing an upward trend, represents the natural growth of a flourishing town. The census figures of 1951 as compared with 1941 show a decrease in population by 65,263. Formerly Muslims formed a large number of the total population and with their departure from the city at the time of Partition, the population of the city has declined. The census of 1951 was not a stable operation due to the recent impact of the Partition. The census of 1961 shows an overall increase in population, though the maximum has not reached the total figures of 1941, i.e., 3,91,010. The increase in 1961 is due to the return of those who had gone away temporarily under fear of insecurity and the immigration of labourers into the town. While in the entire province up to 1947, there were 831 families to every 1000 males and in Amritsar district 799, now according to the census of 1961, for every 1000 males there are about 800 females.

The social structure is far too complicated to permit of easy classification into stratified social classes. Yet, there are to be found in the city certain distinct types of people possessing fairly common characteristics. There are first of all descendants of the old aristocracy, especially, from the times of Ranjit Singh, holding positions of distinction, possessing wealth and power and exercising patronage. Some of the Katras and streets were named after them, e.g. Katra Ahluwalia, Majith Mandi and Katra Maha Singh. Distinguished families like that of Sindhanwallias, the Majithias, the Sardars of Nowshera, the Rasulpura family, the Kalyan Singh, the Gyani, the Manawala, the Sahib Dyal and the Gaugar Mal families have been connected with the city and some of their present representatives are making a definite contribution to the social life of the town. The titled aristocracy remains but its privileged position has been encroached upon by a large number of successful businessmen. The titled aristocracy no longer holds the centre of the stage. Side by side with the old aristocracy, there has grown up a class of the newly rich, whose position depends on trade and commerce. This class with its following of employees and tradesmen dominates the life of the town and usually holds itself aloof from the rest of the population. These

newly rich, especially after the two World wars which provided them with opportunities for amassing fortunes, started sending their sons to public schools. Besides the aristocracy and the flourishing business classes, there rose a rapidly increasing body of professional men—doctors, lawyers and teachers—a feeble minority in contrast with other leading cities who acquired a new social status and are posing problems for the more orthodox. Accountants, Bank Managers and Managing Directors are also developing positions which compete with the older professions and in many ways are making good their claims. They belong, for the most part, to the social world of business. Shopkeepers have done well as a class, accounting for quick turn-overs and large decrease in bad-debts.

The typical representative of the city of Amritsar, however, has been the businessman who owes his opportunity to the later 18th century and who built up his position in the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh when political conditions acquired a degree of stability. He became enterprising and resourceful. He was fond of travelling, had foresight and ran his business on sound lines which usually passed on from father to son. The business is, as it were, a constant, to which the family structure must always be adjusted. In order to keep the name on the business, one son is at least chosen to inherit the family business. On the other hand, where there is no one in the immediate family to inherit and keep the name on the business, a relative is brought in, perhaps a cousin or a nephew. Kindred provide a safeguard against the failure of the family to produce an heir. Training was derived not from study in any specialised institution but from practice in accountancy and contact with people to which was added in some cases the advantage of foreign travel to Japan or England. After acquiring a sound knowledge of business technique, this businessman emerged as an industrialist, especially after the Second World war when he assimilated some of the habits of Western life. The influence of the West has made itself felt in his way of life, particularly in his dress, his houses, his carriages and cars, but it is doubtful whether Western values have changed his mode of traditional thinking. Nor does he see any conflict between the two ways of life. He is by no means an intellectual. He believes in living

a comfortable life and does not grudge spending money on himself, though he may not like to part with a penny to others. He dresses well, admires a knowledge of the English language, and possesses plenty of sound commonsense and industry and is capable of seeing a problem clearly with passionless impartiality. He visits the Lumsdon Club in the evening for a drink and a game of bridge and is an inveterate gossip there. There is a close business fraternity among all types of businessmen. Before Partition, Muslims owned factories and also enjoyed club life in the evening. The structure of society has remained on the whole conservative, in spite of new awareness fostered by foreign travel and education.

Distinct from the 'industrialist', the traditional businessman, who lives mostly in the interior of the town, sits in his shop and carries on his hereditary profession with shrewdness. The businessman or the *lala*, as he is called, is shrewd, calculating, hard-working and well-versed in the technique of getting on with others. He keeps a watchful eye on his interests and tries to establish cordial relations with government servants, especially with the Income-tax officer, who is in a position to embarrass him. He realizes that it is useful to know someone who has a fairly good command of the English language and he now plans on giving his sons an English type of education which he thinks will yield beneficial dividends. Education for him means a process by which wealth can be accumulated and success for him is another name for influence, prestige and power. In spite of being a product of the narrow winding sunless streets of Amritsar, he is a sleek, rotund individual oozing with humour and vitality. His politeness in the presence of others is extraordinary. He welcomes people with a broad smile on his face and a courteous bow. *Mai tay twada tabai dar an.....A dekho ji ki gallan karday pai un*<sup>1</sup> are common parts of his mode of expression. He is capable of disarming anyone by his talk. That is why the U.P. man with a touch of subtlety about him has called him a *meetha thug*.<sup>2</sup> When you visit him, he offers you a bottle of lemonade. This 'bottle' is his favourite drink which he produces instinctively. After he has secured his

1 I am most obedient to you.....See what is he doing, why all this kindness.

2 Winsome Thug.

object to which all his attention has been directed, he is bent on demolishing the 'object' he once adored and would not hesitate in flinging a coarse abuse at him. He spends on himself, eats well and keeps a *Shahi tonga* which is his Rolls Royce and comes out in the early morning and looks round the Ram Bagh. He pays a Sunday morning visit to the canal to eat mangoes and goes for the evening walk to the *Thandi Khui* where he takes *pooris* and drinks a glass of cold water at a swig. He relishes his food and eats with gusto. His *sabzi* swims in *ghee*. He is warm-hearted and remembers you for a long time. He is human with all his failings and can give full expression, if he so desires, to his charitable disposition. He may show want of courage at times but he loves life and enjoys it. Offending others he skilfully manages to avoid.

In the streets of Amritsar there are to be seen tall, handsome Sikhs with flowing beards and colourful turbans who follow different vocations and who mostly live round about the *Gurdwara* which attracted their ancestors to settle there.

There is on a lower level an element, found in most of the major cities, that abandons itself to passion and becomes uncontrollable. It has had at times the support of the moneyed people, and has exploited the turn of events for its own ends by creating many administrative problems for the authorities. This type lives by mostly in slums, where gambling, drinking and other sinister vices are indulged in freely and fearlessly.

The characteristics of a people are not easy to define but here it is possible to make some generalisations about the people of Amritsar that may not be disputed by almost all observers.

Emily Eden, who has given an authentic account of Amritsar, was first struck by the apparent pride of the people which was clearly reflected in their behaviour and she called them a 'proudly sort'.<sup>1</sup> During her stay at Amritsar in December 1838, Emily Eden recorded, 'I say nothing against your Umritsar. If you come to Calcutta, I will show you beautiful things—ships that go by, smoke and fine houses'.<sup>2</sup> Amritsar is widely renowned for its hospitality, and attention was drawn to this by members of Governor-General

1 Emily Eden, *Up the Country*. p. 214.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Auckland's party when they visited Amritsar. People showed charity without ostentation. Despite, however, the hospitality, civility and marked enthusiasm displayed at large scale receptions of foreign dignitaries, they could be like other unsophisticated people, outrageously frank and their mode of expression was somewhat rough—deficient in gifts of subtlety. Akalis—spirited men with reckless abandon, ready to fight at any excuse, wore blue turbans of a peaked or conical form, and over which were placed steel circles, made so as to fit the shape of the turban, diminishing gradually as they approached the top. In addition to their military duties and obligations, they acted as armed guardians of Amritsar; they observed their religious duties with scrupulous care and for long acted as censors of private morality.

People of Amritsar are fond of sport and are sociable and upright in their domestic life. They are not so radical and progressive as those living in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay, and are mostly reluctant to abandon the traditions of their ancestors which they honour and follow instinctively. But they are not averse to changes in their way of life provided they afford them convenience. In 1904 when the water works were first established, the Municipal Committee did not anticipate any big demand for house connections because the popular feeling due to some religious objections was adverse to using water obtained from this source. But in the years which followed, this prejudice among the people has been completely overcome and at the present moment the public demand has far outstripped the supply which the Department has at its command. In general they can be easily provoked and made to flare up into sudden anger if anyone opposes what seems correct to their way of thinking but when they cool down, it is difficult to find anyone as kind and helpful. They remain fundamentally a people of deep feeling, sentimental, boastful, bold, enterprising and not mistaking a shadow for the substance.

The people are meticulously hospitable but not impulsively unselfish; they are loyal but not subservient, enterprising but not visionary. Whatever faults the accumulation of riches has brought them, their hospitality and genial temper never fails them. Their life is not dictated by innate spinelessness nor by idleness. Some Trusts have been created—an indication of patronage; there is an

element of love of power and ostentation in them, as is evident from the practice of commemorating the name of the donor. Doggedness is one of the characteristics of the native of Amritsar. This unbending temper combined with forbearance has helped him to overcome serious difficulties. He listens attentively to any suggestion that may be made and imbibes almost everything that has been said. He agrees politely and then goes his own sweet way, more determined to do the same thing in the same old way. He loves to argue about the price of things and will walk miles to attend an auction sale. Not that he spends his money foolishly. Far from it. But the spirit of barter lingers and he may still keep his money hidden in the house. Confusion, agility, contradictoriness, hard work, outrageous frankness, an innate politeness which embarrasses, memory, stubbornness, resilience, courage, hard-headedness, practical ability, relish for indecency for its own sake and shrewdness are all to be found in him.

The city is pierced by a large number of lanes. The old lines of streets have been preserved to a large extent and they are too narrow for carriages to pass each other with ease. Soltykoff who visited Amritsar on March 3, 1842 noted that the streets were so narrow that an elephant could barely pass through them without brushing the walls and flimsy balconies with his sides and trappings. Even now goods are carried through these lanes by coolies. High buildings sprang up in many parts of the town and nature's gift of light and air was thereby shut out. Narrow streets and tall houses enclosed by the city wall and gates combined with the dense population per square mile have made the city compact. Life has been lived mostly within the walls of the city and the people, as people will, who live closely in touch with one another have developed a broad-minded familiarity and never fail to give a smile or courteous bow while passing through the crowded streets. That intense patriotism, which is peculiar to the members of societies congregated within a confined space, has been strongly developed in the narrow, mazy lanes of Amritsar.

Still in certain parts of the town, when the evening closes in, the difficulties and dangers of walking increase. Windows are opened and pails emptied, with little regard for those passing

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1 Soltykoff's Visit to the Panjab, p. 95.

below. In the heart of the city, the streets are humming with life. One is struck by the general air of prosperity. Shops are brightly lit and the goods skilfully arranged to attract customers. Even small shops are groaning with goods. Piles of cloth in an enormous variety of colours really blind the customers with their brightness. In Guru Bazar and Karmon Deori, business is brisk. Every now and then one passes the shop of a *halwai*, who will put two inches of *malai* in a long glass for you. Narrow streets, tall houses standing cheek by jowl, crowds jostling each other, labourers passing by in small carriages swiftly and noisily, arguing with the carriage driver and people stopping aside and traffic jams are a common sight. One of the remedies for this over-crowding is the expansion of the town which has been quietly going on. The wealthy also thought that the narrow lanes were ill-adapted for their residences and many decided to move further where they could first have the luxury of a coach and then of a car.

### Houses

The structure of the houses originally built in the central position of the city indicates how foreign invasions, political strife and precautionary steps on the part of the local residents, and the steady increase in wealth have wrought changes in the architectural style. Walter Hamilton noted that the streets were narrow, houses lofty and built of burnt brick.<sup>1</sup> The houses were in general good but the apartments were confined.<sup>2</sup> To Captain Wade, the streets of Amritsar corresponded with those of Lahore in style and dimension but the architecture of the houses was 'not in good taste'.<sup>3</sup>

The oldest types of houses built are situated round about the Golden Temple where small bricks (*lakhauri* bricks) are used. Houses were huddled together and the narrow intervening lanes designed for safety. Streets still have their main gate, which can be closed at night, giving security to the entire locality. During the 1947 disturbances, the gates in various localities were closed and watchmen performed night duties ungrudgingly in order to

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1 Walter Hamilton, *East India Gazetteers*, p. 48.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Lieut. Col. Steinbach, *The Panjab*, p. 4.



keep the peace. The interior parts of the city still have old style houses, built of brick, and separated only by narrow streets. Most of the houses in the city are two-storeyed but there are many three, four or five-storeyed buildings where ventilation is inadequate. The ceilings of these houses are low and sometimes a person has to bend in order to pass from one room to another. Many houses have shops on the ground floor. Some of those are ornamented with wood work. James Coley noted in his journal about the middle of the 19th century, that most of the houses were painted all over with figures of men, women, beasts and birds among which the peacock predominated.<sup>1</sup> The house of a well-to-do family has a *baithak* (the outer room) to receive 'guests', especially men, whereas ladies are welcomed in the inner apartments. Others have a *taikhana* or underground chamber built on the model of the Mughal mansion. The houses run in unending rows. Earlier ones had been built haphazardly but now owing to the policy of the Municipal Committee, houses are constructed according to well-devised plans and are provided with adequate light and air. In the civil lines, especially on the Mall, Court Road and Lawrence Road, the houses are of the detached bungalow type called '*Kothis*' inhabited mostly by businessmen. They are built of bricks in cement with roofs reinforced by concrete slabs. Usually a lawn and a verandah form the exterior of a house. Some of the buildings like the Income Tax Office are examples of modern architecture.

### Food

Wheat is the staple food of the residents which they consume most of the year. With the bulk of the people, the food consists chiefly of gram and vegetables; meat is a luxury and few can afford to eat it. Fish is seldom eaten. The drink generally consists of sweet *lassi* or butter milk. Sharbat is very popular with people in hot weather. Two meals are taken in the day, morning and evening. Labourers employed in hard work indulge in mid-day meal as well when they are able to afford it.

*Poori* and *halwa*, (a preparation of flour fried in ghee and treated with sugar), *kichori* or even *poora* form items for breakfast

1 James Coley, Journal of the Sutlej Campaign of 1845-6 and also of Lord Hardinge's Tour, p. 107.

with the business community. These are brought from the confectioner's shop and taken either with *lassi* in summer or milk in winter. In the rainy season *pooras*, *khir* (rice cooked in milk with sugar added) mangoes (in particular of *tabka* variety which is sucked) and *kachi lassi* are almost a rage. In winter *halwa* is made of *gur*, raisins and almonds in pure ghee extracted out of butter. Vegetable oils and *Dalda* are used by those who cannot afford it. Pulses of *moong*, *mash*, a vegetable like *ghia*, *karaila*, *tinda* and pickles of lemon, *galgal*, chillies or *anwla* constitute items at lunch for an average middle class family. For evening, snack like *moongra sewian* is indispensable, through *mathi*, cooked grams and *samosa* with *chatni* are very popular.

What is distinctive about the food habits of the people of Amritsar is their passion for *taliya-hoya* or *sauda* (fried vegetables like potato, carrot, cucumber or brinjals), which is invariably purchased from the confectioner's shop. Sometimes people do not cook at home and bring the cooked grams from the confectioner's shop, put sprinkling of ghee in it and fry it. *Sauda* in this case is complementary. At times *manh* of reddish brown colour are brought from *dhaba* and are taken with *tandori chapati* and pepper. Milk is the last item consumed at night in summer and winter before retiring by those who can afford it. People are fond of taking hot milk with *jalaibis* (which is regarded as a tonic) or *phanians*. Tea is not popular. In general it can be said that people have a passion for fried and hot things. In the evening one can see jostling crowds at the *thandi khui* struggling to buy *talia-hoya*, *kulchas* and cooked grams, *bhallas*, hot *jalaibis*, *golgappas* and *gulah jamans*. There seems a general disposition to depend on things purchased in bazars which leaves ample time to womenfolk to gossip and enables men to finish their eating rather too quickly.

### Dress

There is much variety in the dress of the people of Amritsar. The businessman wears a *kurta* of fine muslin and a *dhoti*, a waistcoat and sometimes a long coat. The cap mostly of black velvet is simple and is placed on the head in a distinctive way. For ceremonials the *achkan* is popular. Pyjamas are of a distinctive style with a narrow *mohri*. In winter pyjamas of surge flannel are

used and at times expensive shawls are worn. The *chadar*, a cloak which was worn across the shoulders and was the picturesque part of a businessman's costume, has almost vanished. Elderly people wear turbans. A Sikh wears a *kurta*, pyjamas and, what is more, a turban. Turbans are worn in different colours. The taste for cloth preferably manufactured in Europe and for clothes of an English cut, especially waist-coats and long coats, has spread considerably and officials, lawyers and others belonging to professional classes have adopted western style clothes, suits, shirts, ties and bush-shirts. The ordinary working dress is *pyjama* and a *kamiz*. The Gandhi cap is also much in use. Formerly women liked to wear dresses of strong colour and a veil edged with gold and silver but of late a preference for softer colours has grown. For the ladies the *sari* is the most popular dress, though unmarried girls prefer to wear tight *shalwars* with *jampars*. Among the older women, the *gagri* with a *dupatta* still remains the favourite.

### Marriage Customs

There may be local variations but in general no peculiar marriage customs are adopted in the city of Amritsar. It is difficult to say at what age children are married as this depends upon circumstances, education and public opinion. Large sums of money are spent on weddings. A proverb *Lalay ki Kamayee biha shadi Nay Khai*<sup>1</sup> shows the true state of things about marriages celebrated by businessman. In many cases to middling classes, the marriage of one's children becomes a great financial strain which adversely affects the prosperity of a family. The activities of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj have made people conscious of the need to simplify the whole institution of marriage, but the results have not been encouraging due to age-old customs which are tenaciously followed.

Marriage is regarded as a sacrament and the most important occurrence in life. It is celebrated by the performance of religious rites under the supervision of a *pundit*. The same old stages of betrothal, fixing of the auspicious date, *barat*, *lagan milni* and *doli* are followed. The horoscope is consulted for determining the auspicious date and time. The marriage ceremony is not complete

1 It means that a businessman's earnings are finished up in a marriage.

until *phera* or circumambulation of the sacred fire has been performed. This is the essential part of ceremony without which no marriage is complete and it is this rite which makes marriage indissoluble. For the performance of these rites a canopy supported on four poles is erected in the courtyard of the house of the girl's father. The members of both sides sit and watch the whole ceremony with interest. On the ground between the *kheras*, sand is spread on which the wood is piled for the sacred fire and lighted. Every family tries to give a dowry in the form of ornaments, clothes, furniture and household goods to the bride which is shown to the marriage party after the performance of marriage rites. The Arya Samajists as well as other Hindus of advanced views do not strictly observe all the ceremonies except circumambulation of fire which is essential in all cases. Early marriages are looked upon with disfavour. In spite of the strong public opinion against it, the much condemned dowry system still persists and receives support from wider circles, particularly near the marriage ceremony as the marriage date approaches.

Some of the richest families in the city celebrate marriages with great lavishness and a big *barat* led by an impressive band passes through the crowded streets which provides a picturesque sight to spectators. The bridegroom in his rich wedding clothes, is seated on a horse. He rides behind the band which usually plays modern film tunes and he is followed by the *barat*. *Attar* is showered over the bridegroom; flowers are thrown and coins scattered among the crowd. Children and the poor mingle with the throng and join in the scramble. All is fun and hilarity. From the balconies and house tops, people watch the processions passing below.

Among the Sikhs the Anand form of marriage takes place which was legalized in 1909 by the Anand Marriage Act. At the actual performance of the marriage, the Holy Book takes pride of place whilst both parties listen to the music of the *Asa-di-var*.

Before partition, Amritsar had many Muslim inhabitants who performed their marriages by the *nakah* ceremony. This takes the form of a civil contract in which the parties undertake to fulfil their respective obligations. Civil marriages are not common among Hindus or Muslims and take place only where the parties

belong either to different castes or to different religions; they are confined to only a few of the western educated classes. Inter-caste marriages are also infrequent.

### Ornaments

Ornaments are of many varieties, but the most common are bangles, ear-rings, necklaces and finger-rings. Some people belonging to the business community wear *murkis* and a sapphire which is considered auspicious. Wearing finger-rings with names inscribed on them is fairly popular. Generally ornaments are a passion with the people of Amritsar, who regard them also as economic securities. Ladies favour sets with precious stones. They wear various kinds of rings in the ear-lobe but they do not wear the heavy rings common in Southern India. They wear *anant* on the upper arm and *taragi* on the waist. Soltykoff noted about the middle of the 19th century that in Amritsar women wore jewels in their noses and ears with chains stretched between so that one could hardly see their faces.<sup>1</sup> At marriage ceremonies in the city the ladies are heavily loaded with ornaments, showing the latest designs executed with exquisite skill. On these occasions they wear ornaments on the forehead and the crown of the head. Because of the demand for adornment, there are several large jewellers' shops which are crowded with customers in the evening.

### Festivals

Religion plays a vital part in the life of the people of Amritsar. It would be equally incorrect to say that they are profoundly religious or unworldly as it would be to say they are. Nevertheless, they take an active part in the religious ceremonies. The Golden Temple seems to have imparted a religious atmosphere to the whole city. Quite a large number visit the Golden Temple and Durgiana temple every day. Business combined with the charitable disposition of the people has led to the setting up of temples, trusts, donations and *chabils* in certain parts of the town. The worship of *Shiva* is popular with some of the businessmen. Some of the residents go to Hardwar for a sacred dip in the Ganges and they have built *sarais* there for the convenience of visitors. *Tirathyatra* thus has a special appeal for the people of

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<sup>1</sup> Soltykoff's Visit to the Panjab, p. 95.

Amritsar who go on pilgrimages to such places as Hardwar, Badrinath, Amarnath or Vaisnava Devi (near Jammu). They observe the religious festivals with enthusiasm. *Diwali* is the most popular when everyone cleanses his house to purify it to receive *Luxmi*, the goddess of prosperity, for whom the business community have a special regard. Sweet-meat sellers display their wares and do a roaring trade. Foreign observers, in particular, Dalhousie during their visits to Amritsar have recorded their impressions of the beautiful illumination of the entire city, especially those of the Golden Temple. Maharaja Ranjit Singh is credited with having encouraged the celebration of festivals in Amritsar at which he gave donations and his blessings. Originally, on the fairs, the *Bungas* (kept up round the tank of the Golden Temple by leading families for the accommodation of their followers during their visits), and all the *Akharas* or rest houses, in the city were filled to overflowing. Roads leading to the city are crowded with cattle for the fair. Special arrangements are made by the police for traffic and security and special trains are run to Amritsar to accommodate the incoming visitors.

Ramlila is held at various places in the city and the life and career of Ram is depicted. *Dussehra* draws thousands of people to the *Qila* ground to see the burning of the effigy of *Ravana*. Some of the festivals are connected with eclipses and others herald the coming of particular seasons. *Holi* is the spring festival and nearly everyone joins in the fun of throwing coloured water. *Basant Panchmi*, when people wear yellow coloured clothes, and *Ram Navmi* are also popular. Among the Muslims, even the poorest classes manage to sacrifice a goat or a *dumba* i.e. fat tailed sheep.

Though at some of the immense religious festivals like *Diwali* and *Dussehra*, thousands of visitors pour into the city, and streets are practically impassable, no rioting or disorder of any kind occurs. Popular entertainments on such occasions are the illumination of the Golden Temple, wrestling, theatrical and acrobatic wonder shows. Enterprising vandors erect stalls and booths and pedlars spread out their wares. Much buying and selling goes on at these fairs which adds considerably to the fun. Helter skelters, swings and riders of death, in which a motorcyclist

courts death twice daily for the amusement of the crowd are great attractions. The favourite is still the merry-go-round with its squealing music that goes on and on much to the increasing exasperation of the residents but to the delight of the visitor who can leave when he wearies of the noise. Fireworks are all a part of the show. It is great fun, but at times a trifle shattering to the nerves. These festivals are the occasion for family gatherings and attract many visitors. Just outside the town where there is plenty of open space, thousands of people assemble for the fair. Artisans and merchants bring their goods for sale and cattle dealers their cattle. An area which lies waste for a large part of the year is converted into a teeming town. This transient town is a source of intense excitement to children, and when it vanishes only its memory lingers.

### Games and Recreations

In 1924 Mr. F.H. Puckle, I.C.S., the Deputy Commissioner, founded the Amritsar Games Association, which provided beautiful grounds for various games, especially the Alexandra Ground which was regarded by Mr. Jardina, the Captain of the M.C.C. 'as one of the best cricket fields of the world'. In 1933 the first International Cricket match was played by the M.C.C. Subsequently, the Bhupindera Pavilion with its stadium was built. Cricket teams from Pakistan and the West Indies have also played matches at Amritsar. The Amritsar District High School and Inter-Collegiate Cricket tournaments are of special interest. Hockey, football, volley-ball, *kabaddi*, *gulli danda* and kite flying, are confined to the few.

Probably the best known of youth organisations is the Boy Scouts movement originally founded in England by the late Lord Baden-Powell. The local Scouts Association has been functioning effectively and has created among its members a love of games, woodcraft and handicrafts. First class bands are attached to Scout troops. Scout associations function in colleges and schools and every year arrange a camp where an attempt is made to discipline its members.

Many youth organisations provide young people with wide opportunities for putting their leisure to good use. There also

exist benevolent and professional societies and clubs. There are social clubs at which people with a common background or common interests can meet. The clubs in Amritsar, like Lumsdon (after Harry Lumsdon) and 'Amritsar', provide places for recreation, bridge and tennis. Here officials, lawyers and businessmen spend their evenings. Many *mohallas* have their own clubs but they are only for athletics. Drama and theatre are not popular. The field of entertainment is still dominated by the Cinema and the Radio. Once a year or so a *mushaira* takes place at which distinguished poets are invited to take part. Before partition, *mushairas* were arranged on a fairly large scale and were extremely popular.

### Daily Life

The daily life of the people of Amritsar is not strikingly different from life in other cities. What impresses the observer as distinctive is their religious and commercial trait. Hurried steps are heard on the streets whilst it is still dark and many people are to be seen in the early morning going to the Gurdwara or the Durgiana Temple. For the rest of the day a businessman makes money so that he may amass a joyless fortune and at last die respectably. Quite a large number of people, belonging to the professional classes, go out for morning walks towards the civil lines, especially the Ram Bagh. Many like to be in a group, or one may see, for example, a group of lawyers, some being accompanied by a magistrate or a judge. Or one may meet a group of retired men walking leisurely, their evening sticks in their hands and discussing the affair of the day. Students also like to go to the Ram Bagh in the early morning to prepare their lesson in the cool fresh air. The greater the heat in summer, the more enthusiasm there is for walking in the morning and evening. Winter is delightful—the air is cool and crisp and the skies are clear. In summer except during May and June, the weather is not unpleasant. During the hottest months the canal is a favourite resort and some businessmen go out in their *tongas* driven by spirited horses. Others prefer to go to the canal outside the Sultanwind Gate. People swim in the main canal, and in the stream, close by the canal, children and women take their bath. In summer people buy fairly large quantities of mangoes which they put in the water to cool before they eat them.



Punjabi is the language spoken by most people but there is a clear distinction between the language spoken by businessmen and others in the choice of words and emphasis. Knowledge of English is limited to a small number of businessmen and to the professional classes. Urdu so far has been very popular and people have used it as a medium for correspondence. Most of the posters—a fair indication of the popularity of a language—are still put up in Urdu.

On the occasion of the visit of a popular leader, people close their shops and give a hearty welcome to the "guest of the city". At the business centre, Katra Ahluwalia, there is great excitement and much buying and selling. In the afternoon near Allahabad Bank, a large number of brokers collect to count their items and hold mutual consultations. People shout at each other from their shops while raising their hands. In winter when men have gone to work, women sit outside their houses, watching the children round, the bangle seller and the vegetable seller who have arrived to do business.

In winter the sunshine is bright and there is a glorious view of the hills from the Medical College. The cold is invigorating which keeps people active and when rains come in winter, few people are seen on the roads. Birds no longer sing, the leaves fall from the trees and men choose to stay at home warmed by the fire, telling stories to their children.

## CHAPTER III TRADE AND INDUSTRY

For more than a century Amritsar has been recognised as a flourishing trade centre of Northern India. Walter Hamilton regarded Amritsar as a 'Grand Emporium of trade' for the shawls and saffron of Kashmir and for various other commodities from the Deccan and the Eastern part of India<sup>1</sup>. Edward Thornton mentions a considerable manufacture in Amritsar of course cloth, inferior silks and shawls made in imitation of Kashmir fabrics<sup>2</sup>. In 1836 Baron Hügel visited Amritsar and described it as the most bustling of all the cities in the Punjab and found 'the most beautiful products exhibited for sale'.<sup>3</sup> Steinbach was impressed by the manufacturing output of the town<sup>4</sup>, and, Alexander Burnes, obviously with some exaggeration, thought that the entire commercial influence of the Punjab was to be found at Amritsar<sup>5</sup>.

One of the reasons for the development of Amritsar as a commercial city is its religious character, which has drawn pilgrims first from its neighbourhood and then from other parts of the country. Pilgrims made contributions particularly at the *Diwali* and *Baisakhi* festivals which according to Sardar Dyal Singh were the 'golden trees and the milch cows of the priests and the professional medicants of the Khalsa'.<sup>6</sup> In view of its proximity to Kashmir where silk and shawl manufactures had attained such excellence, Amritsar provided a ready market for the sale of Kashmir goods. The varied products of Kangra and Mandi Hills were gathered there and exchanged for the produce of the plains.<sup>7</sup> Ranjit Singh's frequent visits gave an added importance to the city

1 Walter Hamilton, *The East India Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 38.

2 Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of Territories under the Govt. of the East India Company*, Vol. I, p. 116.

3 Baron Charles Hügel, *Trevels in Kashmir and Punjab*, p. 393.

4 Lieut. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab*, p. 50.

5 Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, Vol. II, pp. 158-9.

6 *Calcutta Review*, Vol. CXLIII (1881), p. 61.

7 H.M. Lawrence, *Some Passages in the Life of an Adventurer in the Panjab*, p. 106.

and the large army stationed at Amritsar in his times created an immense demand for manufacture and commerce. The British also recognised the commercial importance of Amritsar and connected it by road as well as by rail with Delhi and other important cities of India, thereby increasing its utility as a commercial centre.

During Ranjit Singh's times, the citizens of Amritsar boasted loudly of their increasing wealth and immense sale of cloth.<sup>1</sup> Ranjit Singh imposed customs duties known as *dharat chungi* on 48 items, and in spite of the fact that duty was levied thrice under the existing regulations, a procedure which was the source of many complaints, trade did thrive and Amritsar yielded as octroi duty Rs. 700,000 annually against Rs. 50,000 by Lahore (out of a total of Rs. 2,400,000 collected from the entire dominion). About 1833, quite a large number of famine-stricken Kashmiris had been compelled to leave Kashmir and seek shelter in Amritsar (though these migrations are presumed to have taken place largely due to demand for skilled labour). They brought with them instruments and techniques which greatly helped the local shawl industry develop on sound lines. They manufactured from common wool a sort of thick, warm surge which the Sikh horsemen wore in winter and during the rains. They also cleaned the shawls brought from Kashmir for export to other parts of India. The shawl industry appears to have spread *pari passu* under the dominion of Ranjit Singh due to a large demand for shawls in Hyderabad, Lucknow, Delhi and in the States of Rajputana. Shawls, Carpets, Silk (the wearing of which was more in fashion in native states than British territory) Cotton fabrics, a large quantity of woollen stuff, and a kind of loose cloth dyed a bright scarlet, were exported to other parts of India. After Ranjit Singh's death, trade declined due to political insecurity and indiscriminate taxation of the artisans of Amritsar; robbers frequented the high road; vexatious exactions in the form of duties were extorted and manufacturers were subjected to harassment.

After the annexation of the Punjab, a peaceful era of reconstruction was inaugurated by a band of efficient civil servants which

1 Emily Eden, *Up the Country*, p. 217.

was propitious to the growth of commerce. During his visit to Amritsar in 1850, Dalhousie noted, 'Since I was here, the trade has increased one-third and is swelling'.<sup>1</sup> This increase in trade was due to the abolition of the customs line which was a 'source of cruelty and oppression'.<sup>2</sup> Mr. C.B. Saunders, District Magistrate, Amritsar, found<sup>3</sup> that in 1850 in Amritsar the import of European cotton goods was nearly double the amount of the previous year; the volume of silk imports remained constant but were much cheaper; pashmina imports were greater than before and half as cheap; iron imports had doubled and were cheaper; the volume of salt had quadrupled; saffron imports were three times as large as in the past year; *ghee* was forty to fifty per cent cheaper than before; dried fruits were almost double; the import of indigo was larger but the import of grain had somewhat diminished. This increase in the imports of many commodities was made possible by the more settled political conditions.

According to Robert Montgomery, the merchants of Amritsar belonged to old established houses<sup>4</sup> and were wealthy, and had correspondents in most of the principal towns of India, also in Afghanistan, Bukhara and Kashmir.<sup>5</sup> The Report on the census of the Punjab (1868) states that in the town of Amritsar there were 658 merchants, 2,115 bankers, 3,463 money-lenders and 12,647 shop-keepers. Among the merchants, Raja Singh, a resident of Amritsar, deserves special mention because he had built up a large and lucrative trade in imports and exports and had acquired a permanent social and financial position.<sup>6</sup> All kinds of indigenous produce in the Punjab were to be found at Amritsar, and by 1850 the value of the annual manufactures of various types in Amritsar was estimated at Rs. 690,284 and of Lahore at Rs. 245,445. The imports of Amritsar were worth about Rs. 4,761,454 and of Lahore Rs. 2,646,017. The total trade amounted to 3½ million pounds sterling per annum.

1 J.G.A. Baird, Private letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, p. 145.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Foreign Consultations 144, 29 December, 1852 (National Archives of India, New Delhi).

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

Prior to the annexation of the Punjab, roads were in an appalling state, often lost in the bushwood. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the British authorities had realized the commercial advantage of Amritsar and believed that roads would be more effective than bayonets in preserving tranquillity in the Punjab. The road connecting Ferozepur with Amritsar commanded most of the trade and numerous carts laden with sheet-iron, cotton, firewood and leather from the tracts of Pergunnah Kasur were to be seen passing through it. Mr. C.B. Saunders shortened this road and improved it. A road connecting Amritsar and Lahore was laid and the passenger traffic was greatly increased. The average number of travellers between the two cities was not less than a thousand persons per day; and where, not more than six years before the completion of the road, there had been 20 *ekkas* in Lahore, the number of *ekkas* that plied between the two cities shot up to 2,500. Similarly, other roads were improved and laid out and thus Amritsar was connected with the North Western Provinces and Lahore by the new Grand Truck Road, which was metalled throughout the district, and with Sialkot, Wazirabad, Batala and with the hills by *Kacha* roads which were drained and bridged<sup>1</sup>. In those days commercial goods were conveyed by mules, bullock carts, coolies, *ekkas*, camels and sometimes by horses.

If Lahore was the Capital, Amritsar was the grand entrepot for trade with Central Asia. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Amritsar had become a centre of the Punjab trade both in agricultural and manufactured products and had extensive trade with Calcutta by the Grand Trunk road; with Bombay and Karachi by difficult and lengthy routes, across the desert of Rajputana and with Central Asia. The British, therefore, felt they should link up Amritsar with Multan and Kashmir so that the longer routes to Calcutta and Bombay for despatching goods to Europe could be avoided. They thought that a railway from Multan to Amritsar could be a 'temporal artery of the Indian body'. The indigo, which took so long to travel from Calcutta, and the wheat which rotted in the graneries in the Punjab for want of conveyance

1 R. H. Davies and W. E. Blyth, Report on the Revised Settlement of the Amritsar and Sawrian and Taran Tarun Pergunnchs of the Amritsar District, p 14.

would reach Amritsar speedily and find a ready exit. In the same way, all exports which found their way from Calcutta and Bombay would proceed to Karachi and thence to Amritsar by rail. Thus on February 8, 1859 the first railway connected Amritsar, Lahore and Multan. Due to the introduction of the road and railway system and the lowering of the rate of freights by Railway authorities, there was a vast expansion of trade.

From the middle of the 19th century, the manufacture and export of cloth grew, bringing in its train a richer and more varied life. The city was gaining in wealth and population. The merchants continued to operate the cloth trade on an ever-increasing sale. They supplied raw-material to the craftsmen and then passed on the completed article to other workers for the finishing processes and finally put it on the market. By 1883-84, the import of raw silk was estimated at Rs. 2,500,000 per annum, of silk cloth at Rs. 200,000 and of gold and other precious metals Rs. 1,000,000 while the export of piece-goods was about Rs. 3,000,000 and that of China and hill teas and other articles about Rs. 1,000,000. In the first year after annexation, the annual octroi collections in Amritsar were only about Rs. 50,000 but by 1875 they were nearing Rs. 200,000. This shows how the volume of trade had diminished since Ranjit Singh's times when people were groaning under heavy import duties. The average for the five years (1895-99) was well over Rs. 300,000 and had risen to Rs. 570,000 by 1899. In 1895 the value of annual imports was estimated at twenty million rupees and exports amounted to about fifteen and a half million rupees.

For long Amritsar had formed an important centre for traffic in horses and cattle. In Ranjit Singh's time it had met the increasing demand of Sialkot where the supply of cattle was insufficient. Horse fairs became a regular annual feature. The sale in horses and cattle showed a substantial increase over the years; for example in 1892 about 9,000 horses were sold against 4,000 in 1883 and 3,000 in 1879.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Amritsar became the distributing centre for imported piece goods for almost the whole of Northern India. It imported foreign textiles, cotton

and wollen, mostly from the United Kingdom. Piece goods on a commission basis proved highly remunerative to the business community. The *Marwaris*, who had acquired mastery over business methods and organisation, had settled down at Amritsar and exported commodities to Calcutta and Bombay. A fairly large number of people belonging to Amritsar worked as agents or assistants under the supervision of hardworking, shrewd and enterprising *Marwaris*, from whom they learnt the technique of managing business on sound lines. The range of business was to widen as the years went by.

The outbreak of the First World war at first caused dislocation but subsequently led to an increased demand for certain Indian products which greatly stimulated both private enterprise and the economic policies of the Government. Due to strong public opinion in favour of the Swadeshi movement which gave a fillip to the textile industry, merchants turned industrialists with the result that, instead of importing cloth from the United Kingdom and other countries, they began exporting their own products. In this the Foreign Exchange Banks—in particular—The National and Grindlay Bank (1930) played a creditable part in the development of industry. Some handloom factories were set up to manufacture cloth with yarn imported from abroad, particularly from Japan. Later Art Silk yarn was also imported and women's dress material, commonly known as *Daryai*, was manufactured in pit looms. The first powerloom factory, Bharat Udhar weaving factory, which operated on wollen was set up in 1919 and other entrepreneurs followed suit. An automatic screen printing machine, embroidery machines and warp knitting machines were installed at Amritsar. The slump of 1929-33 caused a set-back in industry, but thereafter the situation improved. In 1933 the first powerloom factory for the manufacture of rayon fabrics was set up, followed by a larger unit in 1934. The Second World war, which resulted in the curtailment of foreign imports and an increased demand by the Allies on account of diversion of productive resources, gave an impetus to local industry, particularly textile. The communal disturbances of 1946 almost destroyed one fourth of the city and the evacuation of Muslims reduced the number of highly skilled technicians and manual labourers which in its turn

adversely affected production. On the other hand, a large number of displaced persons came to Amritsar as industry was considered to be the best means of absorbing them; these displaced persons were helped in the setting up of a number of engineering units for the manufacture of wood screws, machine screws, textile machinery and electric fans. The Industries Department gave them grants, loans, technical know-how and raw-materials like coke and non-ferrous metals at controlled rates. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry supplied industrial machinery on advantageous hire purchase terms.

It would appear from the above account that what was previously a commercial centre, today boasts of an impressive array of industrial units. Of the 4,600 industries registered in the Punjab about 25 per cent are located at Amritsar. Textiles which comprise woollen, cotton, art silk and staple manufactures, remain the most important industry at Amritsar. Jute goods like *bukram* are also manufactured. The other notable industries are engineering and chemical, plastic and ivory goods, jewellery, clay toys, rubber and some small scale industries which produce radios, plastic and ivory goods, wood-carving and rubber articles, fountain pens, thermometers, and jewellery etc.

Among the long established industries, three deserve special mention.

#### 1. *Pashmina*

At one time Amritsar was described as the home of the Kashmiri shawl weavers<sup>1</sup>. The manufacture of pashmina work was first introduced in Amritsar about the time when Ranjit Singh commenced his rule over the Punjab. It was mainly conducted by Kashmiri Muslims but later Punjabi Muslims also took to pashmina weaving. These weavers worked as apprentices for several years and became skilled workers. The average wages for apprentices was Rs. 2/- to Rs. 4/- and for master workers Rs. 5/- to Rs. 6/-. Shawls were made from the pashmina which was brought from

1. The statistical data of more recent years on various industries in Amritsar has been gathered from the Amritsar District Industries office, the Directorate of Industries, Punjab and the Textile Manufacturers Association, Amritsar.



Kashmir and Tibet. After 1833 large number of Kashmiris settled down at Amritsar who traced exquisite embroidery work on the shawls. It is calculated that initially in Amritsar about 300 looms worked with an annual production of Rs. 30,000.

In the next twenty years, the shawl industry made substantial progress and the number of looms increased to 4,000 with a total production worth Rs. 1,000,000. By 1883 there were still only 4,000 looms; the value of pashmina work manufactured yearly was estimated at Rs. 800,000 and the annual exports of pashmina products were about Rs. 2,000,000. This included imports from Kashmir and other places for re-export. Of this pashmina worth Rs. 1,600,000 was exported by European merchants settled in the Punjab and the rest valued at Rs. 400,000 by Indian merchants. But the shawl industry was, however, on the wane and there were less than 1000 looms by 1893 and the goods produced were worth Rs. 200,000 and the supply of pashmina, which had earlier been exported to distant places, became confined to only a few markets like Lucknow and Hyderabad.

The pashmina shawl industry was virtually destroyed due to the following facts; the Franco-Prussian war, adulteration of wool with inferior stuff imported from Kirman in the latter half of the 19th century, the import of woollen clothes from foreign countries which were well finished and considerably cheaper than the local shawls, the advent of machinery and powerlooms and finally the Second Afghan war and the first World war. The immediate loss to Amritsar pashmina manufacturers, as a result of the Franco-Prussian war, was substantial and many weavers were thrown out of employment. Some of the leading firms like Davee Sahai Chumba Mall, Hall Gate had to turn their attention mainly to the manufacture of Indian carpets, though they produced a limited supply of shawls, sheets, table covers, silk, turbans and *kamarbands*.

In the late forties of this century, due to a reduction in tariff duty, merchants were able to import yarn at lesser cost, with which they could make cheaper shawls than those supplied by France or Germany. Shawls were then made in lengths of 6 to 6½ yards and sold by weight. The local wholesale merchants bought up shawl or shawl cloth, had it cleaned, washed and dyed in various colours

after which it was embroidered mostly by Kashmiri Muslims. Shawls were also imported from Germany, embroidered at Amritsar and then sold as one kind of Amritsar's inferior shawls. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the production of shawls (small scale) increased by 120%. In 1962-63, 3 units were working producing goods worth Rs. 2,75,000. Just before Partition, pashmina was not exported from the Punjab and the entire quantity was consumed in the province. About 300 maunds of it were taken in Kulu by the Lahaul and Spiti traders. Of this about 100 maunds were consumed by the local industry of Kangra District, and the rest was brought to Amritsar where another 200 maunds were added from Rampur Bushair in Himachal Pradesh. This quality was mostly utilized by the indigenous industry of Ludhiana, Amritsar and Dehra Baba Nanak. With Partition, local industry suffered a set back and the only place left for the disposal of pashmina was Kashmir. In 1951 due to the Korean war, America stopped her imports from China, who had been her main supplier of pashmina and turned instead to Kashmir. A few Kashmiri exporters came to Amritsar to collect the largest assured supplies. This encouraged American merchants and in subsequent years, Amritsar merchants by virtue of their initiative and enterprise, captured a significant portion of the American demand. This led to an increase in exports from the Punjab and to the discovery of 'pulled pashmina'. Pashmina finds its market mostly in U.S.A., U.K. and Germany and is used for the manufacture of fine garments like pull-overs.

The following table indicates the position of exports of pashmina from Amritsar during the last few years<sup>1</sup> :—

**Export of Pashmina from Amritsar**

Year	Quantity (00 mds.)	Value (1000)	Value per md. Rs.
1950-51	N.A.	N.A.	—
1951-52	4	200	500
1952-53	10	500	500
1953-54	25	1,953	781
1954-55	8	754	943
1955-56	17	1,309	770
1956-57	15	1,871	1,247
1957-58	16	1,096	685
1958-59	31	2,071	668
1959-60	17	1,025	603
1960-61	5	275	550

<sup>1</sup> This table is taken from 'Marketing and Processing of Pashmina in the Punjab', Economic and Statistical organisation, Government of Punjab.

The table shows a sharp fall in 1954-55 due to restrictions imposed on exports. In 1958-59 there was a sharp rise in the pashmina trade, on account of the withdrawal of restrictions, but foreign manufacturers were unable to secure a sufficient supply of raw pashmina from India and were fed mainly from other sources like Mangolia and Iran. Again the decline in exports in 1959-60 can be explained in terms of the fall in foreign demand for pashmina. It is significant to note that exports in 1958-59 were 3,100 tons, the highest ever reached. From November 1960 foreign demand for pashmina fell considerably which gave rise to a fall in prices of about 30 to 40% as compared with the previous year. Since the Sino-Indian conflict, trade in pashmina has come to a standstill and the possibility of the revival of its export has been considerably reduced.

Amritsar is the biggest processing centre of pashmina in the State. The local manufacturers of pashmina purchase raw pashmina at Kulu Mandi and get it cleaned and sorted at Amritsar. Before the Chinese invasion, raw pashmina brought to Amritsar from Tibet was subject to dehairing and colour sorting processes which engaged about 5,000 women, each of whom was paid usually between 8 to 10 annas per day. When pashmina was ready for export, it was packed in bales of 4 maunds, each under the hydrolic press. At present no carding or spinning is undertaken at Amritsar.

## 2. *Carpets*

After the annexation of the Punjab, the export trade in carpets expanded and 4,000 looms were reported to have been in operation at Amritsar. The number of looms later dwindled to about 1,000 as Europeans ceased to wear Kashmiri shawls. Many customers could, however, be found especially at the great fairs. Trade in European goods, which these travelling merchants sought in exchange for local wares, rapidly developed; while the Amritsar shawl weavers, anxious for employment found in the carpets of Afghanistan and the silk work of Bokhara occupation for their imitative talent and idle looms. Thus the carpet industry developed in Amritsar and received further impulse from the work produced in jails. Due to the Franco-Prussian war some of the leading business

firms in Amritsar like Davee Sahai Chumba Mall turned their attention to the manufacture of Indian carpets. Quite a large number of wealthy firms pushed this trade with conspicuous success and the output began to increase. The industry was in the hands of wealthy Hindus who employed Muslim weavers. The Amritsar carpets were soft and pliant and resembled in some ways the carpets of Kashmir. Patterns of carpets were obtained from the Indian States and Central Asia to improve designing and colour schemes. The designs were largely made by Kashmiris and were based on the shawl pattern motif. The firm of Davee Sahai Chumba Mall, which extended from Hall Gate to Hathi Gate, set up 250 to 300 looms and had made available 200 to 300 carpets for sale, each differing in size, pattern, design and colouring. Amritsar carpets were shown at international exhibitions. A Wool Mill for the manufacture of carpet yarns was established in 1921. The carpet production increased in quantity and improved in quality. Before Partition, carpets were also hand woven by Muslim weavers who were paid according to the number of stitches woven into carpet, which varied from 40 to 500 to a square inch. Carpets of beautiful design are still produced and exported to U.S.A., U.K. and France.

### 3. Silk

Originally raw silk was imported from Bokhara and cleaned, sorted, carded and dyed in Amritsar and was then exported to different places in India. In Ranjit Singh's time, broad and thick fabrics were demanded for the dress of Sikh courtiers and hence the quality of piece goods was high until it deteriorated later on account of the demand for cheaper and commoner fabrics. Amritsar exported to Peshawar and beyond the frontier silk goods which the caravans from Kabul inspired her artisans to produce. By 1883 the average annual value of imported silk was Rs. 300,000. By 1893, 2,000 looms were in operation and the output was worth about Rs. 200,000. Silk weaving was considered a luxury and was worn by princes and rich men.

The important varieties were *daryai*, a material made of the finer counts and of one colour, *gulbadan*, striped silk, *kanvez*, a thick stuff much used for skirts, and *garda*, material especially

made for the skirt of Hindu ladies, turbans, waist bands and pyjama strings etc. Of the newer industries, Textile, Engineering and Chemicals take pride of place.

The Textile Industry is said to have been established by the close of the nineteenth century when about half a dozen frame looms were set up by two *karkhanadars* (mill-owners). According to the Survey conducted in 1954-55, 4,604 powerlooms and 7,273 handlooms were operating in textile. In 1962-63 there were 4,109 powerlooms and 9,500 handlooms and the industry gave employment to 16,216 workers.

#### 4. The Woollen Industry

The Woollen industry (large scale) has shown a steady progress both in installed capacity and production. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production in woollen textiles (large scale) increased by 12% and employment by 89% approximately. In 1962-63 there were 15 Woollen mills with 44,300 spindles, 595 looms, 150 handlooms, and production was of the order of Rupees seventy million approximately.

There is a Cotton spinning and Weaving mill (large scale) with an installed capacity of 127,008 spindles, 228 looms employing 295 workers and producing goods worth Rs. 1,823,000. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of the production of cloth fell by 31%.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production in Powerloom weaving (Woollen, Cotton and Art Silk) small and medium scale increased by 88% and labour approximately by 150%.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63 in handloom weaving (medium and small scale) the value of production increased approximately by 29% and employment fell by 38%. In 1962-63, 9,500 units were working, with production worth Rupees fortyfive million, employing 9,800 workers

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63 in Art silk (medium and small scale) the value of production increased by 9%. In 1962-63 production was Rupees thirty million.

Hosiery is an old industry of Amritsar, the essential material used in this industry is yarn. Between 1954-55 and 1962-63, the

value of production increased by 41% and labour remained uniform. In 1962-63, 46 units were working with 210 workers and production was worth Rs. 1,685,000. The textile industry is carried on mostly on a small scale. The Industrialists do not always confine their sphere of activities to one section. They frequently change from Woollen to Art silk and Cotton and vice versa in accordance with demand and the market position. The woollen products of Amritsar are gaberdine, worsted, rugs shawls, coatings, blankets, *namdas* (coloured felts) and carpets. The production of cotton goods is confined to bed covers, bed sheets and tapestry. The main varieties produced with art silk are Shannon, *Georgette*, *taffeta* and *shantung*. The manufacture of various types of machines comprising twisting, reeling, bobbin winding and warping machines needed in the textile industry has been undertaken.

**Machine Embroidery.** The State has the distinction of having the country's two largest units of machine embroidery plants located at Amritsar. The first factory of this nature was set up in 1934 by an Italian and the second in 1941. To meet the rising demand, both the factories have expanded their activity and set up sister concerns. The requirements of embroidered goods like vests, marino, shawl, edgings and laces are met by the State. The essential raw material required by the industry are mercerised cloth, cloth yarn and art silk yarn. Between 1960-61 and 1962-63, the value of production fell by 24% and employment by 70%.

**Printing of Textiles—**With the growth of the textile industry, about 39 units for machine printing, screen printing and block printing, employing about 548 persons on different jobs, have been set up. The essential raw material required for the industry are dyes, chemicals, cloth and steam coal. The export of art-silk fabrics to Middle East countries has provided further stimulus and it is hoped that a substantial export market will be built up in due course.

### 5. General Engineering

An important section of the industry that has recently grown is General Engineering, which includes the manufacture of agricultural implements, carding machines, machine tools, cycle parts, wood and machine screws, printing presses, iron rounds, surgical

dressings, water pumps, sewing machines and parts, electrical goods including H.P. motors and fans, electric switches, building hardwares and other items like hair pins, crochets, screw drivers and needles, knitting pins, perambulators etc. In 1947 an amount of Rs. 7,800,000 was invested in these industries. The following would indicate the state of some of the more important industries.

In agricultural implements (small scale) between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 30% and labour by 31%. In 1962-63 the number of units working was 33, employing 210 workers and production was of the order of Rs. 1,841,000.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of machine tools produced increased by a little over 100% while labour increased by 43%. In value of production the increase was striking in view of the short span of years. In 1962-63 there were 18 units employing 207 workers and production was worth Rs. 2,324,000.

Prams, tri-cycles and a cycle spare parts industry was started at Amritsar during the Second World war on account of the restrictions on goods imported from abroad. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, there was an increase of 24%. In the number of complete cycles (small scale), labour increased by 5% and the value of parts showed a small increase. In 1962-63 two units were working; the parts manufactured numbered 18 and the number of complete cycles manufactured was 338; the value of parts produced was of the order of Rs. 875,000 while the workers employed were 230. The shortfall in the development of this industry can be explained in terms of the general slump.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of sewing machines (large scale) increased by 30% and the value of parts by 43%. In 1962-63 the number of sewing machines produced was 2,423 and the value of parts was Rs. 101,771. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of sewing machines (medium and small scale) increased by 35%, the value of parts by 83% and labour by 12%. In 1962-63, 7 units were working; 2,423 machines were produced and the value of parts was 550,000 while labour approximated 123.

Initially the wood screw industry was installed by a Sindhi concern towards the close of the First World war in 1918 at Karachi. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of wood and

machine screws produced increased by 25% and labour by 7%. In 1962-63, 23 units were working with 625 labourers and production was worth Rs. 2,125,000.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, in cotton ginning and pressing, production in terms of bales fell by 38% while employment increased by 27%. In 1962-63, 27 units were working with a production of 24,720 bales and labour at 920.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production in electric fans fell by 33% and employment by 41%. In 1962-63, 4,371 fans were produced and labour employed was 94. The short-fall in production is due to the non-availability of material and competition with longer established units in other States. The quality of fans is improving. In electric motors there has been no increase worth noting.

**The Engineering Institutions**—The biggest Engineering Institution in Amritsar is the Northern Railway Loco workshop, situated on the G.T. Road with a ground area of 32 acres and a capital investment of about Rupees thirtyfive million giving an annual production of between fifteen to twenty million rupees with its labour strength of nearly 2,300. It produces 22 box wagons for the railways every month, each costing Rs. 40,000. It provides training facilities to about 400 trainees recruited for a course of 3 years.

Another institution, the Dayanand Polytechnic, is equipped with some of the latest machinery, including some modern Russian all-purpose lathes and imparts training to about 600 students under the Government sponsored civil craftsmen Training Scheme. The Punjab Government have also built at Verka with American aid a composite Milk Plant, the second biggest in India at a cost of Rs. 6,000,000 in an area of 16 acres, producing 2,500 maunds of pasteurized milk daily besides 5,000 kilograms of *ghee* and butter and 6,200 kilograms of milk powder. The factory has five storage tanks, each with a capacity of 13,500 litres.

Problems relating to the construction of high dams, designs of hydraulic and hydro-electric structures on rivers and canals, flood control, sediment control, reclamation of saline, alkaline and water-logged land are tackled by the Land Reclamation, Irrigation



and Power Research Institute, which has an annual budget of about fifty million rupees.

#### 4. *Chemicals*

The first Chemical Factory, Messers Shambu Nath and Sons Ltd., was set up as early as 1898. By 1929 two other factories were established. Due to the Second World war, which gave an impetus to industry, the number of units rose to 9 by 1947. Since then 6 new units have been set up, bringing the total to 15 by 1954-55. The total investment in the industry amounted to about Rs. 3,300,000 and the goods produced were worth Rs. 3,800,000. The main products are tinctures, rubber goods, acids, dyes paints, soap, salts, rubber goods, plastic goods, saltpetre refining etc.

Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, 294 units were working with 1,462 labourers and production was worth two million and seventy thousand rupees. In Messers Shambu Nath (large scale) between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 93% while in labour there was a fall. In 1962-63 production was of the order of Rs. 2,647,725 and labour 202.

Before Partition Amritsar was famous for its soap and soap products worth Rs. 800,000 were exported from Amritsar annually to Afghanistan and the Middle East. The ban on imports of vital ingredients like palm and copra oils brought about a crisis in this industry. In addition the transit route to Afghanistan is almost closed due to Pakistan's strained relations with Afghanistan. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 305% and labour by 929%. In 1962-63, 262 units were working with 1,462 labourers and production was worth sixteen million rupees. Of late, the industry has begun to feel the effect of competition from large scale manufacturers like Modi Soap, Delhi Cloth Mills and Bharat Starch Factory etc. Despite this competition, however, from large units, small scale industrialists have succeeded in maintaining their scales with other states.

In Dyestuffs between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 72% and labour by 90%. In 1962-63, 7 units were working, with a labour force of 57 and production worth Rs. 475,000.

The Plastics Goods Industry was started after Partition. Between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 97% and labour by 52%. In 1962-63, 67 units were working with 206 workers and production was worth Rs. 295,750.

Some of the other well-known industries of Amritsar are as follows :-

Flour—Formerly flour used to be ground with hand *chakkies*. Gradually *kharases* came into use and then power *chakkies* and finally roller flour mills. In large scale Flour Mills between 1959-60 and 1962-63 production in value increased by about 40% and labour by 18%. In 1962-63 production was of the order of Rs. 13,871,636 and labour employed was 174.

Utensils—In the manufacture of utensils (large scale) between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production fell by 25% and employment by 26%. In 1962-63, the production of utensils was of the order of Rs. 872,000 and labour 72. In the manufacture of utensils (small scale) between 1954-55 and 1959-60, the value of production increased by 140% and employment approximately by 110%. In 1962-63, 90 units were working with production worth Rs. 2,639,000 and labour 392. Another feature of the industry was the introduction of the manufacture of stainless steel utensils. Brass casting is carried out both as a utilitarian industry and for ornamentation purposes. *Thalis* are made in copper and enriched by concentric bands of ornament cast through the tin into the copper ground. Metal work as a craft is seen in the inlay work. Inlaying is done on copper and brass in floral and other designs.

#### 5. Leather

Before Partition, Amritsar was famous for raw hides and skins, leather, and leather goods. The trade was mostly in the hands of certain sections of the Muslim community. The main items of leather manufacture are sandals, sleepers, and *desi joota* (indigenous shoe). In leather tanning between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 227% and labour by 237%. In 1962-63, 85 unregistered units were working, with production at Rs. 170,000 and a labour force of 330. In shoe-making between 1959-60 and 1962-63, there was only a small

increase in the value of production, though the labour force increased by 33%. In 1962-63, 328 units were working producing goods worth Rs. 2,250,000 and employing 895 workers.

#### 6. *Ivory Carving*

The ivory carving in Amritsar began with the comb trade about 100 years ago. Combs are of special importance to Sikhs because they form a part of their attire. Round about the Gurdwara are to be found many shops where articles of ivory work, executed with skill and neatness, are displayed. Box wood is used in large quantities and the finest comb is made of ivory, decorated with geometric patterns. Occasionally miniature painting on ivory is traced. Paper knives, trays, bangles, chains, buttons, tags and the long parting combs of the European toilet are also made. The raw material for these is purchased locally or imported specially from Central Asia. Between 1954-55 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 41%. In 1962-63, 5 units were working and goods were produced worth Rs. 250,000.

In Miscellaneous handicrafts between 1959-60 and 1962-63, the value of production increased by 200% and labour by 25%. In 1962-63, 40 units were working with production worth Rs. 225,000.

#### 7. *Jewellery*

Skill in mounting and arranging jewels is confined to articles of adornment, like locketts, rings, bracelets and necklaces. There is a considerable trade in coloured stone. Enamelling on gold as an accessory in jewellery is practised. A large quantity of imitation jewellery is turned out. Jewellery is made from glass, coloured and plain, with tinted foil behind it. Zinc ornaments for use by the poorest classes are rudely cast, and in some streets the whole of the moulders' operations is carried out in the open air. The patterns are not as beautiful as those used in Bombay or Delhi. Sapphire work is done in precious metals. A large number of people specialize in *kundan* work, which can be executed with thin leaves from pure gold. These gold leaves are utilized for the setting of diamonds and other precious stones. *Kundan* leaves are prepared through special processes by removing all impurities from gold. This gives a permanent lustre to the pieces of jewellery.

Some dealers do not have regular shops at Amritsar but make ornaments and send them out of Amritsar for sale. There are quite a large number of '*Dharam Kanta*' people (specialists in weighing gold and gold ornaments).

Due to the promulgation of the Gold control regulations about 10,000 goldsmiths of Amritsar have faced the problem of unemployment. According to these restrictions, ornaments of only 14 carat gold can be put on the market. The general feeling is that the new law may drive people to resort to traditional but primitive methods of preserving gold and they may remove their ornaments from lockers and bury them in the ground. A healthy effect of the gold policy has been a substantial abatement in the smuggling activity on the Amritsar border. It is, however, apprehended that most of the hoarders may go underground.

#### 8. *Wood carving*

The city contains some beautiful specimens of architectural wood carving. At one time the wood carvers of Amritsar achieved an excellence of a high order and claimed their city to be the headquarters of the wood carvers art in the State. The doors and windows of houses in the city exhibit some of the best efforts of the wood carvers. Other notable items of wood carving are chairs, tables, screens, bedsteads, lattice work, watch cases and flower stands. The wood generally used is *shisham*.

Wood work—This is quite an old industry and the main articles made are harmonium, wood combs and penholders etc. In 1954-55, there were 104 units, employing about 500 workers and production was worth Rs. 8,50,000.

#### 9. *Gold Lace (Gota wearing)*

Gold and silver, woven like cotton with silk or fibre yarn, is used by ladies for the borders of their dresses and especially for saris, table covers etc. This industry is carried on partly in homes and partly in small *karkhanas*. Weaving of imitation *gota* was formerly popular but this industry is now declining due to the changing habits of the people.

### 10. Clay Toys

Models of fruits, vegetables and of figures are made in clay which are popular with children. Potters display their work, particularly at religious festivals like *Diwali* and *Janmashthmi*.

Jam and Murraba—This industry was set up about 1850. By 1954-55, 16 units were working (only one registered) of which 4 have been established since Partition. The raw materials mostly used are fresh fruits of *anwala*, *harrar*, carrot, apple, mango and sugar. The murraba (jam) is sold throughout the country. In 1954-55, the number of workers employed was 50 and the investment amounted to about Rs. 864,000.

Jail Industries—During 1960 prisoners working in Band and Rope-making in the District jail produced goods worth about Rs. 14,500.

The Thermometer industry was set up in 1955 and during 1955-56, 5,000 pieces were produced at a value of Rs. 28,000. The manufacture of Radio and Radio parts started in 1946. The production of vegetable *ghee* in a large scale factory in 1962-63 was worth twenty million rupees and the labour employed was 140.

Some crafts the like ware-making, kin-khab making, straw-basket making, book-binding, picture-frame making and textile dyeing are also popular.

Despite considerable industrial expansion, Amritsar has remained a great distributing centre and much business is carried on wholesale in import and distribution of commodities. The principal articles of merchandise imported into the city and re-exported are kiriyana (groceries) which include dried fruits, turmeric, spices, almonds and palms. These are acquired mostly from Kabul, Bombay and Madras. Business in these items is mostly carried on in Majith Mandi. Wheat, barley, gram and pulses are imported from the neighbouring districts and the United Provinces. The grain business is mainly confined to Dhab Basti Ram. The wheat comes from the local canal tracts and is mostly re-exported. Amritsar is an important centre of the tea trade; tea is imported from Kangra, Dehra Dun and Assam and then exported to Lahaul

and Spiti and Afghanistan. Silver and gold are imported from Bombay and Delhi and are used for display of all kinds. A small portion is re-exported to smaller markets but the larger portion is used for ornaments. This trade has suffered due to the recent Gold regulations. For the sale of jewellery and precious stones, there are several big shops in Guru Bazar. There is flourishing trade in brass and copper utensils made locally or imported from Moradabad. They are sent out to the villages for sale. Hides and skins of slaughtered animals are tanned in small cottage tanneries at a few centres by indigenous processes and are exported to Kanpur or abroad. Paper is imported from paper Mills in India and native account books called *bahis* are produced in large numbers. The city has a thriving trade in *paper* and *variyan* which are popular all over the country. The essences of *henna* and *khas*, the former noted for its cooling properties are also distilled in Amritsar. Among the less important articles of commerce are *ghee*, sugar and tobacco.

The above survey shows that though there are no large scale industries like Sugar, Cement, Paper, Diesel Engine, Automobile Parts and Electric motors, yet Amritsar's industry has now a capital investment of anything between twenty to twentyfive million rupees. Out of the total more than half is invested in the Textile industry (power looms) which retains its primacy. Out of 30,000 workers employed in industry in Amritsar, the largest labour force in the Punjab, about 11,000 workers, i.e. over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total are employed in textile (power loom) and 9,800 workers in handloom weaving, i.e. about another  $\frac{1}{3}$  in handloom weaving. Increase in the output of powerloom weaving (cotton) during 1962-62 and 1963-63 may be ascribed to the change over of the industrialists' interest from one section of industry to another. In hosiery there is a trend towards expansion and an improvement in quality but this industry has to face the competition from Ludhiana. Staple yarn spinning and wool tops are likely to have a promising future due to an increase in demand. Next to textiles,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total is invested in Chemicals which has shown an increase of 170% in the last 5 years, though the non-availability of material like coke has somewhat hampered its growth. Pharmaceutical herbs available in abundance in the Kangra District need to be exploited. In

washing soap the increase in output and employment is striking, i.e. 305% and 929% in the last five years. In Engineering, where the trend towards development is fairly evident, machine tools indicate an 100% increase in output in the last five years. Leather tanning, handicrafts, plastic goods and utensils are other industries showing promise, while in electric fans, cotton gin and pressing, lace manufacturing and rubber industries, there is a shortfall in output due to the non-availability of material.

Proximity to the 'temperamental' border, a perennial shortage of raw material and electricity, the high level of excise and sales tax, major restrictions on the import of foreign yarn, non-availability of coal and iron, the enforcement of Marla tax by the Punjab Government and inadequate marketing (which are described here as big irritants) have hampered the industrial growth of the city and deterred industrialists from making large investments. Ludhiana has already stolen a march over Amritsar, particularly in hosiery. With a favourable political climate, availability of raw material, particularly yarn at uniform rates backed by the initiative and enterprise of the people of Amritsar in which they are not wanting (as was shown during the Chinese invasion and the Indo-Pakistan war when small and big factories overnight changed over to the production of goods needed for the defence of the country) and the helpful attitude of Government may enable Amritsar to retain its position as an important industrial town, if not regain its former enviable stature as the foremost centre of trade and commerce in undivided Punjab.

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## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The first Administration Report 1849-50), which was prepared after the Punjab became a British Province, throws valuable light on the kind of educational system then in vogue. The pattern of education in the Punjab had its parallels in many parts of India, though there were local variations. The indigenous schools were of five kinds :

1. *Pathshalas* (from '*Path*' reading) where writing and the rudiments of arithmetic were taught in Hindi.
2. *Makhtabs* where the *Koran* was studied in Arabic and also *Golistan* and *Bostan*, the didactic and poetical works of Sadi in Persian.
3. *Schools* in which Gurmukhi was taught, together with the study of the *Granth*, the repository of Sikh faith.
4. *Mahajani* school where various tachygraphic forms of *lande* and *sarafi* were taught in addition to multiplication tables (*pahara*). In particular, these schools were popular with the business community for their special emphasis on accounts.
5. Miscellaneous schools in which different languages like Sanskrit and Persian were taught.

The mode in which teachers were remunerated varied from donations on festivals to offerings of grain or grants of land.

Amritsar remained for long the chief seat of Sikh learning. Education owed much to the system of rent-free grants and endowments made under the Sikh Government. G. W. Leitner, at one time the Principal, Governments College, Lahore who worked for the foundation of the Punjab University, produced a "History of Indigenous Education in Panjab" which describes specifically the number of educational institutions existing in Amritsar city. It suggests that besides the Golden Temple and *Bungahs* attached to it, there were about 300 schools in the city where Gurmukhi was



taught and rhetoric studied. The text book of Faqir Amar Das of Amritsar was extremely popular which included a guide to polite conversation, manners and etiquette. The number of Gurmukhi schools, however, was showing a decrease.

According to Leitner, the largest *Pathshala* in Amritsar was conducted mainly by Pandit Achint Ram<sup>1</sup> and others who taught sanskrit, grammer, poetry, logic and prosody to 75 pupils and later on prepared students for the *Pragya* and *Visharad* examination of the Punjab University which give a grant-in-aid of Rs. 40 per mensem to the school. The largest *Maktab* in the city was attached to the mosque of Sheikh Khairuddin in Hall Bazar in which, as Leitner's report suggests, 200 pupils were taught the *Koran*, Persian and various branches of Arabic learning. The salary of a *Maulvi* varied from Rs. 4 to Rs. 21 per mensem. This school was established and supported by Sheikh Khair-ud-Din. The largest of the Gurmukhi schools was attached to Akal *Bungah* where Bhai Atma Singh taught the *Granth* in Gurmukhi to about 100 to 150 students. In many localities, like Katra Bhangian, Katra Ahluwalia, Katra Khazana, Karmon Deohri, Mori Ganj, Katra Bhai Sant Singh, Katra Karam Singh, minor Persian, Arabic and Urdu schools existed where students numbered anywhere between 2 and 18 in a school and the income of a teacher ranged between Rs. 3 and Rs. 41. Similarly in a higher Arabic, Persian and Urdu school, students numbered between 4 and 60 and the subjects taught were medicine, grammar, *hadis*, logic, rhetoric, arabic, persian, etc. These schools were situated mainly in Katra Sufid, Katra Mohan Singh, Kotwali and Katra Karam Singh. Gurmukhi schools were attached to *Dharmshala* or private houses situated in various localities, such as Katra Sher Singh, Chawk Pasiyan, Akhara Brahm Buta. The range of remuneration to a teacher was between Rs. 1/4 and Rs. 8 per mensem. In Mahajani schools, situated in Chaurasti Atari, Ghanta Ghar and Katra Dulu, students numbered between 12 and 80 in each school and the income of a teacher varied from Rs. 19/- to Rs. 10/- per mensem. Sanskrit schools were scattered throughout the city, and according to Leitner, the standard of teaching

1 G. W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in Panjab*, pp. 31-8.  
General Abstract, Amritsar District,

there was quite satisfactory. The number of students in Sanskrit schools was between 4 and 75 and the income of a teacher between Rs. 7 and 80. Robert Montgomery, Commissioner, Lahore Division, in his letter to P. Melvill, Secretary to the Board of administration, dated 8th November 1850<sup>1</sup> writes that the children of the more affluent had private instruction in their own houses. Montgomery's statement about educational institutions indicates that in Amritsar city there were 15,256 houses, 9 Arabic schools with 72 scholars, 13 Persian schools with 129 scholars, 15 Hindi schools with 540 scholars, 3 Gurmukhi schools with 12 scholars, 26 *Koran* schools with 147 scholars and 42 general schools, confining themselves to no particular languages, with 197 scholars<sup>2</sup>. Despite political changes, education progressed and by 30 October 1882, there were in the city of Amritsar 54 *Makhtabs* with 964 pupils, 59 *Pathshalas* with 1027 pupils, 20 *Gurmukhi* schools with 792 pupils, 12 *lande* schools with 607 pupils and a total of 145 indigenous schools with 3,390 pupils<sup>3</sup>.

Many distinguished men noted for their learning lived in the city. The best known were Ganga Ram Kripa Ram and Pir Baksh Aziz-ud-Din. Among the Muslims the most famous were Rukun-ud-Din, Akbar Shah and Muhammad Fazl Karim. There were available many Gurmukhi scholars and authors by the end of the 19th century but Bhai Gyan Singh and Bhai Bishan Singh of Amritsar were the most distinguished; the latter was a prolific writer in grammar, philosophy, logic and history<sup>4</sup>. Among the *Bhais*, Hazara Singh and Kishan Singh had also won repute. Pandit Tulsi Ram, Pandit Balmukumd and Pandit Baijnath were well-known Sanskrit scholars.

The indigenous education was deficient in critical and scientific ideas, in the study of geography and history. Natural causes and phenomenon did not enter in the scheme of things. Commercial and Agricultural accounts became really the summum bonum which circumscribed rather than enlarged the minds of

1 Foreign 1851, Political Consultations, 31 January, No. 22, (National Archives of India), New Delhi.

2 *Ibid.*, No. 24.

3 G. W. Leitner, History of Indigenous Education in Panjab, p. 31; General Abstract, Amritsar District.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 31

pupils. Students were mostly made to learn and possibly to admire the virtues of their traditional religion. Learning was by rote and some children showed marvellous powers of memory by reproducing many columns of arithmetical figures which amazed the spectators. The multiplicand generally ascended to forty or even higher. Discipline was somewhat strict. In larger schools, the teachers was permanent but there were also itinerant teachers who followed the local demand.

The members of the Punjab board scrupulously respected all existing educational endowments and proposed to found a central school in each city of the Punjab. After the annexation of the Punjab, the suggestion of establishing a school at Amritsar seems to have originated with Mr. C.B. Saunders, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar in 1849, though the merit of first carrying it into execution belongs to Mr. R. Montgomery, Chief Commissioner. The question, which exercised the mind of officials, was whether the school should be founded at Amritsar or Lahore. Mr. C.B. Saunders, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, examined this question in details in his letter of 23rd August 1850 addressed to the Commissioner of the Lahore Division<sup>1</sup>. According to Saunders, Amritsar was regarded by the people of Punjab as the chief seat not only of the prevailing religion of the country (for the Hindus, equally with the Sikhs, regarded it as such) but also of learning and intellectual superiority. He was impressed by the mental and social outlook of the influential citizens who displayed few prejudices. Furthermore, their commercial and mercantile interests stimulated them to acquire proficiency in English. They evinced a strong desire to have their children instructed in the English language too and had in some cases arranged for them to be taught English privately. A 'Calcutta Babu' with an adequate knowledge of English<sup>2</sup> had established himself in the city of Amritsar and had drawn round him several pupils and was appointed English tutor to the younger members of the Sindhanwala family. Saunders felt that the feelings of the inhabitants of the city were so strongly in favour of the English language that he thought it was absolutely necessary to bring it within their reach.

1 Foreign Department 1851, Political Consultations, 31 Jan. No. 23 (National Archives, India).

2 *Ibid.*

Two petitions had been submitted to the Deputy Commissioner by the 'Residents' for the appointment of an English teacher to impart an adequate knowledge of reading and writing in the English language.

Saunders was therefore convinced of the need for the establishment of a school in Amritsar, and the general principle advanced by him<sup>1</sup> was that parents should pay for the education of their children save in the case of the needy who should be provided with adequate facilities. He suggested that Rs. 3,000 be chargeable to the *Nuzul* fund of the district for the purpose of adapting and adding to a government building in the centre of the city for educational needs.

Mr. Robert Montgomery, the Commissioner, strongly supported Mr. Saunderson's case in his letter to P. Melvell, Secretary to the Board of Administration dated 8th<sup>2</sup> November 1850 by adding that there was no city in the Punjab which because of its position, importance and the general intelligence of its inhabitants, presented a greater opportunity for the introduction of a good school than Amritsar. Mr. Melvill considered the selection of Amritsar for an educational establishment of a collegiate character as judicious from every point of view. He argued that Amritsar was in the heart of the Punjab and as such, it was necessary to enlighten the youth, which apart from other benefits, would have a political value in diffusing peaceful and industrial habits among the people. He recommended the case for the consideration of the Governor-General.<sup>3</sup> The Governor-General in his Minute wrote that Amritsar for its commercial, religious and literary importance afforded the most favourable sight for the establishment of a school in the Punjab and he authorized its immediate foundation.<sup>4</sup> He provided an annual grant of Rs. 5,000 for the establishment of the school at Amritsar to which Rs. 3,000 were to be added from the *Nuzul* funds. It was further recommended<sup>5</sup> that a European

1 Foreign Department 1851, Political Consultations, 31 Jan. No. 23. Saunders' Report to the Commissioner of Lahore Division.

2 Foreign 1851, Political Consultations, 31 Jan. No. 22.

3 Foreign 1851, Political Consultations, 31 Jan. No. 21 pp. 1-4.

4 *Ibid.*, No. 21.

5 *Ibid.*, No. 25.

headmaster be employed at Rs. 150/- p.m. Maharaja Delip Singh also gave for some time a yearly contribution of Rs. 500 to the school.

The Amritsar District school was established in 1851 and shared the same building with the *kotwali*, the handsome structure which once overlooked the sacred tank and the temple of Amritsar. There were Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and Gurmukhi departments in this school. The main subjects taught were history, geography, algebra, arithmetic and the natural sciences. The Administration reports indicate the growing popularity of this institution. The average daily attendance increased in the first year from 107 to 153. By the end of the second year, the school had 153 pupils on its rolls and at the end of the fourth year (1853-54), the number rose to 308 scholars<sup>1</sup> of whom 137 were Hindus, 84 Sikhs and 87 Muslims. In January 1856, W.H. Arnold, Director of Public Instruction, wrote that the Government school possessed great vitality and was eminently popular and had been a serviceable instrument of government.<sup>2</sup> Leitner's report suggests that the school had 500 students and that some of the students acquired a good knowledge of the English language and the European sciences.<sup>3</sup> The Missionary school, which had combined the teaching of the Christian religion with secular education, was making rapid progress. In 1863 the Christian Vernacular Education Society sent an agent to the Punjab to found a normal school for men, who were to be educated up to Government standard as teachers. In Amritsar work commenced in 1865 and was completed in 1870 and a normal school was established, capable of receiving at least 60 students. Prior to the foundation of Khalsa College, there were a large number of primary and secondary schools but there was no college in Amritsar, and students desirous of further education had perforce to go to Lahore or Delhi. By the end of the 19th century, the demand for a college was such that as a result of the enterprise of the residents, two colleges were founded. This was mainly due to activities of the Sangha and Hindu Sabha.

1 Bosworth Smith, *The Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I, p. 309.

2 Foreign 1856 Department, *Political Consultations*, 29 August. No. 74.

3 Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in Punjab*, p. 166.

The Singh Sabha was founded in 1877 in order to revitalise Sikhism. It was felt by members of this group that the Sikh religion was in danger and that steps should be taken to meet the challenge of Christianity which was gaining ground in the Punjab especially at Amritsar where a Mission school had been established in 1853. Maharaja Dalip Singh was making an annual grant of Rs. 500 to the Christian Mission at Amritsar. Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, a local Sikh aristocrat, had been included to donate a site in Amritsar to the Mission. Early in 1873, four students of the Amritsar Mission School—Aya Singh, Attar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh—had declared their intention of embracing Christianity. One Shardha Ram Phillauri, who had been engaged by the British to write, the 'History of the Sikh Community', delivered a series of lectures in *Guru Ka Bagh* at Amritsar attacking the Sikh Gurus and scriptures. These developments shook the complacency of the Sikhs and they called a meeting of prominent Sikhs in 1877 in the Majithia *Bunga* at Amritsar and founded the Singh Sabha with Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawala as its President, and Giani Gian Singh as its Secretary. The object in view was to purify Sikhism and to diffuse learning and sciences among the Sikhs. The Khalsa Diwan was set up in 1883. In a farewell address to Lord Ripon at the meeting of the Khalsa Diwan on November 13, 1884 at Darbar Sahib, Kunwar Partap Singh of Kapurthala said, "Our efforts are now directed to secure the march of that (intellectual) progress permanently by setting up such institutions as colleges, schools etc. which will become an increasing sources of benefit to our posterity".

The Singh Sabha at Amritsar adopted a resolution for the establishment of a Khalsa College. A memorial was submitted to Sir Charles Aitchison (1832-96), Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, for the purpose of securing his approval. At a meeting of the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, February 1890, the Khalsa Establishment Committee was set up. Col. W.R.M. Harliroyd, Director of Public Instruction, was the President of the Committee with Sardar Attar Singh and Sardar Dharam Singh as Vice-presidents, and Mr. W. Bell as Secretary. A subscription list was opened for the collection of donations. Some ruling chiefs made liberal contributions. The question of the location of the institution

whether it was to be established in Amritsar or Lahore stirred controversy<sup>1</sup>. Eventually Sir James Broadwood Lyall, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, decided that the college would be founded in Amritsar due to 'the wishes of the great majority of the Sikh people'. Representations in favour of the establishment of Khalsa College in Amritsar with 48,694 signatures had reached the Lieutenant Governor. The foundation stone of Khalsa College was laid by Sir James Lyall on March 5, 1892. The Establishment Committee was replaced by the Khalsa College Council of which the Hon'ble Dr. William H. Rattigan, the Chief Justice of Punjab, became the President and Dr. J.C. Oman D. Litt. was appointed the first Principal. In the beginning, the British exercised control over the institution which they relaxed with time. A Sikh school was established at Amritsar in 1893; it was raised to a high school in 1896 and in the following year, intermediate classes were opened and in 1899 it became a Degree College. Later Postgraduate teaching was introduced. Khalsa College was established 'to impart to Sikh youth an education that will tend to raise the status of the Sikh people, to maintain the Sikh religion, to promote morality and sobriety of life, to develop active habits and physical strength and to produce intelligent and useful citizens and loyal subjects of the British Crown'<sup>2</sup>.

Originally designed for the higher education of Sikhs, the college admits non-Sikhs also. Its management is private and is in the hands of a Committee who are responsible to a general council. The college has enjoyed extensive patronage of the former Sikh Princes and had a galaxy of eminent Principals including Mr. G.A. Wathen and Rai Bahadur Manmohan. Public subscriptions have been raised and the Government have also given grants.

The college is situated  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Amritsar on the Grand Trunk Road away from the hubhub of the city amidst pleasant surroundings. It is an impressive building with its towers, reminiscent of the old Sikh architecture. The building does not

1 For a detailed account of this controversy, see *Amritsar versus Lahore by a Pothwhari* (Published under the auspices of the Khalsa College), 1891.

2 J.F. Bruce, *A History of the University of the Panjab*, p. 112.

overawe nor inspire yet; it is plain, austere and commanding. The main building is a fine specimen of Indo-Saracenic art. The college has vast lawns, large playing grounds, halls, hostels, laboratories, botanical gardens, an agricultural farm, a model dairy, a fruit nursery, a gymnasium, a pavilion, a swimming tank, common rooms, a library and a reading room. A City Students' Association is open to non-resident students. Master Tara Singh, the veteran Sikh leader, graduated from this college in 1901. In 1963-64, the number of students was 1,165.

The construction of the college building was supervised by Sardar Dharm Singh, who responded to the request of the Managing Committee and placed his services honorarily at their disposal. As a result of the efforts of the All India Sikh Conference, the Endowment Fund of the college rose to a figure of Rs. 1,530,477/-/6 and the main Building Endowment Fund went up to Rs. 328,480/9/11 by the end of the financial year 1904-5. On December 11, 1905, the college was visited by Their Royal Highnesses the Crown Prince and Princess of Wales, who later on ascended the throne of England as King George and Queen Mary. Before the close of the function, which was arranged on a grand scale, Prince George sanctioned the use of his name for one of the scholarships recently endowed, and a sum of Rs. 200,000 was subscribed on the spot.

In November 1913, Sir Michael F. O'Dwyer visited the college on his way to Lahore to take charge of the province as Lieutenant Governor and sanctioned a grant of Rs. 9,300 for a tubewell and a swimming tank. On February 16, 1919, he presided over the Annual Prize Distribution function of the college and in recognition of the services rendered by the Sikhs and the Khalsa college during the First World war, he offered a grant of Rs. 300,000 from the Government of the Punjab for the completion of the main building. Between 1947-48, the Government took over the college buildings and grounds for the accommodation of refugees and military; and the institution suffered a heavy loss of Rs. 27,736/8/0 in addition to Rs. 101,414/8/0 in tuition fees.

The Hindu Sabha which was founded in 1818 aimed at the promotion of Sanskrit learning and the social reform of Hindus, Subscriptions to the amount of Rs. 50,000 was raised, to be spent



in the cause of education. The Hindu Sabha High School was built in 1906 near the Lohgarh Gate and was raised to the standard of an intermediate college in 1926 and to degree status in 1936. In 1946 efforts were made to introduce M.A. (English) but these plans did not mature. Formerly, it was a co-educational institution but now it is restricted to boys only. It is run by a Council elected by the Hindu Sabha which gives it financial aid from its large properties in the Dhab Teli Bhanar, in Jubilee market. The Municipal Committee and some commercial establishments have also provided financial aid, though a substantial amount has also accrued from the college fees. The college has purchased a new site outside the city in order to extend its premises. A hostel in the civil lines provides residential accommodation to students. In 1963-64, the number of students on the rolls was 725.

Founded in 1874, the Anjuman-i-Islamia's special object was to encourage english and religious education among the Muslim Community. In May 1933 a Muslim Intermediate college was established near Hall Gate by adding the first two college classes to the local M.A.O. High School, which was built in 1885. The college was raised to the degree standard in 1945, and was financed and run by the Anjuman-i-Islamia. Hostel accommodation was also made available to students. After the evacuation of the Muslims from the city, the college naturally ceased to function and its premises were occupied for some time by refugees from Pakistan. When things began to settle down, the D.A.V. Management took over the building and the D.A.V. College has been functioning since 1955. In 1963-64, the number of students in this college was 1800. The Government College for Women, originally known as the Stratford College for Women, was founded in 1932 and was raised to Degree standard in 1938. The college is situated at present in Rani Ka Bagh opposite the Courts, and hostel accommodation is also provided to students. The Modern College for Women located on the Mall is a private institution preparing students for degree examinations.

The Medical College, originally a Medical School, was separated from King Edward College, Lahore and removed to Amritsar in 1920. It is situated in the civil lines. Its annual expenditure is

partly met by the government and the balance from fees and other income. Formerly only the diplomas of L.M.S. (Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery), ophthoemology, dispenser's and dresser's certificates were awarded. The course has now been extended to 5 years for M.B.B.S. Twenty-one percent of the seats are reserved for scheduled and other backward classes. The Dental College, Amritsar, prepares students for B.D.S. and is situated near Rambagh Gate. Besides these colleges, there are some small private coaching academies where students are prepared privately for the Punjab University examinations. These institutions are quite popular with students, because the fees charged are small and the courses covered short. Ready-made notes are dictated—question and answer-wise and success in examinations is assured.

The Muslims had four schools in Amritsar city, three of which (M.A.O., Muslims and the Islamia) were managed by the Anjuman-i-Islamia, and the fourth was the Chistia High School which was governed by a Council of prominent local citizens. The Government High School, the Hindu Sabha High School, the Pandit Baijnath High School, the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School, the Balmukund Khatri High School and the Government Clerical and Commercial School are popular educational institutions. The Pandit Baijnath High School (founded by Pandit Baijnath) and the Balmukund High School (founded by Lala Bansi Dhar Kapoor) are fairly old and enjoy a good reputation for discipline, results and games. These schools also have branches in different parts of the city. The Ram Ashram High School, which has recently moved to its new site at Majitha Road, was founded in 1923 with 7 students by Acharya Sunder Singh, a man of simple habits and a staunch advocate of National Education. He had come to Amritsar at the suggestion of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in order to rehabilitate the tottering national school. For the last 25 years, this co-educational school which is run on modern lines has played a vital role in the life of its students, by laying special emphasis on studies and extra-curricular activities. At the Government Clerical and Commercial School, short-hand, type-writing, book-keeping and other commercial subjects are taught. At the Junior Vernacular Teachers' Training Class, attached to the

Khalsa Collegiate School, pupil-teachers are given a two years' course in primary school teaching.

People held orthodox views about female education but Mangal Singh Ramgarhia and Raja Kalyan Singh, the city Punch, popularized the cause of female education<sup>1</sup>. As elsewhere, it was the missionary activity which yielded fruitful results in the field of female education. The Church Mission society established missions and posted chaplains who founded the Alexandra High School and Middle Class school for girls, besides the High School for boys, as mentioned earlier. The oldest girls' school in Amritsar is the Alexandra High School, founded by the Church Missionary Society in 1878. It took its name by royal sanction from Princess Alexandra, later Queen Alexandra, who had visited the Punjab in 1875. It was originally founded for Indian Christian girls but since 1907, it has admitted children of other communities as day scholars. It is situated in the civil lines. The Sacred Heart School on Majitha Road is a missionary institution which provides instruction to both Christian and non-Christian students up to Matriculation standard. Foreign missionaries have also taken up social work in this institution.

The Midwifery School was opened in 1866. Shrimati Dayawanti Kanya Maha Vidyalaya was founded in 1906 and the Government High School started functioning in 1929. The Punjab Institute of Textile Technology founded in 1925 is managed by the Government and prepares students for a diploma in technology. The Institute for the Blind receives a small grant-in-aid from the Department of Industries and its inmates are taught various crafts.

From a sanitary point of view, few of the schools were situated in favourable surroundings. They presented really a sorry spectacle. Class-rooms were over-crowded and there was little light. There were no playing grounds. Majority of the schools were lodged in rented premises and the Municipal Committee, Amritsar did not make sufficient progress in the direction of constructing these buildings. In a paper on the 'Unhygienic and Unsanitary Condition of Boys and Girls Schools in cities', which

1. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, p. 482, f. 560.

Sir Gopal Dass Bhandari read before the All India Sanitary Conference held at Lucknow in 1914, he said, 'As far as their situation is concerned, they are situated in dirty lanes, full of offensive smell. The rooms are without sufficient light or air and in measurement are about 10 feet each. There is no ventilation if you close the door, and abundance of drought if you open them'. This state of affairs is largely true even to-day and efforts are being made to improve existing conditions.

One of the Municipal Committee's aims has been to eradicate illiteracy. This campaign began on November 16, 1925 when the Panjab Primary Education Act of 1919 was enforced in the town. In the first instance, compulsory education was introduced in Divisions No. 2 and 3 in addition to Divisions No. 1 and 5, where it was enforced during 1939-40. By early 1941, compulsory education had been introduced in about one-third of the town.<sup>1</sup> Between 1951-52, compulsory education was introduced in Divisions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12. To speed up the work a census of boys of school-going age from 6-11 years was taken in March 1952. Between 1951-52, the total number of boys of school-going age was 13,167, out of which 10,793 boys were receiving proper instruction in different schools. This amounted to 6% of the entire male population of the Municipal area. By 1956-57, the Act was in force throughout Amritsar and a census of children of school-going age was taken in the third week of February 1957. As compared with 13,167 children in 1951-52, the total number of boys of school-going age between 1956-57 was 12,230, out of which 11,251 were already receiving instruction in educational institutions either maintained or supported by the Municipal Committee. The guardians of the remaining 979 were asked to send their boys to school with the result that another 398 were enrolled. As compared with the total male population of the town, the percentage of pupils came to 7 in 1956-57. Thus within about 4 years there was an increase of 1%. Reading material was distributed free to the needy pupils. Those belonging to scheduled castes were also helped in this way. In 1951-52 the number of M.B. Schools was as follows :

Boys' Primary Schools

... 20

1. Annual Municipal Administration Report (1940-41), p. 10.

Girls' Primary Schools ... 11

Girls' Middle Schools ... 4

In 1956-57 the number of M.B. Schools was as follows:

Boys' Primary Schools ... 24

Boys' Middle Schools ... 1

Boys' High Schools ... 1

Girls' High Schools ... 1

Girls' Middle Schools ... 4

Girls' Primary Schools ... 11

The total enrolment of boys on 31st March 1952 was 6,540 against 5,883 on 31st March 1951—an increase of 657. The enrolment for M.B. Primary Schools on 31st March, 1957 was 9,793. These figures do not include the enrolment of the primary section of the Middle Schools. The average attendance of Middle Schools was 1,098 in 1957 and the total average attendance of Primary Schools was 9,181. Between 1951-52, the teaching staff for boys' schools was 154 whereas in 1956-57 it was 224. The staff employed was fairly well qualified and trained. Between 1956-57, the number of aided school was 17 with an enrolment of 4,672. The number of recognised but unaided schools was 19.

The Municipal schools were open to all sections of society. This included pupils from the scheduled classes. Originally the M.B. Primary Schools at Hati Gate, Gilwali Gate and Bhagtan Wala, were started in localities largely inhabited by the scheduled classes. Between 1951-52, the number of pupils belonging to the untouchables was 368, whereas between 1956-57, the number was 1,485.

One of the schemes initiated by the Municipal Committee for the encouragement of education among students was to offer scholarships to outstanding students for further studies. Some were specifically reserved for scheduled castes. Junior Red Cross societies with dispensaries were attached to Municipal schools. First-aid was rendered in cases of accidents. A prescribed scientific programme of physical training in M.B. Schools was adopted and Municipal schools participated in the Independence Day parade and the yearly Red Cross Mela at Amritsar. Besides imparting formal education, Municipal schools also gave children

training in useful handicrafts, especially in book-binding, picture-cutting, envelope-making, toy-making and ink-making. A display of these hobbies is given at important functions. Wax-candle and chalk-making were also introduced.

From time to time the Municipal Committee has provided funds for the improvement of existing school buildings and for the construction of new schools. In 1957-58, the number of schools housed in Municipal buildings and erected at their expense was 20. The number of rented buildings was 17. In 1958 the Municipal Education Department earmarked Rs. 100,000 yearly in the education budget for the construction of new school buildings and the adaptation of others. Medical inspection is under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health. In 1956-57, 6,088 pupils were found to be suffering from various ailments.

The gross expenditure of the Municipal Committee on Education, including contribution grants to miscellaneous institutions and expenditure on libraries and reading rooms, amounted to Rs. 613,699 during 1951-52 whereas Rs. 1,045,351 were spent in 1956-57. Details of expenditure during the latter period are as follows :

M.B. High Schools	...	Rs. 31,427-14-3
M.B. Middle Schools	...	Rs. 17,024-15-6
M.B. Primary Schools	...	Rs. 481,881-6-0
M.B. Girls' High Schools	...	Rs. 108,163-1-9
M.B. Girls' Middle Schools	...	Rs. 159,572-9-0
M.B. Girls' Primary Schools	...	Rs. 173,583-11-0

In 1956-57 there were 11 Girls' Primary Schools, 4 Girls' Middle Schools and 1 Girls' High School. The total enrolment of girls was 7,979. The number of girls reading English has increased in recent years. The schools run by the Municipal Committee were provincialised by the State Government as a matter of policy with effect from 1st October 1957 and this resulted in a decrease in expenditure on education in 1958-59, which fell from the 1957-58 figures of Rs. 604,762 to Rs. 112,295. In the latest Executive Officers' Budget note, provision of the sum of Rs. 73,447 for Education has been made.

It is clear from the above account that the development of education received its impetus from the interest taken by the Municipal Committee and certain individuals who proved themselves painstaking teachers. Many parents became convinced of the advantages of education and were persuaded to send their children to schools. There are also institutions for the sick in the city. The *Dai* School was established about eight years ago by Lady (Miss) Hewlette of St. Catherine's Mission hospital, whose name is still remembered by many people in Amritsar, for teaching up-to-date methods in midwifery. Other missionary ladies, who succeeded Miss Hewlette continued her noble tradition of service to others. The Amritsar Municipal Committee took up the work of training *dais* in August 1923 and opened a *Dai* School.

Though from the point of view of education Amritsar has not been able to rival Lahore, yet it has remained more advanced than any other city in the Punjab. The Khalsa College has long enjoyed wide renown, and of recent years the Medical College has taken a prominent place among medical institutions. There is a widespread respect for missionary schools on account of their sound teaching of English. The number of literates has increased. One of the methods employed for the spreading of literacy has been the establishment of spare-time schools for adults in different parts of the city, where they assemble for instruction in elementary reading and writing. The number of those belonging to professional classes has also increased considerably during the last 20 years.

The following table will indicate the present state of education in the city of Amritsar in 1965 along with the enrolment of students, strength of staff and the amount of money expended on schools.

**PRESENT STATE OF PRIMARY/MIDDLE/HIGH/HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
IN AMRITSAR CITY**

Kind of School	No. of Primary Schools	Staff Strength	Enrolment	Financing of Schools	
				Govt. 'Local' 'Body' Bodies	Managing Bodies
PRIMARY SCHOOLS					
Central Railway Schools	3	3	176	5,400/-	—
Punjab Govt.	31	367	16,362	576,000/-	—
Cantt. Board	1	4	190	—	10,561/-
Privately Managed	64	307	17,065	4,054/-	364,937/-
Total :	99	681	33,793	585,454/-	10,561/- 364,937/-
MIDDLE SCHOOLS					
Govt. Middle School for Boys	—	—	—	—	—
Privately Managed Middle School for Boys	16	169	6,749	—	183,472/-
Govt. Girls Middle School for Girls	1	37	1,096	59,971/-	—
Privately Managed Middle Schools for Girls	5	40	1,353	1,128/-	51,937/-
Total :	22	246	9,198	61,099/-	235,409/-



Kind of School	No. of Primary Schools	Staff Strength	Enrolment	Financing of Schools		
				Govt. 'Local' 'Body'	Managing Bodies	
HIGH SCHOOLS						
Govt. High School for Boys	1	34	1,471	49,461/-	—	—
Govt. High School for Girls	—	—	—	—	—	—
Privately Managed High Schools for Boys	4	43	1,423	324/-	—	56,695/-
Privately Managed High Schools for Girls	7	167	5,531	8,268/-	—	209,538/-
Total :	12	244	8,425	58,053/-	—	266,233/-
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS						
Govt. Higher Secondary Schools for Boys	2	110	3,499	275,952/-	—	—
Govt. Higher Secondary Schools for Girls	5	328	9,867	625,259/-	—	—
Privately Managed Higher Secondary Schools for Boys	11	158	12,979	273,61/-	—	889,118/-
Privately Managed Higher Secondary Schools for Girls	8	144	4,974	217,77/-	—	282,939/-
Total :	26	740	31,319	950,394/-	—	1,172,057/-

One of the main reasons why Amritsar did not become a cultural centre in Modern India is because it was not well exposed to Western ideas. In Amritsar, save for a few officials and missionaries, the number of British residents was very small and further all those educative agencies were wanting which could have transformed the life of people. But by the early forties of this century, there was an upsurge of literary activity among certain circles. Political and social problems agitated the minds of a small educated minority which became interested in constitutional and revolutionary ideas. Some exquisite pieces of poetry were composed in Urdu. Because of his precision of image and economy of words and a deeply penetrating vision of form, Faiz Ahmad Faiz won a distinct place of honour among the foremost living Urdu poets of the country. His *Naksh-a-Faryadi*, a collection of lyrics, was distinguished for its refined sensibility and depth of feeling. Dr. Muhammad Tasir wrote little but whatever he produced, revealed his spontaneous and genuine love of literature. He enjoyed imparting his enthusiasm to others and his great gift was in the art of initiation. Muhammad Hussain Arshi wrote some exquisite verse both in Persian and Urdu in the classical vein and thus reaffirmed traditional values. A remarkable collection of letters in Urdu entitled *Dal Dal Pat Pat* by Braham Nath Datta Qasir has appeared which has been greatly admired by the foremost literary critics both in India and Pakistan for its wealth of ideas and chaste and beautiful style. Recipient of six first prizes from the Punjab Language Department for his works, Qasir has earned a distinguished place for himself both as a poet and a prose writer. On the annual literary function held on the 27th March, 1966 under the auspices of the Language Department, he was presented a robe of honour and an Address in recognition of his eminence as a litterateur. Firoz-ud-Din Tughrai, Sufi Tabassam, Pandit Sarup Narain Aiman, Pandit Brij Mohan Tikku Zaiba, Abdul Kadir, Kirpa Ram Sharma Nazim and Arjan Nath Nausha are other literary figures connected with Amritsar. Mulk Raj Anand, the well-known novelist and art-critic, also belongs to Amritsar, though he has done most of his writing elsewhere.

Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), a distinguished and a prolific Punjabi writer of poetry, drama, prose and fiction founded the

first Press, Wazir Hind, and established the Khalsa Tract Society in 1898 which published a large number of books and tracts. His poetry was instinct with mysticism, love of nature and lyricism. The popular form with him was the *Rubaiyat*, representing philosophical, religious and sensuous moods. His *Merey Saiyan Jio* was given the Sahitya Academy award for being an outstanding book in Panjabi. His poetical works include *Rana Surat Singh*, *Bijlian de har*, *Lehran de har*, *Baba Nand Singh* and *Bijay Singh*. Another noted Panjabi writer, Dhani Ram Chatrik, who also wrote poetry under the guiding inspiration of Bhai Vir Singh, drew his themes from Indian history and mythology. He was also sensitive to the poverty and misery of the Indian people. *Chandar Vari*, *Navan Jahan*, *Sufi Khana*, and *Kesar Kiyari* are his well-known works. Hari Singh Talib translated the *Rubayat-i-Umr Khayam*, in Punjabi.

In Urdu, periodicals like *Vakil-i-Hind*, *Chani-Nur*, and *Riaz-i-Hindi* gained popularity. *Al-Irshad*, a monthly issued from Amritsar, aimed at waging war against Westernization. The first Panjabi newspaper which had been sponsored by the Ludhiana Christian Mission was published about the middle of the 19th century. Nearly two decades later, the first Punjabi newspaper *Akhbar Sri Durbar Sahib* appeared from Amritsar in 1867 which carried on its front page the drawing of the Golden Temple. The first Daily *Shahid* appeared from Amritsar on December 4, 1914 and its editor, Charn Singh, expressed in it his revolutionary political ideas. In 1899 Bhai Vir Singh started his paper *Khalsa Samachar* which offered commentaries on the Sikh religious text and contributed to the understanding of Sikh socio-religious, educational and political movements during the past seventy five years with details about the Kooka movement, the Singh Sabha activities, the Ghadar movement, the Gurdwara Reform movement and the Sikh role in the course of India's struggle for independence. In 1930 the Sikh Record Department was set up in Khalsa College for the collection of historical material and publication of research monograph. About a dozen work in English, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi have so far appeared. In Medical profession some local doctors have gained distinctions, and in this connection, Dr. Tulsi Dass, Dr. Baldev Singh and

Dr. Santokh Singh deserve special mention for their meritorious contributions to Medical profession and knowledge.

The buildings constructed by the Sikhs at Amritsar are small and do not compare with the grandeur that characterises the buildings of the great Mughals. Nevertheless, they have their own individuality and beauty which are reflected chiefly in the external plating of gilt and copper and in the lavish internal decoration. The style is, however, largely influenced by Mohammedan architecture, though the animal forms like birds and beasts are accepted in Sikh architecture contrary to the Muslim practice. The upper storey of the Golden Temple is sheathed in splendid gilt copper work, while the lower is encased in a panelling of marble, inlaid with precious stones in the style of the Taj at Agra. Like all modern Indian work, the decorations are 'suave and flowing in line' but they are less Italian in character than those of Agra. At Amritsar was developed an important school of wood carving used for architectural decoration and designs. The doors and windows of houses in Amritsar exhibit some of the best efforts of carvers in wood. Amritsar has remained a centre for the manufacture of skilfully carved ivory goods.

The Indian Academy of Fine Arts was founded by S.G. Thakur Singh in 1928 for the study and appreciation of Fine Arts and Crafts, Ancient and Modern, along with Sculpture, Modelling, Photography, Music Dancing and literature. The Academy has organised a number of All India exhibitions. The Municipal Committee, Amritsar, donated a suitable piece of land on long lease to the Academy which is housed now in an impressive building on the Madan Mohan Malaviya Road (Egerton Road) with an Art Gallery and the Thakur Singh School of Arts. Thakur Singh's consummate skill as an artist is evident in his well-known paintings like 'His last Desire' 'Village-bathing' and 'Ganesh Puja'. Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash's frescoes in the Golden Temple are noted for their skilled craftsmanship. Cultural functions are arranged on behalf of Municipal Committee, which initiated the cultural scheme on 2nd January, 1951 for Municipal schools with a view to imparting education to boys and girls through the medium of music, drama, dialogues, songs and folk dances. A Cultural Party was formed on the initiative of Mr. P.P. Maheshwary. Every

year a *Bal Mela* was organised on the occasion of the birthday of late Prime Minister Nehru. Educational films are shown to children. Lectures by distinguished personalities from outside on cultural and social subjects at the Punjabi Literary Society and the Rotary Club have become a regular feature for the last few years. During *Holi* at the Durgiana Temple, *rag sabhas* are held where top-ranking singers are invited to give their performance. The entire performance is free and open to the public which participates with a spirit of genuine appreciation. But the real cultural types of Amritsar still remain the Sikh priests who expound the teachings of the Granth, the ivory workers and jewellers and unique individuals not to be placed in any category, whose character and ideas are an impressive combination of a manly sentimentalism, moral courage and a religiousness that broadens the vision and exalts the mind.

## CHAPTER V

### PLACES OF INTEREST

The most important places of historical interest at Amritsar which were built within the limited space about 160 years are of a religious nature, or at least built for religious purposes which reflect an intense vitality reminding us rather of this world than the next. It was largely Ranjit Singh's desire to rival the magnificence of Hindu and Muslim buildings which made construction and renovation possible. Ranjit Singh beautified the temple with gold-work, marble mosaic and fresco paintings. The eastern loggia of the temple was gilded by Rani Sada Kaur at a cost of Rs. 175,300 while the other three sides were done in gold by Ranjit Singh at a cost of Rs. 535,332. The Golden Temple, Ram Bagh and Govindgarh fort are expressive of the traditional Indo-saracenic style.

#### Golden Temple

The structure of the present building dates from 1764, while the greater part of its decoration was added in the early years of the 19th century. The idea of erecting a monument in the middle of a tank or lake is not foreign to indigenous architectural workmanship as earlier examples of such practices exist. This design has been appreciated for two reasons. Firstly, a shrine is detached from its earthly environment and secondly, its reflection in the water adds considerably to the scenic beauty. The Sikh religion, being a crusade against the existing idolatries, never tolerated elaborate rituals and ceremonials and laid emphasis on the reading of the *Granth* and prayers. It was, therefore, natural that these monotheistic places of prayer should be free from any trace of ornateness or ostentation and lead the worshippers' thought away from the world of flesh to the things of the spirit. What strikes a visitor is the serenity and beauty of the temple in the midst of the city, and he is overwhelmed by the feeling that he is treading on holy ground which has been a source of inspiration to many. To leave behind the noise and bustle of the city streets and sit for

a while in the solitude and quietness of the temple is to find that peace which passeth understanding.

The Golden temple is 40½ feet square, and rests upon a platform, 67 feet square. It is a two storied marble structure which island-like rises from the centre of the tank, 510 feet square, the only approach being by a causeway over 200 feet long. From within six feet of their base, the walls outside are sheathed with the brilliant metal, gold-plated copper which covers the domes and minars. The lower half is decorated with white marbles inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones—cornelian, serpentine and lapis lazuli. The central structure is adorned with structural embellishments like the balconied windows thrown out on carved brackets, low-flinted domes and ogee arches and elliptical eaves which are also found in buildings in the immediate vicinity. Over the main building rises a low flinted, splendid dome in gold metal reflecting the rays of the sun, while kiosks with flinted metal cupolas are attached at each corner. One large hall of marble forms the interior which is richly inlaid with floral designs either 'painted in tempera or embossed in metal'. Fresco-painting known as *mohra qashi* also forms part of the decoration of the interior of the temple and there are about three hundred different patterns on the walls which from distance look like Persian carpets. The *Adi Granth*, strewn with flowers and watched over by attendant priests, lies under a gorgeous canopy studded with jewels. It is carried in the golden palanquin with jewelled canopies over it from the *Akal Takht* (the throne Divine) in the temple precincts to the main shrine and carried back to *Akal Takht* in the same palanquin at 10 p.m. The floor is swept with the broom of the peacock feathers when the carriage moves.

On the upper floor there is a small hall of mirrors known as *Shish Mahal*, originally a pavilion, where Gurus sat in contemplation, which is decorated with the fine filigree and enamel work set in mirrors and stones. A 13 ft. wide *Pradakshina* (Procession path) encircles the temple and steps on the east lead to the waters of the sacred tank known as *Har-Ki-Pauri* (steps of God). The marble causeway 240 ft. X 21 ft. which leads to *Darbar Sahib* is entered through an archway, called *Darshani Darwaza* or Gate of Prayer. It is bordered by perforated marble, balustrades and

standard lamps with elegant gilt lanterns at close intervals. The door frame of the arch is about 10 ft. in height and 8 ft. 6 inches in breadth. One side of the door kept to the wall is more interesting, being a very curious and admirable piece of ivory inlay. A 60 feet wide promenade called the *parikrama* (path of circumambulation) runs round the tank. On the right hand side of the entrance gate, staircase leads up to the Treasury. This place has thirty-one pillars or poles of silver, 9 ft. long and 4½ inches in diameter. In a chest are kept three gilt maces, a *pankha*, two *chauries*, all with gilt handles, a canopy weighing 10 lbs. of pure gold, set with emeralds, rubies and diamonds, a pendant of gold, a coloured plan of the temple, and a bejewelled head band which used to be worn by Nau Nihal Singh. Other precious objects include gilt arch 6 ft. high, a golden umbrella, a 145,000—thread sandalwood fan of 1,120 lbs. made by a Muslim divine after a labour of five years and seven months. All these come into use when the *Granth* is carried in procession.

In the early years of the 19th century, Walter Hamilton notes that about 500 to 600 priests were attached to the temple.<sup>1</sup> Thornton tells us that the temple was then richly adorned with gold and other costly embellishments.<sup>2</sup> Emily Eden, who visited the temple, and had ample opportunities of seeing it, estimated that the canopy cost Rs. 10,000.<sup>3</sup> She heard one of the priests deliver a long oration. Shawls were presented to the Governor-General's party. For the visit of Governor-General's party, the bridge, the temple, the minarets and Sher Singh's palace in particular were all illuminated. Baron Hügel who visited Amritsar in 1836 described it as mysterious and romantic in character.<sup>4</sup> He admired the skilfully contrived golden roof which was inlaid with marble. Before the entrance to the bridge he found two large red banners; on one was written "*Wah Guruji ki Fateh*" in white letters; on the other, the name of Ram Das. M'Gregor thought that the building was a handsome one and its lofty gilded dome and minars

1 Walter Hamilton, *The East India Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 48.

2 Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*, p. 116

3 Emily Eden, *Up the country*, pp. 215-7.

4 Baron Charles Hügel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab*, p. 394.



produced a rich and dazzling effect.<sup>1</sup> He saw the *Granth* placed under small arch of gold tinsel, inlaid with precious stones. He was told the *Granth* was presented by the Maharaja at an expense of Rs. 50,000; the rest of the apartment was covered with rich carpets and strewn with flowers, particularly those of jasmine.<sup>2</sup>

Dalhousie was invited to visit the shrine which he described as one of the beautiful things.<sup>3</sup> He thought that the temple was superb and noted that it was entirely composed of marble, beautifully inlaid both inside and out, while the upper portion of the outer superstructure was of copper richly gilt. He regarded the interior as gorgeous—everything that gold and marble could do was done. At one time it could never be imagined that a European would stand safely in the streets of Amritsar. But times had changed and the Governor-General stood at the 'holiest ground' surrounded by the *grantees* and the Akalis who were salaaming him.<sup>4</sup>

James Fergusson has regarded the Golden Temple as splendid and example of its class as can be found in India, though neither its outline nor its details could be commended.<sup>5</sup> However, he thought it useful as exemplifying one of the forms which Indian temple-architecture assumed in the 19th century. Perhaps Fergusson expected ornateness in Sikh architecture which their religion did not encourage or countenance. Percy Brown's estimate of the Golden Temple is complimentary.<sup>6</sup> He admired it as an example not so much of architectural style but of religious emotion expressed in marble, glass, colour and metal. According to Percy Brown, the Golden Temple at Amritsar was equalled only by the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon;<sup>7</sup> the former symbolised the faith of the Sikhs, the latter was the highest expression in a very similar range of material of another great Indian religion.

1 W.L.M. Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 235.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

3 For Dalhousie's impressions see Baird, *Private letters of Dalhousie*, pp. 145-7, ff. 395-8.

4 Baird, *Private letters of Dalhousie*, pp. 145-7.

5 James Fergusson, *History of India and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. II, p. 163.

6 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, p. 124.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Many of the buildings within the precincts of the Temple were built at different periods. The most imposing of these is the gilt-domed Akal Takht, the highest seat of the religious authority of the Sikhs. Its foundation had been laid by Guru Har Govind. The ground floor of the present building was constructed in 1774. Three storeys were subsequently added by Ranjit Singh. It is here that converts to the Sikh faith go through a form of baptism—known as *pahal*, the ceremony by which a convert is initiated into the fraternity of Sikhs. Here too are kept the swords said to have been used by Guru Har Govind and Guru Gobind Singh along with vessels for the initiation of new members into the Sikh Brotherhood. Ranjit Singh said once that whenever he thought he had been guilty of any enormity it was a rule of his to go and prostrate himself before Akal Takht.

The temple garden, Guru-ka-Bagh, situated on the south side of the enclosure is 30 acres in extent, and contains pomegranate, orange and other fruit trees, a tank called *Kaulsar* built by Har Govind and several small pavilions. At the south end of the garden is the nine-storeyed tower known as *Baba Atal*, 131 ft. high, erected between 1778 and 1784 in memory of a son of Guru Har Govind. Atal Rai, the youngest son of Har Govind, raised to life the child of a sorrowing widow. His father reproved him saying that Gurus should use their power in the purity of doctrine and holiness of living and not in miracles. The youth is reported to have said that as a life was required by God, he would give his own. He was called Baba (an old man) because he carried an old head over young shoulders. The lower room of the tower is richly painted with frescoes representing scenes from the life of Guru Nanak.

The Golden temple is surrounded on all sides by *Bunghas* in which paintings adorn the walls. Under the Sikhs, the refined Kangra style became pompous and gaudy but their pictorial art makes up for this by a flair for details and a sense of the humorous which is evident in the wall paintings of the *Bunghas*. The Chauras-thi Atari was once a dwelling place of Guru Arjan at the end of the *Guru ka Bazar* which was used as a hall of residence. *Shri Guru Ram Dass Nivas* is a free hostel with 156 rooms and 8 halls

for the pilgrims maintained by the temple authorities. Other places of historical interest are *Gurdwara Santokh Ser* built by Guru Arjan, *Guru Ramsar* where Guru Arjan worked on the compilation of the holy Granth; *Babekser*, built by Guru Har Govind; *Dukh Bhanjuni Beri*; *Thera Sahib*; *Baba-di-Ber*, *Gurdwara Ilachi Ber* and *Gurudwara Shahid Bunga Dalip Singh*.

Since the days of Ranjit Singh, the responsibilities of *granthis* have increased. Originally Bhai Buddha was appointed the first *granthi* by Guru Arjan and his line of descendants continued to hold this office until Bhai Chanchal Singh in the times of Ranjit Singh. Henry Lawrence appointed Lahna Singh as the Manager of the Golden temple. Daily allowances and expenses were to be sanctioned by the Resident. In 1884, the general supervision was in the hands of Raja Kalyan Singh. With the increase of duties the *granthis* were expected to perform, it was decided to appoint two assistants to each *granthi* and the number of assistants was later increased to three. With the enactment of the Gurdwara Act of 1925, the management of the Gurdwara came under the control of the *Panth*. The Darbar Sahib Committee supervises over the temple; and its budgeted income from *golk*, *jagir*, *langar* and *karah prasad* was about Rs. 1,150,000 in 1962-63 and its expenditure almost equals its income. The main items of expenditure are buildings, *karah prasad* and pensions to the descendants of 'martyrs' etc.

### Ram Bagh

This beautiful public garden marks the state of a mud fort, once the stronghold of the chiefs of the Bhangian Misl. The grounds were encircled by solid masonry walls some fourteen feet high, and a rampart carrying guns, while outside the wall, was a moat filled with water from the Hasli Canal. Originally the fort was laid out by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819 A.D. In the middle of the garden Ranjit Singh built himself a luxurious two-storeyed summer palace which cost Rs. 125,000. Below in the foundations were constructed cool underground apartments for use in the hot weather. Nearby was a swimming bath for the ladies of the Royal household. Small palaces were provided for the Chiefs. Ranjit Singh used the central building as a country house during

his visits to Amritsar on *Baisakhi*, *Diwali* and *Dussehra* festivals. Both the garden and buildings were constructed under the supervision of Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, Sardar Desa Singh and Sardar Lahna Singh Majithia. The red-stone work of all these buildings was executed by workmen brought from Delhi by Faqir Aziz-ud-Din. In 1847, on the representation from Sardar Lahna Singh, some furniture was placed in the Ram Bagh *baradari* in 1848 which was set apart for the accommodation of English travellers and a couple of elephants were also ordered to be there in attendance. Sir Gopal Dass Bhandari took a keen interest in the development of the garden. During his tenure as President of the Municipal Committee, fountains to the east and west of the palace were excavated under the guidance of an old *bahishti* (water-carrier) employed in the garden.

The area of the garden is about 84 acres and is embellished with a sunken English Rose garden. The central hall and ante-chamber in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's palace have been renovated and completed in recent years. The opening ceremony of the building now named 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh Baradari' was performed by the late Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Revenue Minister, Punjab. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's life-size portrait in oil colours adorns the walls. A Meteorological observatory and a Broadcasting station have been installed in one of the rooms in the left wing of the *baradari*. A portion of the park has been given to children for their recreation. A statue of Mahatma Gandhi has been installed in a prominent portion of the garden facing the Mall which has cost the Municipal Committee Rs. 30,000.

Nichol Park with an area of 18 acres is situated outside the Galwali Gate and Chatiwind Gate. Aitchison Park known as Gol Bagh is one of the oldest parks. In earlier times it was served with canal water. Bull Park, outside the Hall Gate on the Railway side, has a beautiful rockery on one side of the bridge and a small hillock on the other and Kesari Bagh is in the heart of the city. A special plot near Lohari Gate in the garden is reserved for ladies.

#### **The Govindgarh fort**

One of the most striking and historic objects of the city of Amritsar is the Govindgarh fort whose height and heavy batteries,

placed one over the other, gives it an imposing appearance. During 1808 the fort of Goojar Singh Bhangi at Amritsar was repaired and rebuilt under the supervision of Imam-ud-Din, the younger brother of Aziz-ud-Din, who was appointed the Civil Governor of Govindgarh for many years. This fort was rebuilt on the plan of the Ramgarh fort with a view to flattering Jodh Singh whose co-operation was required by Ranjit Singh in the conquest of Kasur. According to Hügel, the protection of the holy tank and of the pilgrims offered a pretext to Ranjit Singh for erecting a fort for himself.<sup>1</sup> It is also suggested that Ranjit Singh built this fort at the suggestion of Jaswant Rao Holkar in order to protect his treasure which he formerly kept with the bankers at Amritsar.

Govindgarh was built of brick and lime with numerous bastions and strong iron-gates. Twenty-five pieces of cannon were likewise mounted upon its ramparts. After the departure of Charles Metcalfe, the Maharaja directed his attention to strengthening it and large sums of money have been expended in improving its structure.

Steinbach regarded the Govindgarh fort as a most striking edifice which held the wealth of the Government in Ranjit Singh's time.<sup>2</sup> The Maharaja believed that whosoever possessed the Govindgarh fort held the keys of the Kingdom. But M'Gregor, who had sound knowledge of military strategy felt, that the fort, though strongly built, was not in a commanding position and could not for long stand a seige with guns of large calibre. He compared it unfavourably with the fort of Bharatpur as being constructed of bricks and realised that the wall could not withstand a battering rain while the ditch was useless and filled with water from Moti Jheel.<sup>3</sup> James Coley recorded that the serious fault from which the fort suffered was that its inside was visible from outside.<sup>4</sup> Several houses were built on the bastions. Raja Dhian Singh, Ranjit Singh's Prime Minister, had some of his guns placed on the walls of the fort.

1 Baron Charles Hügel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab*, p. 390.

2 Steinbach, *The Panjab*, p. 5.

3 M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 19.

4 James Coley, *Journal of the Sutlej Campaign (1845-46)*, and also of Lord Hardinge's Tour, p. 104.

Usually foreign visitors were shown the Govindgarh fort from outside as only Ranjit Singh's principal chiefs were allowed to enter it. But contrary to the usual practice, Ranjit Singh took W.G. Osborne, military secretary to the Earl of Auckland, and showed him the building from inside in January 1839. Osborne tells us that the building contained his treasure chests of about twelve millions in gold.<sup>1</sup>

### Jallianwala Bagh

In order to acquire the Jallianwala Bagh and raise a memorial, a Committee was formed with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as President and Dr. S.C. Mukerji as its secretary.<sup>2</sup> Jallianwala Bagh was purchased from its thirty four individual owners for Rs. 50,000 raised by national subscription and consecrated as an Indian National Memorial. The National Memorial Trust of which Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru became the chairman, took some years to select a suitable design for the Jallianwala Bagh memorial from the thousands submitted by Indian and foreign architects. The design chosen in 1956 was jointly prepared by Shri T. R. Mahendra, a Delhi architect and Mr. Benjamin Polk, also working in Delhi. Its construction was begun in November 1957 and was completed at a cost of Rs. 925,000.

The Bagh being in a depression, the builders of the memorial had to raise the level of the surface by 5½ feet to that of the road outside. Four big stone lanterns flank the pylon which is composed of 300 pieces of stone with the Asoka Chakra carved on them. They have been so arranged that the pylon looks like a flame from all directions. Fourteen small lanterns scattered over the site provide subdued lighting. On the right side of the pylon is a swimming pool, 400 feet by 25 feet, for children. Columns indicate, the soldiers standing, verandah, the semi-circle, which the soldiers had formed, and the central fountain, the small machine gun used. The 'Flame of Liberty' was constructed in

1 W.G. Osborne. *The Court and Camp of Ranjeet Singh*, p. 218.

2 Dr. S. C. Mukerji, a practising homoeopath joined the Congress in 1905 and came to Amritsar at the suggestion of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. He stayed in the Jallianwala Bagh since 1919 until his death in August 1961 when his son, Shree U. N. Mukerji took over as Secretary of the Jallianwala Bagh Trust.

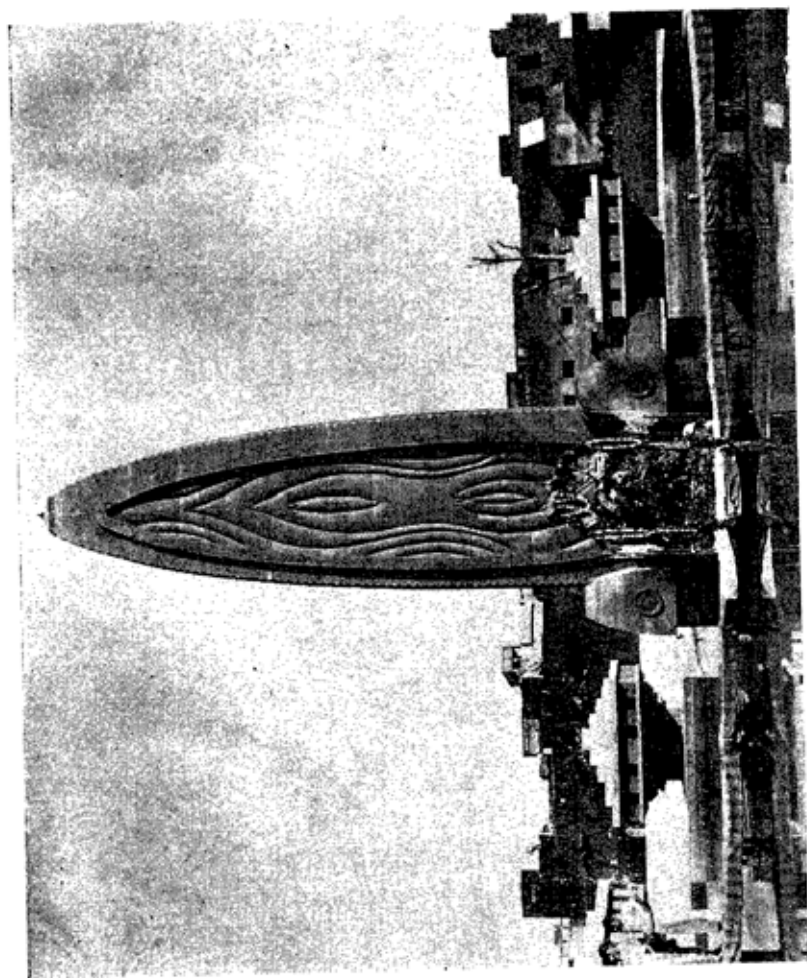
1954 and inaugurated by the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1961. On the four sides of the memorial, the words, "In memory of martyrs—13 April, 1919" have been inscribed in Hindi, Panjabi, Urdu and English. The annual expenditure for the maintenance of the establishment is Rs. 23,000.

### The Durgiana Mandir

Situated outside the Hathi Gate, the Durgiana Mandir, the biggest Hindu temple in the city, was founded by the joint efforts of Lala Nathu Mal Rangwala and Gur Sahai Mal. The architecture of the temple is modelled on the pattern of the Golden Temple. The temple lacks the intimacy characteristic of the Golden temple but has an air of spaciousness, simplicity and other-worldliness. The idols of worship installed in the central structure, which stands in the middle of the town, are beautifully draped and profusely ornamented. During *Dussehra* and *Dewali* festivals, the temple is illuminated. From time to time lectures on the message of Lord Krishna and Yoga are delivered by competent exponents of Hindu philosophy. Musical performances and the chanting of devotional songs are well attended. Rich businessmen and others belonging to professional classes make large contributions to this temple. It is run by a management that professes the faith of Sanatan Dharam, the unity of the Hindus and the protection of the cow.

### Other Places

The services of Sikh chiefs of distinction during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time have been commemorated by naming streets after them, such as Katra Basti Ram and Katra Moti Ram. Basti Ram was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's treasurer, and Moti Ram, the Governor of Kashmir. Majitha Mandi, a prosperous business-centre, reminds us of the famous Majithia family, who have contributed so many administrators to the city of Amritsar. Going back in time, we are reminded of the battles which have been waged for possession of the city by the names of at least three of the *misl*s, Ramgarhia, Ahluwalia and Bhangian after whom two prominent streets and a *qila* were named. Some areas are given names after the particular type of goods sold there, such as *loon* mandi (salt market), *kanak* mandi (wheat market) etc. Other places of interest



*The 'Flame of Liberty' in Jallianwala Bagh*





in the city are *sarai* Guru Ram Dass, *baradari* in Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa Garden, the *havelies* of Sardar Lahna Singh, *haveli* Jamadar Khushal Singh, *haveli* Sardar Harcharan Dass, Raja Rallia Ram Garden, Raja Sahib Dyal temple, *haveli* Bhai Sant Singh Gyani, *haveli* Sandhan Wala Sardar, *bungah* Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (the back of the building had two lofty minars and a red-stone verandah in the *parikrama* of Darbar Sahib before Ranjit Singh built it), *dharamsala* Basti Ram and *sarai* Sardar Harcharan Dass.

## GLOSSARY

<i>Abadis</i>	... Suburbs.
<i>Achkan</i>	... Long coat.
<i>Anwala</i>	... The tree Emblic myrobalan ( <i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> ), and its fruit. A kind of astringent nut.
<i>Attar</i>	... Scent.
<i>Baisakhi</i>	... The Hindu new year day, observed practically all over Northern India. For the Sikh community it is of special significance since on this day in 1689, Guru Gobind Singh organised the Sikhs into the Khalsa. In the Punjab farmers start harvesting on this day. It falls on April 13th every year.
<i>Baithak</i>	... Private sitting outer-room.
<i>Bal Mela</i>	... Children festival.
<i>Barat</i>	... A wedding party.
<i>Bazar</i>	... Retail daily market, shopping centre.
<i>Bhalla</i>	... Saltish and round stuff made of ground pulses soaked in curd.
<i>Bhang</i>	... An intoxicating decoction prepared from hemp leaves.
<i>Bhat</i>	... A professed genealogist and poet, exaggerating the deeds of the brave.
<i>Bhoonga or Bunga</i>	... Hospice or a rest house built by the Sikh chiefs for their residence.
<i>Chabil</i>	... Drinking water booth.
<i>Chak</i>	... A piece of land.
<i>Chak-Guru</i>	... A piece of land detached and given to a faqir.
<i>Chakki</i>	... A grinding wheel.
<i>Chapati</i>	... An unleavened flat circular cake consisting of flour and water.
<i>Chaudhri</i>	... Headman of a profession or trade or village.
<i>Charpoy</i>	... A common Indian bed-stand.
<i>Chatni</i>	... Sauce.

<i>Dal</i>	... Army.
<i>Dalda</i>	... Hydrogenated vegetable oil.
<i>Darbar</i>	... Court but also applied to the Golden temple.
<i>Darshan</i>	... To pay obeisance.
<i>Dhaba</i>	... Food stall.
<i>Dharna</i>	... Sitting down as a protest. A practice by which one throws oneself on the threshold and fasts. A method of exacting justice.
<i>Dhoti</i>	... Loose cotton garment passed between legs and fastened round the waist.
<i>Diwali</i>	... Hindu festival of light commemorating Rama's return home after defeating Ravana and rescuing Sita. Usually occurs in late October.
<i>Doab</i>	... Land lying between two rivers.
<i>Doli</i>	... A kind of sedan for women, by which a woman goes to her husband's home.
<i>Dupatta</i>	... A veil.
<i>Dussehra</i>	... The nine day celebrations known as Ramlila. The most spectacular part is the portrayal of the battle between Rama and Ravana on the tenth day.
<i>Ekka</i>	... Small one-horse vehicle carrying two or three persons.
<i>Faqir</i>	... Ascetic or religious mendicant.
<i>Faryad</i>	... Supplication.
<i>Gagri</i>	... A long skirt worn by elderly ladies on ceremonial occasions.
<i>Gal-Gal</i>	... Mostly used in pickle. The citron, a kind of large lemon.
<i>Gharries</i>	... Carriages.
<i>Ghee</i>	... A clarified butter.
<i>Ghia</i>	... A kind of a pumpkin.
<i>Golgappas</i>	... Made of flour which is fried thin, round and crisp.
<i>Goondas</i>	... Ruffians.
<i>Granthi</i>	... The reader of the Adigranth (the holy scripture).
<i>Gulli danda</i>	... A game of tip cat in which a stick and a ball are used.

<i>Gulab jamuns</i>	... A kind of sweetmeat.
<i>Gur</i>	... A lump of raw or coarse sugar (the produce of the first inspissation of the juice of the sugar-cane).
<i>Gurbani</i>	... Voice of the Guru.
<i>Gurdwara</i>	... A Sikh temple.
<i>Gurmatta</i>	... A matta means an opinion or a resolution and it is called gurmatta or resolution endorsed by the Guru.
<i>Guru</i>	... A spiritual teacher.
<i>Hackeries</i>	... Native bullock carts used in slow draught of goods and materials.
<i>Hadis</i>	... The commentary of the Koran.
<i>Hakim</i>	... A Judge, a ruler, a master.
<i>Hakumat</i>	... Rule.
<i>Halwai</i>	... A confectioner.
<i>Har-Har-Mahadev</i>	... A slogan in the name of Lord Shiva.
<i>Hari-Mandir</i>	... The earlier name of the Golden temple which means the temple of God.
<i>Hartal</i>	... Bycott, cessation of work.
<i>Holi</i>	... The most boisterous of Indian festivals observed all over Northern India when people throw coloured water on one another.
<i>Howdah</i>	... Elephant seat.
<i>Hukam Nama</i>	... Order from the guru.
<i>Hundi</i>	... A written order usually unconditional, made by one person or another for the payment or demand or after a specified time, of a certain sum of money to a person named therein, a bill of exchange.
<i>Ilaka</i>	... Area.
<i>Jagir</i>	... Assignment of land and its rent with or without conditions of service.
<i>Jagirdar</i>	... Holder of a hereditary assignment of land.
<i>Jal-Baradari</i>	... Bath.
<i>Jalaibis</i>	... Kind of sweetmeat.
<i>Jampar</i>	... Blouse.

<i>Janamasthami</i>	... The birthday of Lord Krishna.
<i>Jatha</i>	... Procession.
<i>Kabaddi</i>	... The competitors in this game form groups at two sides of a square when they are surrounded by their respective friends and backers. One man is selected from a side and advances into the area—this is a challenger of all corners. The opponents of the challenger are not allowed to commence their attack until he has touched them.
<i>Kachi lassi</i>	... Milk and water.
<i>Kamarband</i>	... Waist-bands of silk with gold ends.
<i>Karah Parshad</i>	... A syrupy batter made of flour, sugar and clarified butter.
<i>Karala</i>	... A kind of bitter vegetable. <i>Momordica charantia</i> .
<i>Karkhanas</i>	... Mills or factories.
<i>Katra</i>	... Quarters.
<i>Khalsa</i>	... The liberated or chosen people. Used by the Sikhs for their community.
<i>Khillat</i>	... A dress of honour conferred.
<i>Kichoori</i>	... Pastry of wheatear flour in which bruised pulse and vegetables are filled.
<i>Killadar</i>	... The commandant of a fort, castle or garrison.
<i>Kim-Khab</i>	... Brocade.
<i>Koocha</i>	... Lane.
<i>Kothi</i>	... A House detached, bungalow type.
<i>Kotwali</i>	... The chief police station.
<i>Kulcha</i>	... A small disc-shaped loaf (made of flour, milk and butter).
<i>Kurta</i>	... A long loose shirt without collar.
<i>Lagan</i>	... The appointing day of marriage or the letter, or message appointing the day (sent by the bride's father to the bridegroom's father).
<i>Lakh</i>	... One hundred thousand.
<i>Lambardar</i>	... The head of the village who may hold the office by descent or election.

<i>Lande</i>	... Indigenous mode of accountancy popular with the business community.
<i>Langar</i>	... A free kitchen.
<i>Lassi</i>	... Butter milk
<i>Lathi</i>	... A stout stick or stave.
<i>Madrasa</i>	... Muhammedan College.
<i>Maharaja</i>	... The title of the King.
<i>Maktab</i>	... Native muslim school.
<i>Malai</i>	... Cream.
<i>Mandi</i>	... Market for a particular article.
<i>Manh</i>	... A species of pulse.
<i>Manjha</i>	... Mid up-land country of the Sikh commonwealth. At one time used to denote the whole of the upper part of the Bari Doab as distinguished from the Malwa.
<i>Masands</i>	... Agents.
<i>Mash</i>	... A species of pulse.
<i>Mathi</i>	... A kind of small bread cooked in oil or clarified butter.
<i>Maulvi</i>	... A master of Muslim law, a teacher or a learned man.
<i>Milni</i>	... Reception arranged by the bride's parents.
<i>Misl</i>	... An Arabic word meaning an equal or alike. A kind of military confederacy.
<i>Missar</i>	.. The appellation which usually the Brahamans have.
<i>Mohalla</i>	... A portion of a town or a village.
<i>Moharars</i>	... Writers.
<i>Mohri</i>	... Width.
<i>Moong</i>	... A species of pulse.
<i>Moogra Sewian</i>	... Small fried and saltish stuff made of gram flour.
<i>Muharram</i>	... The first month of the Muslim year. So applied to the period of fasting and the public mourning observed during that month in commemoration of the death of Hasan and of his brother, Hussain.
<i>Mushaira</i>	... Poetic symposium.
<i>Nai</i>	... Hair dresser.
<i>Nanbai</i>	... Baker.

<i>Nara-I-Taqbir</i>	... The great slogan.
<i>Nautch</i>	... Dance.
<i>Omrahs</i>	... Nobles.
<i>Pahara</i>	... Multiplication table.
<i>Panchayat</i>	... Committee, traditionally of five members.
<i>Pankha</i>	... Fixed and swinging fan formed of cloth stretched on a rectangular frame.
<i>Panth</i>	... Order.
<i>Papar</i>	... Made of some pulses ground to a fine paste and mixed with spices. They are then kneaded like flour and rolled into thin discs and baked.
<i>Parikrama</i>	... A path of circumambulation.
<i>Phanian</i>	... A kind of sweet meat.
<i>Poora</i>	... A sweet cake mixed with rasins fried in clarified butter.
<i>Pooris</i>	... Unleavened cakes fried in clarified butter.
<i>Quasis</i>	... Priests administering justice.
<i>Qila</i>	... Fort.
<i>Raes</i>	... A genealogist and a singer praising men in authority.
<i>Rag</i>	... Song.
<i>Raises</i>	... The rich.
<i>Raj</i>	... Rule.
<i>Ram Naumi</i>	... The birth-day of Rama.
<i>Sabha</i>	... A gathering, an assembly.
<i>Sabzi</i>	... Vegetable.
<i>Sahukar</i>	... A money lender.
<i>Samosa</i>	... Pastry filled with potatoes and peas.
<i>Sangat</i>	... A union, association. Harmony.
<i>Sarafi</i>	... A script used in indigenous accounts specially by Marwaris.
<i>Sarai</i>	... A rest-house for travellers.
<i>Sarbat Khalsa</i>	... The grand diet of the Confederation.
<i>Sarbarah</i>	... Manager.
<i>Sardar</i>	... A chief as notable. A prefix used by Sikhs.
<i>Sari or Saree</i>	... Loose garment worn by women.
<i>Sarkar</i>	... A Mughal district used as synonym for government.



<i>Sat Sri Akal</i>	... God is truth.
<i>Satta</i>	... Financial transactions of a risky kind. Speculation.
<i>Satyagraha</i>	... Insistance on truth. A movement launched by Gandhi.
<i>Shalwar</i>	... A lady's trouser.
<i>Shia</i>	... A follower of the Mohommedan sect or sects venerating Ali or regarding the Imam and his descendants as the true successors to the Caliphite.
<i>Smadh</i>	... Sepulchre.
<i>Smadhi</i>	... Meditation.
<i>Sunnis</i>	... Applied to the large Mohommedan sect acknowledging the first four Caliphs to have been the rightful descendants of the prophets and are thus opposed to the Shias.
<i>Swars</i>	... Riders.
<i>Tazias</i>	... Elegant structures of tinsel work intended to be replicas of the tomb of martyrs.
<i>Thandi Khui</i>	... The well containing cold water.
<i>Thara</i>	... A raised platform.
<i>Thug</i>	... A cheat. Member of a now extinct association of robbers and stranglers.
<i>Tinda</i>	... A vegetable.
<i>Tirthyatra</i>	... Visit to a holy place of pilgrimage or of bathing for the good of the soul.
<i>Toshākhana</i>	... Treasure chamber or a storehouse.
<i>Vakil</i>	... A Pleader.
<i>Variyan</i>	... Of this flour, which is much thinner than that used for bread, roundish balls are made and 'dropped' on some flat disc or tray and allowed to dry. The balls are later cooked as a curry with spices etc.
<i>Zamindar</i>	... Landlord.
<i>Zargar</i>	... Goldsmith.
<i>Zillah</i>	... District.
<i>Ziyafat</i>	... Entertainment, feast.

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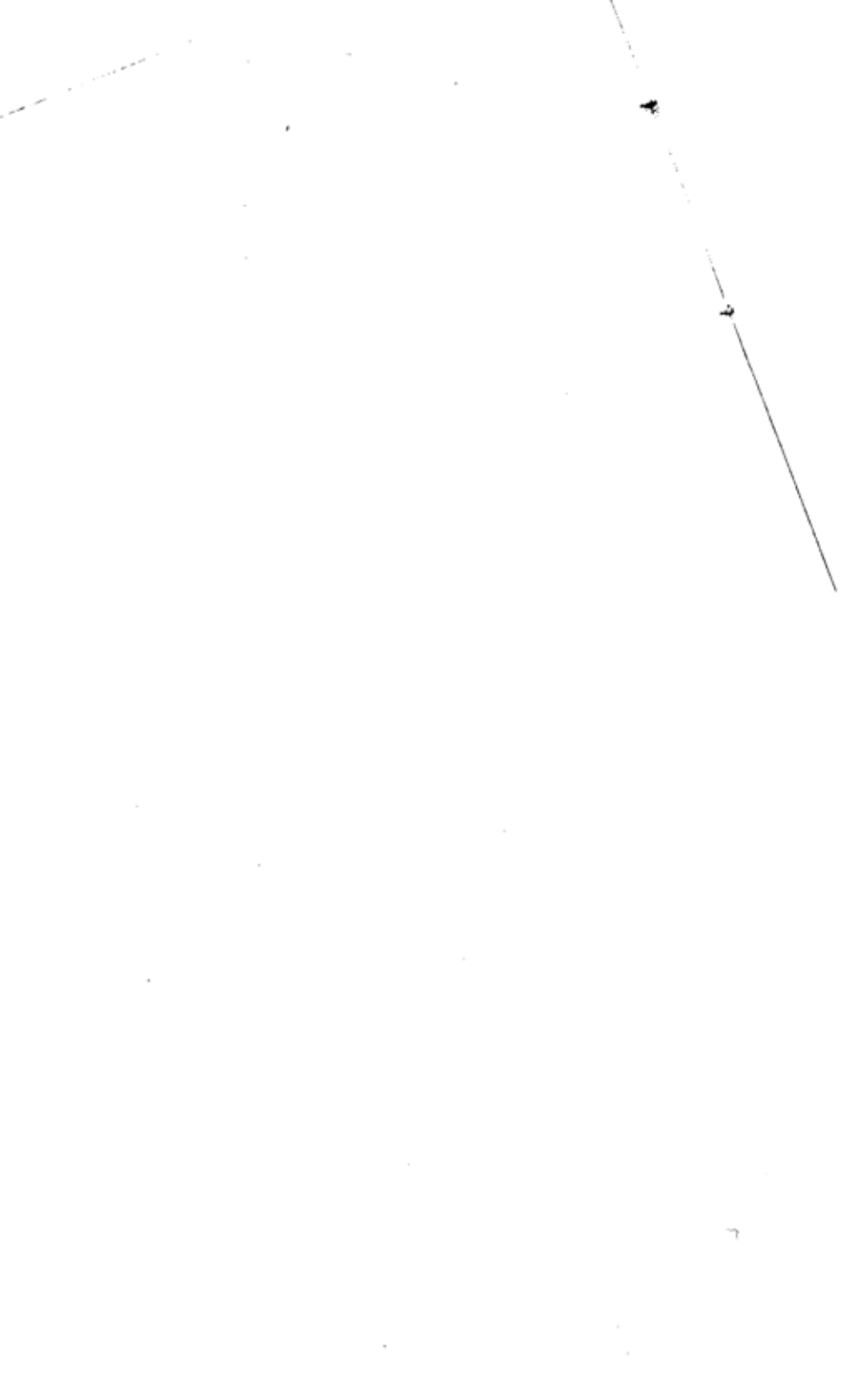
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