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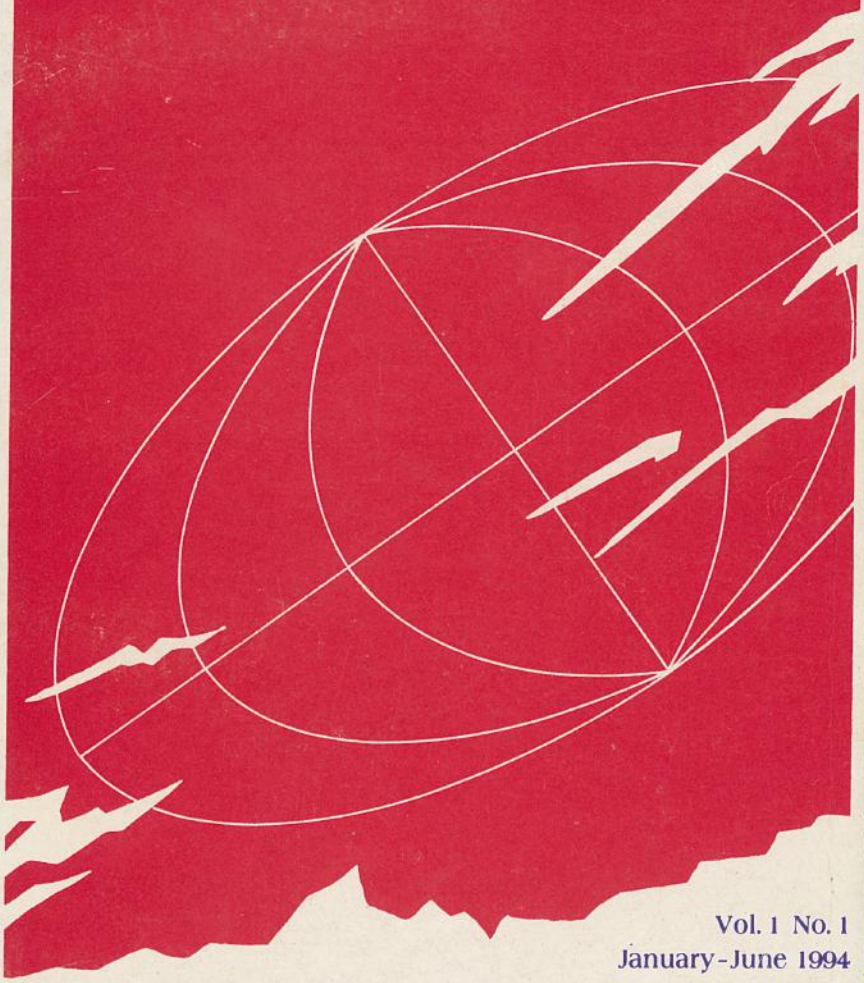

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Editorial

Few regions in South Asia have occupied such political, economic and strategic importance as the Punjab. It shaped the fortunes of north-west India in the modern period, and since the partition of 1947, its successors have played a pivotal role in the development of India and Pakistan. The contemporary combined population of east and west Punjabs is almost 80 million and their political, economic and strategic significance has increased rather than diminished. Moreover, through migration, several million Punjabis have established a 'third Punjab'—a strong vibrant Punjabi diaspora that covers most of the developed world.

Surprisingly, despite this significance, academic interest in Punjab Studies has been relatively limited. Political and ideological considerations in both India and Pakistan have tended to discourage regional scholarship as the destinies of east and west Punjab became entwined with the newly created states. At the same time, the relative communalisation of Punjabi nationality provided restricted scope for the defence of Punjabi identity. Yet, almost half a century after partition, as the world of ideologies is disintegrating, it is perhaps appropriate that the academic neglect of Punjab studies should be redressed.

The objective of the *International Journal of Punjab Studies* is to provide a forum for academic scholarship on the 'three Punjabs'—pre-1947, post-1947 (east and west) and the Punjabi diaspora. The journal will be interdisciplinary and welcomes contributions from all fields of study. A specific aim will be to encourage interdisciplinary and comparative research that in-

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tegrates themes within the 'three Punjabs'

By incorporating the Punjabi diaspora the journal hopes to extend the conventional interest in regional studies beyond the boundaries of South Asia. The last decade has dramatically highlighted the growing importance of the Punjabi diaspora in the political, economic and social development of east and west Punjab. This process is likely to be strengthened with increasing globalisation and social and cultural change within the diaspora itself.

The *International Journal of Punjab Studies* will provide authoritative and specialist analyses of main issues in Punjab studies by leading scholars in the field. Its subject matter will be of special interest to academics, researchers and policy makers who want to understand the Punjab and Punjabis.

We launch the first number with a series of articles which attest to the breadth and rigour of scholarship in the field of Punjab studies.

David Gilmartin examines the neglected but nonetheless important role played by kinship systems in modern Muslim Punjabi politics. The establishment of a Punjabi press by the diaspora community of North America forms the interesting focus of Darshan Singh Tatla's study. Mufakharul Islam switches our attention to the impact of the Great Depression on Punjabi agriculture, and illustrates the unique characteristics of the region's agrarian development during the colonial era. Lou Fenech, in a pioneering study, examines the Persian ghazals of the late seventeenth century Sikh poet, Bhā'ī Nand La'l Goyā. Ranjana Ash brings a perceptive understanding to the works of the contemporary authoress Amrita Pritam.

Biraderi and Bureaucracy: The Politics of Muslim Kinship Solidarity in Twentieth Century Punjab

David Gilmartin

North Carolina State University

The distinctive roles played by kinship systems *(biraderis)* in modern Punjabi politics have been largely neglected. The relationship between the 'brotherhood' of extended kin and forms of political authority can be traced back to the colonial era. Whilst powerful biraderi identities predated its existence, they obtained political importance as a counterpoint to the politics of bureaucratic centralisation under British colonial rule. The article demonstrates how the distinctive political roles played by biraderis in contemporary Punjabi politics reflect the legacies and contradictions established between the colonial state and Punjabi society.

Increasingly, historians have stressed that the history of the state and the history of kinship (and the family) are closely related. Historians of Europe, for example, have traced the often complex relationships between the centralising monarchies of the early modern period and the increasing social prominence of the patriarchal conjugal family, stressing the close connections 'between the structures of the modern family and modern state formation'.[1] Historians of modern India have also noted the complex relationships between colonial ideology, colonial state structure and changing structures of kinship, family and authority in Indian

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society. Lata Mani, for example, has shown the ways in which British reliance on reified notions of 'Hindu' law served simultaneously to strengthen Brahmanic and state authority in much of India, linking the authority of the colonial state to the upholding of ideal textually based forms of patriarchal family authority.[2] State appropriation of Indian caste and kinship categories strengthened simultaneously the administrative authority of the state and that of local kin and caste leaders. As historical work is increasingly demonstrating, the construction of the colonial state and the colonial economy carried important political implications for the changing forms and political roles of kinship in Indian society, just as new forms of kinship and gender relations helped to stabilise the colonial regime.

Religion has played so central a role in the history of the modern Punjab that historians have often overlooked the important relationship between the state, kinship systems and politics in the shaping of Punjabi history. But the relationship between forms of kinship and forms of political authority can be clearly traced in the political prominence in colonial Punjab of the *biraderi*, that is, the 'brotherhood' of extended kin. The continuing importance of biraderis in both Indian and Pakistani Punjabs attests to the importance of these kinship structures in the emergence of modern Punjabi politics. Biraderis are sometimes portrayed as 'primordial' or 'tribal' in character, but they in fact obtained political importance as a counterpoint to the politics of bureaucratic centralisation under British colonial rule. Powerful biraderi loyalties certainly predated the latter, as the Persian origin of the term suggests. But the distinctive political role played by biraderis in modern Punjabi politics reflects the legacies and contradictions in the relationship established between the colonial state and Punjabi society.

BIRADERI, BUREAUCRACY AND THE STATE

Many analysts have discussed the biraderi as a distinctively Punjabi kinship institution, but the definition of biraderi has continued to pose problems of interpretation. Historical and anthropological writings contain a variety of definitions. Their existence reflects the inexactness and fluidity of this term as used by Punjabis.

As Hamza Alavi noted in 1972, biraderi signifies, in its most basic meaning, a descent group, 'a collection of related households'. Punjabi reckonings of patrilineal kinship lie at the root of the concept 'In its most general meaning', Alavi writes, 'the descent group, the *biraderi*, includes in principle all those between whom actual links of common descent can be traced in the paternal line, regardless of the number of generations that have elapsed',[3] but in practice, as many scholars have discovered, the boundaries of biraderis cannot be objectively calculated simply from genealogical tables. As an institution of corporate solidarity, the form and size of biraderis are strongly shaped by particular political and social contexts. Patterns of marriage connections play an important but not absolutely determinative role. Parvez Wakil has noted that biraderi sometimes includes affines as well as patrilineal relatives (a distinction blurred in any case by the common practice among Punjabi Muslims of preferred cousin endogamy). More importantly, however, the boundaries of biraderi depend on the level and nature of communication among households, 'on memory, contact over geographical distances, degree of strictness of endogamy and most of all on an intricate gift exchange system'.[4] All these factors vary in turn with social class, control over land, wealth and property, networks of political exchange and political structures.

The system of gift exchanges which usually known as *vartan bhanji* provides the clearest guide to the extent and shape of the biraderi. It also defines its essentially transactional nature. At the most local level the 'system of reciprocal but unequal exchange of gifts on certain ceremonial occasions' and the 'ritual acceptance (or rejection) of invitations to the ceremonial occasions on which gifts are exchanged' provide the foundations, as Alavi argues, for the activation of an ideology of corporate biraderi solidarity.[5] Both the working boundaries of the local biraderi and the context for the emergence of biraderi leaders thus are provided by patterns of reciprocal, yet unequal, exchange. Despite the underlying ideology of solidarity based on descent, biraderi leaders are defined not primarily by genealogical position, but by the bonds of reciprocal obligation they have established with other biraderi members, largely as a result of the ability (through wealth, landholdings, personal energy, official connections, political

savvy, skill as mediators, etc.) to provide service to their biraderi cohorts. Leadership may be formally acknowledged through membership in a biraderi council or panchayat. But it does not require such formal recognition, so long as it is confirmed in ritual patterns of exchanges. In some cases this solidarity is reinforced by the existence in villages of biraderi meeting places or *daras*. These (like the *deras* of many western Punjabi landlords, which can be focuses for the distribution of largesse) enhance the sense of reciprocal obligation binding biraderi members together. Indeed, they may also suggest the common pastoral roots of the authority of west Punjabi landlords and the institution of biraderi.[6] Thus, in sum, boundaries of biraderi identity and patterns of leadership are not fixed firmly by genealogy. They result, rather, from ongoing patterns of social transaction and contestation symbolised by ritualised exchanges.

At the local level institutions of biraderi solidarity have tended to be strongest among relatively independent small landholding peasants (though these ties have not uncommonly divided the various lineages of dominant land controllers within villages). Biraderi ties have been weaker among village service groups *(kammis or kamins)* whose households are enmeshed in relations of dependency with village land controllers. Similarly, large landlords have tended to be less susceptible to biraderi influence locally than smallholders, but have developed in some cases more geographically extensive biraderi networks, rooted in more widely dispersed marriage patterns and in broader networks of communication.[7] In some parts of Punjab,—among the settled, formerly pastoral 'tribes' of its south-western region, for example—landlords have used biraderi idioms to define relations with their poorer 'tribal' cohorts, even as they have employed a wide range of material levers of domination over them. Not surprisingly, the relationships between biraderi and other categories of Punjabi kinship networks *(zat, got, patti, khandan,* etc.) have also varied with social class and geographical region.[8]

The relationship between biraderi and the structures of state authority and bureaucracy are of central importance in analysing the local *political* significance of biraderi. As a term defining in essence an idiom of transactional political solidarity based on kinship, the meaning of biraderi developed historically in

close interaction with the contours of the British colonial system. At the heart of any analysis of biraderi, therefore, is an examination of the political structures which incorporated kinship categories, first established in Punjab by the British in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The British colonial state's two seemingly contradictory aspects are essential to this examination. On the one hand colonial authority in Punjab (as in the rest of India) was grounded in the establishment of rationalised, bureaucratic structures of administration. This was central to the British vision of themselves as 'scientific' rulers, a vision that in their own minds set the British apart from the people they ruled. Whether in revenue administration, in law or in structures of political authority and representation the British established a structure of administration grounded in rationalised, Weberian principles. At the same time, however, they saw affective ('non-rational') bonds, based on custom, religion and kinship, as critical defining features of Punjabi society. These were thus central to the stability of indigenous society under their rule. Unable to draw, as a culturally alien regime, on the direct loyalties of the population, the British saw the maintenance of these stabilising social bonds as necessary for their own bureaucratic regime to function. Biraderi, like other forms of indigenous kin-based solidarity thus became politically salient for them. But simultaneously to control these indigenous structures and yet to separate the colonial state from these 'non-rational' loyalties, the British sought to embed them firmly within 'rational' categories that they defined and controlled.[9] The significance of British policy emerged initially in the regime's definition of local and land rights and inheritance law. Even as the British defined a structure of individual private property rights, they also 'fixed' the position of each landholder with respect to a village kinship structure by recording it bureaucratically in village records at each land settlement. Carefully recorded genealogical tables defined rights in the commons, rights of pre-emption, and reversionary inheritance rights to land. These all signalled the importance of kin-based local communities within the structure of the colonial land administration.

The British concern to control and manipulate local kinship structures emerged more explicitly in the state's definition of

a system of customary law for family (and 'tribal') relations. Customary law was in theory based on the recording of local and 'tribal' customs in the Punjab. The British in fact interpreted Punjabi customs so as to give systematic primacy to agnatic succession to land, excluding daughters from inheritance rights and granting extensive potential rights (in the absence of sons or other close male relatives) to male agnates in the patrilineage. By seeking to stabilise patrilineal control over land and over women, the British thus sought to stabilise rural Punjabi society generally.[10] By bureaucratically appropriating and defining a *system* of 'tribal' kinship categories as the social bedrock of Punjabi society, the state sought to stabilise at the same time its own 'rational' bureaucratic administration.

The larger political implications of this 'tribal' kinship structure for the British were signalled most dramatically by the promulgation of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act in 1901. This act was passed in order to prevent the transfer of land to moneylenders. But critical to its import was its definition of social stability in colonial Punjab in terms of the maintenance of land within groups referred to in the act as Punjab's hereditary 'agricultural tribes'. These were not in fact landholding units, but rather categories of local groups marked by their 'ancestral' control of land and their local political organisation based on principles of patrilineal descent. Jats, Rajputs, Arains and other broadly construed 'tribes' were gazetted by name as agricultural tribes in the various districts of Punjab, not because they owned land as units, but because their social cohesion at the local level was believed to depend on both land control and patrilineal kinship organisation. More than any other action, the Land Alienation Act linked the stability of the colonial state explicitly to local kinship structures among Punjabi landholders. At the same time it delineated bureaucratically, and fixed 'objectively', the categories that defined those structures. In practice, the act mobilised the state bureaucracy to maintain the political importance of these units by limiting the passage of land to those who were not members of officially defined and gazetted 'agricultural tribes'.

The act like other, earlier, administrative actions thus created a political framework in which the interests of landholders, as members of local patrilineal kinship structures, were recognised

and systematised by the state. Just as the elaboration of customary law strengthened local patriarchal control over women, the Land Alienation Act strengthened the control of village landholders over village kamins and landless labourers. It served to bar kamins, who were in general not members of gazetted agricultural tribes, from acquiring village land. It also increased the leverage of small and large landowners alike with respect to non-agriculturalist money-lenders. Though the Land Alienation Act did not refer directly to biraderis (in Urdu the word 'tribe' was translated as *qaum*), it nevertheless provided the framework in which biraderi, as a structure based on patrilineal kinship, came to be vitally implicated in the stability of the colonial state. Participation in local patrilineal kinship networks defined, in effect, the legitimate legal power of landed male household heads over their families and their labourers, and empowered landholders as members of these groups to claim a privileged place in twentieth century Punjabi politics within the framework of the terms laid down by the Land Alienation Act. In the eyes of the British, stabilisation of local kinship structures, stabilisation of the agrarian political economy and stabilisation of the state went hand in hand.

But the growing political salience of the term biraderi, in particular, within the colonial political system lay also in a paradox. The importance of biraderi in colonial politics arose not just from the efforts of the state to co-opt local kinship structures. It also ironically stemmed from the fact that among Punjabi kinship units, the biraderi was the one perhaps most difficult for the state to appropriate fully. As a form of local political solidarity, rooted primarily in transactional relationships rather than fixed genealogical calculations, it was not fully susceptible to 'objective' fixation and bureaucratic appropriation, whatever the state's intentions. It is this which probably explains why the term biraderi was not used in the Land Alienation Act, and in general was used far less commonly in referring to local 'tribal' solidarity in British administrative documents than the word *qaum*, a term suggesting a more readily identifiable 'objective' ethnic category.[11] Though biraderi fitted into the general structure of state reliance on local patrilineal kinship organisation, it defined a form of local solidarity that remained, to an important degree, bound up in local networks of reciprocal obligation and social

contestation. Biraderi solidarity thus provided a vehicle for both accommodation *and* resistance by Punjabi villagers to the power of the increasingly bureaucratic colonial state. It linked land-holding organisation to the state, but also defined an arena of on-going status and power negotiation and competition which was independent of it.

Indeed, despite clear pre-colonial origins, the term *biraderi* gained increasingly common political currency in the twentieth century, reflecting the contradictions inherent in the structure of the colonial state. The British established an increasingly rationalised bureaucratic structure that penetrated in important respects to the base of Punjabi society Whether in the structure of property and family law, revenue collection, irrigation rules, politics, or the appropriation of indigenous kinship categories, by the late nineteenth century British bureaucratic rule had begun to impinge deeply on the everyday lives of Punjabi villagers. Biraderi, however, represented a realm of reciprocal political and ritual transactions and relationships (tied to 'blood') that the 'rational' state bureaucracy could not fully penetrate. In this sense biraderis, though rooted in ideologies and patterns long predating the colonial state, assumed a new political significance in the bureaucratic colonial political context.

BIRADERIS AND ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Analysing the detailed political workings and meaning of biraderi in Punjabi electoral politics under the British remains difficult precisely because biraderi was a category little discussed in administrative documents. Nevertheless, it seems apparent that biraderi identity played an important role in the twentieth century in shaping emerging political ties between the villages of the Punjab and the larger electoral arena.

This was *not*, it must be emphasised, because local biraderi politics created only kin-based village unity, thus producing ready-made, clearly identifiable, unified blocks of village support for political leaders seeking a popular base. To the contrary, even when dominated by a single 'agricultural tribe', local village politics were often marked by considerable conflict between

biraderis within the dominant 'tribe' in the village (and sometimes by conflict among households within individual village biraderis as well). The existence of an administratively defined village 'community' by no means assured internal political unity or, more importantly, unity in dealing with the outside.

The British discovered this in their efforts to implant formal institutions of village governance into Punjab villages. In spite of the vision of village solidarity that permeated much of British administrative discussion of Punjab villages, attempts to establish elective representation in villages led to British hand-wringing over the level of conflict that this turned up. The experience of the British in attempting to establish elected, state-sanctioned panchayats in the 1920s illustrated this dramatically. In instituting panchayats on an experimental basis to handle certain kinds of judicial cases, British officials tried to find villages that were relatively homogenous in terms of 'tribe' and without serious conflict. But as officials soon discovered, even in villages dominated by a single 'tribe', there were sometimes substantial internal differences along biraderi lines. As one official noted of several Arain villages originally proposed for panchayats in Lyallpur district, they were in practice 'honeycombed' with internal conflicts and petty jealousies that would prevent panchayats from reflecting an effective sense of community. He also wrote that elections for panchayat seats in the *jangli* villages of Lyallpur district would inevitably produce deep divisions. 'A biraderi of thieves will elect a thief', he stated, 'who may upset the whole work and usefulness of the *panchayats*.'[12] This was of course not to suggest that villages with institutions of common purpose and solidarity were lacking in Punjab, but that the concept of unified village biraderis was in large part a myth that had been embraced by the British themselves.[13]

Critical to understanding the role of biraderi in Punjab, however, is an awareness that such internal conflicts did not foreclose the creation of structures linking villages to the larger political system drawing on biraderi ideology. Indeed, internal conflict was itself critical in many cases in drawing Punjabi villagers into political relationships with those who wielded power outside the locality. If conflicts over status usually provided the foundation for long-standing intra-village conflicts over women, land or

water (as many studies have shown), battles over local status were commonly redressed by alliances forged with those outside the village (police, irrigation officials, lawyers, nearby landlords, politicians, etc.) capable of providing leverage in local conflict. Such alliances could, of course, take many forms. They might be based simply on ad hoc payments in return for political support or favours, unconnected with ties of personal relationship. But often, appeals to real or presumed kinship bonds extending outside the village provided the foundation on which these relationships were constructed. Though 'tribal' bonds alone could not, in and of themselves, secure alliances (as internal village conflicts indicated), kinship provided a language of reciprocal obligation that allowed alliances outside the village to be more easily negotiated and carried through. Appeals to the language of biraderi in these larger political contexts did not necessarily imply, of course, the formation of solidarities with all the features of local biraderis (in terms of marriage relationships, ritual transactions, etc.). But appeals to biraderi did imply solidarities built on the transactional model of reciprocal obligation legitimised by biraderi terminology. The language of biraderi—suggesting reciprocal relationships forged through political transactions—thus allowed villagers and local village leaders to penetrate into the larger bureaucratic and political arenas outside, whilst maintaining the inner essence of their own struggles for status within the village context.[14]

The structure and ideology of British rule itself heightened the political salience of this biraderi idiom within the new colonial electoral arena emerging in the twentieth century. The first British-organised elections in rural Punjab were for seats on district boards, the constituencies for which were normally administrative divisions marked out in the nineteenth century, largely in order to encapsulate (in so far as possible) 'tribal' divisions of the population *(zails)*. District board 'representatives' in many early elections were *zaildars*, men appointed as rural officials (and thus 'fixed' as local representatives) by the British. But in the twentieth century, as elections to these boards were expanded, conflict over 'representation' increasingly required the mobilisation of local support, and appeals to biraderi helped to cement alliances between district board representatives and village leaders based

on mutual interest. At the same time blocs based on biraderi solidarity were activated by alliances among elected leaders on district boards; indeed, the idiom of common kinship legitimised 'tribal' blocs that were often dominated by leaders who used the leverage derived from biraderi support and from patronage available on district boards to build powerful connections.[15]

Some British officials worried that this would tend to disintegrate their system of social control, particularly in those western Punjab areas where landlords were strong, stirring up 'factions' in local politics and undercutting the ability of the British to co-opt 'tribal' categories and 'fix' local 'tribal' leaders themselves.[16] Critically, however, elections tended in most areas to transform the nature of the 'tribal' bonds that already linked leaders to the colonial system, transmuting relatively fixed 'tribal' representation into the more fluid idiom of biraderi leadership, rather than undercutting altogether the colonial system.

This was evident also in the emerging electoral arenas of provincial politics, where political parties had also begun to develop by the 1920s as important players. In theory, of course, parties—with their potential for programmes, organisations and ideologies—offered alternatives to biraderi as focuses for extra-local political loyalties. In practice, however, the role of biraderi and 'tribalism' was stabilised by the emergence of the Unionist party in the 1930s as the predominant rural Muslim party. It mainly aimed to transform British administrative reliance on 'tribal' identities at the local level into an ideology of provincial solidarity. Using support of the Land Alienation Act and its definition of 'agricultural tribes' as the key to its ideology, the provincial leaders cast the Unionist party as the defender of the interests of the zamindars and agriculturalists. It, of course, represented largely the interests of dominant local landholders. Indeed, its leadership comprised relatively wealthy landlords. But it offered an ideology of political affiliation at the provincial level that was integrated with and protective of the operation of biraderi politics at the local level. It thus integrated the transactional politics of local biraderi alliances with adhesion to a provincial party that protected local power.

This process is revealed most clearly in the jockeying which accompanied elections for the Punjab Legislative Assembly,

established after the reforms of 1935. Though constituencies for the Provincial Legislative Council were geographically quite wide in the period 1920-35, the reformed Legislative Assembly after 1937 was based on a broader franchise which drew representatives from narrower geographical constituencies. These were usually tahsils, as for district board elections, and they gave considerable scope for 'tribal' representation. Constituency candidates for the 1937 elections were frequently chosen on the basis of the 'tribal' distribution of voters. Unionist Party correspondence contains numerous assessments of 'tribal' strength in various constituencies. But the enumeration of the voting strength of 'tribes' did not by itself define the role that biraderi played in shaping polling.[17] The common pattern in 1937 was not for the Unionist Party or its rivals to simply pick a candidate from a dominant 'tribe' and expect kin-based solidarity to carry the day; but rather to encourage various candidates from important 'tribes' (often many from the same 'tribe') to file for candidacy and then participate in a process of bargaining, with both party officials and local leaders, leading to negotiated withdrawals from the race. Though the role of the party leadership in this process was sometimes shadowy, the effect of this was to activate biraderi idioms as representatives established transactional bonds linking them to allies and their followings, sometimes through the arbitration of provincial party leadership (and the awarding of party tickets) and sometimes not.

This process can be discerned not only in political correspondence, but also in election petitions filed after the elections. A letter to Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Unionist Party leader, for example, details some of the negotiations preceding the selection of candidates in 1936 for the Jullundur South (Muhammadan) Assembly seat. This constituency possessed a large Arain population. Mian Muhammad Ahah Nawaz, an Arain of the prominent Baghbanpura Mian family of Lahore, sought to win the Unionist ticket for the seat by convincing provincial Unionist leaders of his strong Arain support in the constituency, whilst at the same time reassuring local Arains of his strong support from provincial Unionist leaders. He wrote to Sikander as the deadline for withdrawals approached, explaining that two others had also filed for the seat. One was a pro-Unionist, but did

not come from the Arain community, the other, Chaudhri Abdur Rabb, was an Arain but possessed weak ties with the Unionists. If the non-Arain candidate did not step aside, he declared, then 'the Arain *biraderi* will decide between me and Chaudhri Abdur Rabb.' Urging Sikander, therefore, to use his influence to secure this withdrawal so that the Arain biraderi would not end up opposing the Unionists, he added that 'the many *zaildars* and *nambardars* (village headmmen) of *ilaqas* Nakodar and Phillaur' had made it clear to him that if he could secure the withdrawal of the non-Arain then they would urge Chaudhri Abdur Rabb to step aside as well, so that a pro-Unionist Arain would be elected. Otherwise, he said, on 27 December 1936, 'the *biraderi*' apparently meaning the Arain zaildars, nambardars and leading men in the constituency, 'will meet to choose which of the Arains would oppose the non-Arain candidate.' Sikander's response is not recorded, but the result of the election is: a victory for Chaudhri Abdur Rabb. It is unclear how he secured more support among the leading local Arains than Shah Nawaz. His close connections to the constituency probably carried the day once Shah Nawaz's failure to sway the provincial leadership was evident. But, because of the prominence of the biraderi idiom in the political negotiations, his ability to win the solid support of Arain voters came only after the bargaining through which a range of Arain leaders were brought to his political support.[18]

The importance of negotiated withdrawals is suggested also by an election petition concerning the South-East Gujarat (Muhammadan) constituency. Seven candidates originally filed: four Jats, one Gujjar and two others. Two of the Jat candidates withdrew in favour of another, 'after a meeting of the prominent members of the Jat brotherhood was held at the house of Ghulam Rasul [one of those who withdrew] on the Ist of December, 1936, to decide which of the Jat candidates should receive their support.' The nature of the negotiations involved is not completely clear, but charges were made, ultimately rejected by an elections tribunal, that the victorious candidate illegally paid a sum of Rs 500 to one of the other candidates to withdraw. More substantive was the evidence presented in the petition that Nawab Fazal Ali, Chairman of the Gujarat district board, a Gujjar, exercised his own influence to secure the endorsement of the Jat biraderi

meeting for the winning candidate. He used in part his influence over district board contracts. He also secured the withdrawal of the sole Gujjar candidate, so that the election of the victorious Jat, his political ally, would be assured. Though Jats clearly remained politically divided in the constituency, biraderi relationships nevertheless played an important part in the election. But here, as in many other constituencies, biraderi influence was mobilised only through a complex series of political transactions in which the roles of patronage and clientage were critical, involving powerful men operating within the arenas of power established by the colonial state in the constituency.[19]

Such examples suggest both the importance and the complex role of biraderi idioms in linking local leaders to the new arenas of power that had been established within the colonial Punjab as a system of elected bodies was introduced. The key to the significance of biraderi lay precisely in the shifting referents of the term. It was not employed as a fixed genealogical construct, but rather as one that shifted with the political context, thus facilitating adaption to the structure of the colonial system. While linking politicians to a language legitimised both by kinship and by the structure of the colonial administration, it nevertheless created a language of solidarity in the contestation for political power that was outside the direct control of the British bureaucratic system. It enabled new transactional political links to be forged between leaders at different levels of politics, even as they engaged in local struggles, sometimes even with their own 'tribesmen' to secure a voice within the political system.

BIRADERI ASSOCIATIONS AND COLONIAL POLITICS

The very fluidity of biraderi in contexts such as these, however, created tensions in the formal expression of biraderi identity. The appeal of biraderi as a form of solidarity beyond the direct realm of bureaucratic control also found another expression in colonial Punjab. This was not primarily rooted in electoral transactions, but in the politics of social reform and self-assertion emanating from Punjab's cities. A number of formal 'tribal' associations or *anjumans* had emerged during the second half

of the nineteenth century. These drew on biraderi identity in ways different from ad hoc electoral alliances. They attempted, like the British, to fix 'tribal' identity, embodying it in formal organisation. But unlike the British these anjumans viewed 'tribal' identity not just in terms of fixed bureaucratic definition and enumeration, but in terms of personal, inner, individual identities activated by education, reform and association. For most of them the interaction of kinship solidarities with the emerging public world of Punjab's cities shaped a distinctive idiom of biraderi identity. This idiom was sometimes in tension with the ad hoc manipulation of biraderi by local political leaders. But it nevertheless shared with the transactional politics of local biraderi solidarities an appeal to kinship ideology as the locus of a non-bureaucratic identity.

Numerous biraderi associations existed in twentieth century Punjab, though they differed in their antecedents. The most powerful model for this form of organisation was the Jat Mahasabha associated in Punjab politics largely with the name of Sir Chhotu Ram. This predominantly Hindu organisation had its roots among Hindu Jat landowners in Rohtak district, most of whom were deeply influenced by religious reform movements, particularly the Arya Samaj. Though it thus possessed relatively little direct impact on Muslims, the organisation illustrated how new forms of formal biraderi association, linking personal education and political mobilisation, had begun to define among educated Punjabis new conceptions of biraderi politics. Chhotu Ram, who, along with his law partner and sometime factional rival, Lal Chand, came to dominate Jat politics in Rohtak by the early 1920s, was educated at Dayanand Arya Vedic College, Lahore. He was a strong believer in Arya educational efforts. Drawing on this tradition, he viewed the education of Jats as critical to their uplift and mobilisation.[20]

Politically, however, he appealed directly to a new, ideological form of 'biraderism', as one put it[21] or 'Jatism' (both on the public platform and in his newspaper, the *Jat Gazette*), to mobilise in his support relatively well-off segment of Jat farmers and professionals, who were imbued with a new self-conscious sense of personal Jat identity and interests. Chhotu Ram used the structure of British colonial, with its emphasis on 'tribalism' and on the special position of the 'agricultural tribes', to carve out a place

for himself (and other Jats) in provincial politics as Jat 'tribal' leaders. But at the same time he tapped a new, self-consciously political form of biraderi identity, cultivated in arenas outside the direct realms of British bureaucratic control.

Chhotu Ram used this strategy effectively to take an increasingly prominent place on the stage of provincial politics. In linking Jat mobilisation to the pro-zamindar ideology of the Unionist Party, he emerged as the leading spokesman for the interests of Punjab's agriculturist tribes and became one of the most powerful politicians in the province. His career dramatised how the championing of a particular biraderi identity could be linked to the larger ideology of Unionist Party domination. He thus served as a model for many rural Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs, eventually drawing many Muslim and Sikh Jats, as well as Hindus, on to the Jat Mahasabha platform at the provincial level. In the 1940s Muslim and Sikh Jats were given prominent roles at Jat meetings to dramatise (for Unionist political reasons) the 'non-communal' character of Jat organisation.[22] Nevertheless, the Jat Mahasabha held little appeal as an expression of individual Jat identity, except for those Hindu Jats for whom formal Jat biraderi organisation was intertwined with a transformed personal identity tied to social uplift, religious reform and education.

The most successful biraderi associations amongst Muslim 'tribes' were those anjumans which, like the Arain, Gujjar and Awan, linked biraderi identity with Islamic reform and education in defining new forms of self-assertion under colonial rule. Perhaps the most important of these was the anjuman of the Arains. The Punjabi Arains were predominantly smallholding agriculturalists who were concentrated in a few central districts (particularly Jullundur and Lahore) and in the canal colonies. But even though Arains were a largely rural community, the history of the Arain anjuman was influenced strongly by their urban presence, especially in Lahore, and by the concerns of an emerging educated Arain elite. This was composed largely of professional Arains, urban *rais* and a few prominent landlord families. The history of the Arain anjuman can be taken as an extended example of the development of formal biraderi organisation among Punjab's Muslim 'tribes' and the tensions it produced.

The first movements towards formal Arain organisation began

in the 1890s and were the work of Arain students, rais, lawyers and retired civil servants. Meetings were held in both Jullundur and Lahore where the importance of reforming many popular Arain social customs was stressed. Such concerns became yet more explicit when a group of prominent Arains dominated by such urban rais as the Baghbanpura Mians met in Lahore in 1915. They launched the Anjuman Ra'iyan-i Hind, an all-India Arain newspaper, *Al-Rai,* and an Arain meeting house at Lahore. The catalyst for the launching of the anjuman had been a British army directive that Arains, as hereditary market gardeners, should not be eligible for recruitment.

Leaders of the new anjuman responded by stressing the large numbers of Arains throughout the Punjab. They also argued that Arain representation in the rural administration and colonial bureaucracy justified British recognition of their status and significance. Playing the game of 'tribal' politics structured by the British, the anjuman argued that Arains deserved a better place within the colonial system.[23]

But at the same time the rhetoric of the anjuman also stressed the roots of individual Arain biraderi identity in terms outside of the structure of the colonial state. Its leaders stressed the pure, inner Muslims nature of Arains that was rooted in the 'tribe's' genealogical links to Arabia. The Arains the anjuman argued, were descended from the Arab soldiers who had come to Sind with Muhammad bin Quasim in the eighth century. They were thus descended not of the Prophet, like Saiyyids, but from the common Arab man who had brought Islam to the subcontinent. The inner identity of Arains was suggested, the anjumans declared, by the fact that most had 'pure Arabic names' and that 'their marriage and funeral rights evince the simple characteristics of the Arabs.[24] The point of formal biraderi organisation therefore was not simply to pressurise the government in the name of Arain political and economic interests, but also to assert publicly what, for the leaders of the anjuman, being a good Arain meant. Reform, education and personal transformation were essential to realise the full meaning of Arain identity and to bring outward behaviour into conformity with inner Arain nature. Formal biraderi organisation thus provided a vehicle not only for political organisation, but for establishing personal identities (and for

the internalisation of claims to high social status) commensurate with the new positions in British professional and public life of urban professionals and educated zamindars[25]. Formal biraderi organisation offered an outward expression for new internalised identities that operated outside the objective structure of British definition and control.

The nature of Arain biraderi identity as articulated by the anjuman nevertheless produced serious ambiguities. These suggest the various roles played by biraderi in colonial Punjab. Formal biraderi organisation was linked not only to the personal identities of its leaders, but also played an important local role in many Punjabi elections. For some, the open participation of the anjuman in colonial politics posed a potential threat to its own ideology of Arain identity. As Sardar Muhammad Shafi of Ganja Kalan, rais and zamindar of Lahore district, declared in a presidential address to the All-India Arain Conference in the 1940s, political mobilisation of the biraderi for competition with other biraderis could only compromise the foundations of Arain identity, encouraging forms of asabiyyat, or 'tribal feeling' that dated back to the era before the time of the Prophet. It was long residence in Hindu India and more recently the British regime itself, he said, that had encouraged the emergence of these forms of 'tribalism'. Rather, he said, (in asking 'what is the purpose of *biraderi* organisation?'), the aim of formal Arain organisation ought to be to encourage exemplary popular religious belief and practice as a model for the entire Muslim community, much as a particularly *sharif* family could serve as a guide for an entire clan. Only in this way could the Arains set an example for all of Punjab.[26]

But the relationship between anjuman making and the mobilisation of popular Arain support in elections was not to be ignored by Arain leaders interested in using 'tribal' influence to secure a place, as Chhotu Ram had done, on the provincial political stage. In the period before the 1937 elections, for example, leaders of All-India Arain Conference (from six Punjab districts) met in Lahore and constituted an Arain Parliamentary Board whose aim, as the president of the conference, Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz of Baghbanpura put it, was to encourage 'Arain cohesion and cooperation in the coming elections.' He specifically asked leading Arains to present the names of Arains likely to

run in their constituencies and to discuss, if more than one were running, how a reconciliation was to be brought about.[27] Invitations subsequently went out to the leading *'buzurgan-i qaum'* (loosely, 'elders' or respected men in the community) to meet in Lahore for 'mutual consultations' on the elections. The aim was to prepare the ground for Arains elected in the assembly to form a united front so that their leaders could exert maximum influence on the new ministry.[28] But substantial difficulties arose. Not only did many of those present have their own political agendas to pursue (such as Shah Nawaz's relative, Mian Iftikharuddin, who was launching his radical career), but, more than that, few seemed willing to trust to a formal Arain Parliamentary Board, the delicate matter of local negotiations and withdrawals of candidatures, that were so critical to local representation. Indeed, the idea of formal biraderi organisation in some ways seemed to undercut the very power of the biraderi idiom as a legitimiser of the ad hoc political alliances that shaped electoral contests.[29]

Perhaps more telling, however, were the questions raised about the proper role of the anjuman in politics following the elections and the emergence of a new Unionist Ministry in 1937 under provincial autonomy. Though most of the leading Arains had come to terms with the Unionists as the dominant party among Punjab's Muslims, the politicisation of anjuman activities in the period leading up to the elections made some prominent Arains charge that formal participation in politics had damaged not only its 'fragile' affairs (and its finances) but also the original mission of its founders. This resulted in the formation within the anjuman of an Islahi (reform) Committee. It sought to regularise the anjuman's constitution, register it officially under British Indian corporation law and to create an official category of three rupee members who alone could vote for others.[30] These leaders of the anjuman intended to separate it more clearly than ever from the political manipulations that had created divisions before the election and that had, in any case, produced little result.

The continuing machinations of leading Arain politicians in league with various provincial political parties, nevertheless, kept the more general problem of defining the anjuman's purposes fresh in the minds of its leaders. This led to considerable soul-searching in the late 1930s and 1940s about the overall political

meaning of biraderi organisation in Punjab politics. The well-publicised break of several Arain MLAs with the Unionist Party in January 1939 produced a wave of criticism of the role of 'biraderism', particularly from other Muslims. *Al-Rai* produced an impassioned editorial on the 'Arain *Biraderi* and Politics'. Though the anjuman was founded, it wrote, 'on the reform of the *millat*, the protection of the rights of Muslims, the progress of education, Islamic publicity and the regulations of the shari'at, it was now being accused of interfering in politics'. But the relationship between politics and the advance of the biraderi was in fact complex, 'from one side', it declared, 'it continues to be said that in Islam, religion and politics cannot be separated'. But 'on the other side, it is decided that for the Anjuman Ra'iyan-i Hind, politics is the forbidden tree.' But how could the anjuman play a role in defining for individual Arains a place of exemplary leadership among Muslims while at the same time remaining apart from politics? 'When it comes to the organisation of the Arains for the protection of their rights,' the paper declared, 'then surely they must be united so that they become a model for the unity of all Muslims.'[31]

At the heart of the uncertainty about the political role of biraderi, however, lay the relationship of kinship solidarity to the colonial state system of the British Raj. At the local level the idiom of biraderi provided a foundation for the alliances that allowed many Muslims—including the Arains—to cope with the power of the colonial bureaucracy over their lives. It not only facilitated the creation of transactional political networks linking villagers with the structure of the state, but it did so with a language of reciprocity, in a realm of 'blood' that bureaucratic principles could never fully control. At the provincial level the founding of the anjuman shaped also the identities of many prominent, educated Arains, for whom support for the anjuman defined an inner identity, one rooted in the linking of commitment to pure Islamic principles with the power of 'blood'. But at the provincial and public level, the political operation of the Arain anjuman in a world of bureaucratically defined 'tribes' by the British was in the eyes of many, not to resist bureaucratic domination but to compromise with the system completely.

These contradictions in Muslim biraderi politics for the Arains

and other communities came even more clearly into focus in the political catharsis leading to the creation of Pakistan. In calling for Pakistan, the Muslim League attacked the basic ideological foundations of the colonial state. It sought to define foundations for the state that rested not on its 'scientific' ordering of indigenous communities, but on the establishment of new symbolic links to the Muslim community as a whole. 'Tribal' politics were a product, League leaders now argued, of the colonial political system. They threatened to undercut the symbolic unity of the Islamic community. 'To achieve complete inner unity it is necessary,' wrote to pro-League *Eastern Times*, 'that all caste and tribal consciousness should be killed and effaced, until none is left who shall say "I am a Pathan" or "I am a Rajput" or "I am an Arain".'[32] In practice, of course, Muslim League leaders by no means ignored local biraderi considerations in organising for the elections of 1946. Biraderi concerns guided the selection of many Muslim League candidates, for biraderi politics remained central in many areas to patterns of local electoral alliance. But at the provincial level, the Muslim League saw no place for biraderi politics, and attacked directly many of the provincial 'tribal' anjumans, particularly those which had ties with the Unionist Party. In such circumstances leaders of the Arain anjuman found little scope to offer the biraderi as a model for the community. Though the Anjuman Ra'iyan-i Hind endorsed the Muslim League in October 1945, *Al-Rai* bemoaned the increasing apathy that characterised the anjuman's activities.[33] The irony was that at the pinnacle of public enthusiasm and popular mobilisation in colonial Muslim politics in the years before partition, the Arain anjuman found itself relegated to virtual irrelevance.

Indeed, the anjuman's problems on the eve of Pakistan reflected the contradictions long inherent in formal biraderi organisation. As *Al-Rai* had written metaphorically of colonial biraderi politics:

> God is our witness that we are involved in the crime of love,
> If it is a crime, then God will not forgive us.[34]

Though biraderi solidarity was for many, like love, an inner reality, the formal embrace of it in the public realms of state politics was indeed a kind of 'crime', a display of sectional

self-interest that could not be tolerated when the definition of the larger community as a whole was at risk.

CONCLUSION: PAKISTAN AND BIRADERIS

The creation of Pakistan, of course, changed the dynamics of biraderi politics among Muslim Punjabis. On one level biraderi identities remained central to the formation of local political networks and alliances, accommodating the shifting patterns of patronage and political transactions that shaped political configurations. Indeed, in some respects the increasing bureaucratisation of power in Pakistan following the British departure only strengthened the salience of biraderi as an idiom simultaneously of local accommodation and resistance to the state structure. Kinship provided a powerful non-bureaucratic idiom for the articulation of local bonds of political reciprocity and alliance, whatever their material bases. Though local biraderi politics could sometimes pose a threat to development schemes,[35] this was but a small price for the bureaucratic state to pay for the structure of accommodation that biraderi politics allowed between Punjabi villagers and itself. Indeed, in a world of inequalities, poverty and bureaucratic power (and 'corruption'), the appeal of biraderi as an idiom of protection rooted not in bureaucratic rules but in inner power of 'blood', held a pervasive appeal. It often legitimised reciprocal political obligations between patrons and followers in rural Punjab, even as it played an important role in legitimising blatant material inequalities.

But after partition the role and meaning of biraderi within the political and ideological structure of the state also changed markedly in Punjab. While the British colonial state had mobilised and protected 'tribal' identities, 'fixing' them in scientific and bureaucratic language to serve its interest, the Pakistani state officially rejected protection of 'tribal' identities. To the contrary, the new state saw itself as the expression of a Muslim community that supplanted all localised identities. For ideological reasons the new government in the late 1940s thus repealed the provisions of the Land Alienation Act mandating the protection of land in the hands of the 'agriculturalist tribes'. It also officially replaced the Punjab customary law in matters of personal and family

law with the shari'at.[36] The new state structure thus left little scope for the continuing operation of a political party such as the Unionist that had ideologically linked an appeal to 'zamindar' solidarity at the provincial level to a political base resting on patronage structures and 'tribal ideology in the localities. Indeed, biraderi politics were bitterly condemned in Pakistan's early years, simply as remnants of the colonial regime. Though formal biraderi anjumans thus continued to attract support in much of the Punjab after 1947, even expanding in many cases their numbers and their local branches as a result of urbanisation and the integration of east Punjabi refugees, they seem to have operated increasingly on the provincial level as little more than associations of social reform and arenas for individual status definition.[37]

But, if the legitimate incorporation of biraderi politics into the structure of the state was now largely foreclosed, new political parties did little to establish fresh bonds linking the organisation of society and the principles of the state. The Muslim League itself, in spite of its ideological appeal to Islam, failed to develop in the years after 1947 into a political party that could aggregate the interests of the Muslim community as a whole by linking local parties to the principles defining arenas of state authority. Nor did other parties perform this function in the years leading up to the establishment of military rule in 1958. Only with the rise of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's People's Party in the late 1960s did this begin to change. There then emerged a significant party structure in Punjab that promised to integrate into state politics the *class* interests of a wide range of both new social groups and old ones newly politicised in the wake of the economic transformations of the Ayub Khan era. Historians may debate the degree to which the People's Party represented the real dawn of 'mass politics' in the Punjab. But there is little doubt that in the election of 1970 the People's Party established ideological and institutional links to voters in many parts of Punjab that bound them to the state in new ways. It even opened the possibility of a new structure of party government that could exert political control in the name of a broader political community over the bureaucracy. This is not to say that the People's Party ignored entirely the old politics of biraderi and patronage in the 1970 elections, any more than had the Muslim League in 1946.[38] But

the party aimed clearly to subordinate such local structures to the development of a more broadly based party organisation. This was intended not only to marginalise the political power of local biraderi and patronage ties, but to exert new forms of party control over the bureaucracy.

The promise of the People's party, however, failed to materialise. Many commentators noted long before the 1977 elections that it had reverted to an increasing reliance on powerful local patrons. Indeed, the party's increasing willingness to tap biraderi politics for support became for many a touchstone of its failures. 'Back to the Biraderi System?' asked one journal pointedly in November 1976. Nothing, in the view of critics, marked more clearly than this the long-term failure of the party to establish new bonds linking society and state. The People's Party's ideological disarray and lack of strong 'democratic party organisation' critics argued, pushed it logically into 'organizing the people in the name of their respective biraderis.'[39]

The relationship between biraderi politics and the lack of effective political party organisation became still clearer with the advent of the new military regime under Ziaul-Haq. Zia, of course, like Ayub Khan, acted initially in seizing power to sever the state from the political process. Endlessly promising the return to democratic forms, Zia finally held 'partyless' elections in 1985, prior to the lifting of martial law. To the surprise of very few, however, the results were a resurgence of biraderi and local patronage politics on a wide scale.[40] This, of course, was completely consistent with Zia's intent. 'Partyless' elections allowed, in many respects, for a system of controlled representation based on local interests that could not threaten the state. It was much like that defined in the nineteenth century by the British. But the other side of this, of course, was increasing reliance on the power of a relatively unconstrained bureaucratic regime, in strong alliance with the military, linking the state to the population. In some respects Zia's ideological emphasis on Islamisation, dictated largely from above, fits also into this same framework. For it aimed toward justifying the state in terms largely disconnected from the actual structures of representation operating in local politics.[41] What unified Zia's simultaneous encouragement of local patronage and biraderi politics on the one hand, and

state-directed Islamisation on the other, was only the commitment of all these policies to the maintenance of stable hierarchies of inequality in Punjab, linked to religion, the domination of men over women and the maintenance of local patronage structures legitimised in biraderi idioms. But the power of the latter also derived from their ultimate grounding not in the realms of bureaucratic state administration, but in bonds of internally rooted reciprocal obligation linked to 'blood'. That the importance of biraderi grew hand in hand with the increasing weight of state control under Zia reflected the long-standing fact that its ideology represented a mode not only of accommodation to state power, but also of resistance to the pervasive establishment of bureaucratic control. This provided perhaps not much of a consolation to the poor, but certainly one to local land and power holders.

The re-emergence of party politics after Zia's death changed the political picture dramatically in many ways. But the continuing importance of biraderi in Punjab elections was clear in 1990. As newspaper accounts of the election campaign have indicated, the relationships between the local kinship solidarity, bureaucracy and party politics have grown increasingly complex.[42] But, as a flexible idiom for the development of local alliances based on political transactions, biraderi still has an important part to play. Whatever the changes that have occurred, the outlines of the tense and yet symbiotic relationship between biraderi and bureaucracy, a relationship dating to the colonial period, are still strongly in evidence.

Notes

1. Bonnie C. Smith, 'Introduction' to special issue on, 'Women and Gender in French History', *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1 (July 1989), 1–2.
2. Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India', *Cultural Critique* (Fall 1989).
3. Hamza A. Alavi, 'Kinship in West Punjab Villages', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, New Series, VI (December 1972), 2.
4. Parwez Wakil, 'Explorations into the Kin Networks of the Punjabi Society: A Preliminary Statement', in Muhammad Fayyaz (ed.) *Pakistani Sociological Writings*, 1 (Lahore: Punjab University Sociologists Alumni Association, 1970), 5–7.
5. Hamza A. Alavi, 'The Politics of Dependence: A Village in West Punjab', *South Asian Review*, 4,2 (January 1971), 116–17; an extensive account

of such ritualised gift exchanges is provided by Zekiye Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan* (Columbia University Press, 1960).

6. Douglas Merrey suggests that, as distinctive institutions, biraderis may have emerged in western Punjab out of the processes of semi-nomadic settlement. Self-conscious biraderis, he argues, grew out of the fluid idioms of nomadic, patrilineal kinship as the British awarded rights in land to individuals while still recognising the residual rights of agnatic kin: Douglas James Merrey, 'Irrigation, Poverty and Social Change in a Village of Pakistan Punjab: An Historical and Cultural Ecological Analysis', unpublished University of Pennsylvania PhD dissertation in Anthropology (1983), 559, for a discussion of biraderi daras, see also 570–71, 576.
7. Alavi, 'Kinship in West Punjab Villages', 5; see also, Saghir Ahmad, *Class and Power in a Punjabi Village* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 83.
8. For a short, relatively recent review of the referents of this Punjabi kinship terminology and some of its variations, see, Merrey, 'Irrigation, Poverty and Social Change', Appendix 1 ('Social Organisation of Rural Punjab: Terminology') 768–83; there are of course a number of more extended studies of Punjabi kinship in particular social contexts: for example, Paul Hershman, *Punjabi Kinship and Marriage* (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1981), which focusses on a village in Jullundur district and on Punjabi migrants in the UK.
9. Unlike most modernising European states, which attempted to confine affective kinship bonds to the 'private', apolitical realm of the family, however, the British in Punjab did not try to exclude these bonds from the political realm. Rather, they accepted the potential political importance of such bonds, but sought to confine them to a world of local, indigenous culture, seperated from the rational, bureaucratic world defining the power of the colonial ruling authority.
10. For a discussion of the British elaboration of customary law in limiting female inheritance rights, see David Gilmartin, 'Women, Kinship and Politics in 20th Century Punjab', in Gali Minault (ed.), *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Chanakya, 1981); the broader implications of this (and other related policies) for the position of women in the colonial social structure and economy are discussed by Michelle Maskiell, 'Gender, Kinship and Rural Work in Colonial Punjab', *Journal of Women's History*, 2, 1 (Spring 1990).
11. Though it is perhaps a mistake to lay too much stress on explicit usage of these terms (or on the British usage of such terms as zat or got that were operationally shaped primarily by marriage prohibitions), the shades of their meanings provide clues to their political significance. Biraderi defined most clearly among these terms a form of kin-based solidarity that could not be described or fixed genealogically without reference to the on-going patterns of local transactions that transformed potential kin-based power into a local political reality. Interestingly, qaum seems to have been used as a term of administrative identification also by the Mughal bureaucracy.

12. J.G. Beazly (Deputy Commissioner, Lyallpur) to Commissioner, Multan, 2 February 1924, Local Self-Government/Panchayats, A Proceedings, 112–35, September 1924, Punjab Archives, Lahore (hereafter PA).
13. Interestingly, British officials often maintained this myth by declaring that there were special reasons why the villages in the area they were concerned with did not conform to the common model of village solidarity. Dispersal of settlement in south-western Punjab and relatively recent migration and settlement in the canal colonies, for example, were often offered as reasons why villages in these parts of Punjab did not conform to what was still taken as a dominant, normative model of village solidarity.
14. In analysing this system, some have stressed its essentially segmentary character, genealogical segments that are in conflict on the local level will nevertheless unite on the basis of common ancestry at wider levels to oppose a common foe. 'As in tribal regions,' Charles Lindholm has writtten, '*Biraderi* tend to line up against one another on a segmentary basis': Charles Lindholm, 'The Segmentary Lineage System: Its Applicability to Pakistan's Political Structure', in Ainslee T. Embree (ed.), *Pakistan's Western Borderlands* (Delhi: Vikas, 1977), 53. This captures an important dynamic in the system. But it overstates, I think, the importance of precise genealogical reckoning in the process, and understates the importance of political transactions in shaping patterns of political biraderi formation and alliance.
15. Evidence on local district board politics before partition is limited. One example of such a bloc comes from Lahore district. There, as the Senior Vice-Chairman of the Lahore district board, Muhammad Sharif, noted in 1939, Arains made up seven of the fifteen Muslims of the district board at the time. Six of the seven acted together as part of a group under Muhammad Sharif's leadership: Muhammad Sharif to Syed Afzaal Ali Hasnie, Unionist Headquarters, 31 July 1939, Unionist Party Papers, File G-45.
16. Note by Olaf Caroe, 10 December 1921, Local Self-Government/Boards, A Proceedings 28–30, August 1923, PA.
17. Interestingly, calculations of 'tribal' voters in correspondence were sometimes combined with discussions of the marriage connections among leading families and of the on-going alliances and enmities of the leading men of various 'tribes' in the constituencies. These were critical to any mobilisation on the basis of biraderi: For one example (from 1945), see handwritten notes on Unionist elections prospects in Gujranwala district, Unionist Party Papers, file D-24.
18. Muhammad Shah Nawaz to Sikander Hyat Khan, 25 December 1936. Khurshid Ali Khan Papers, Private Collection.
19. Report of the First Election Petitions Commission, Punjab, Chaudhri Bahawal Baksh vs Khan Sahib Pir Muhammad, South-East Gujarat Muhammadan Constituency, *Punjab Gazette*, 22 September 1937, part I, 1429–37.
20. Prem Chowdhry, *Punjab Politics: the Role of Sir Chhotu Ram* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984), 46–47.
21. Ibid, 62.
22. At the All-India Jat Conference in Delhi in December 1942, for example,

Chhotu Ram proclaimed the 'inter-communal' character of the organisation with prominent Jat Unionist allies including Sir Jogendra Singh and Sir Shahab-ud-Din on the platform: *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 1 December 1942).

23. Ali Asghar Chaudhri, *Tarikh-i Ara'iyan* (Lahore: Ilmi Kitabkhana, 1973), 168–69, 184; see also, 'Petition of Arains to Lord Kitchener' (1915), Mian Abdul Aziz Collection, Lahore.
24. 'Petition of Arains to Lord Kitchener'. This, of course, was the Arain ideal, since many of the early speeches at Arain meetings were directed toward reforming common Arain customs that did not measure up to this: See, for example, Chaudhri, *Tarikh-i Ara'iyan*, 184.
25. See, for example, the reported comments of Mian Muhammad Shafi of Baghbanpura, a Lahore lawyer and one of the leaders in early Arain organisation, to a suggestion from another family member that he try to raise the family's status by asserting Rajput or Saiyyid status. 'He was proud to be an Arain of Arab origin,' Shafi declared. 'And, God willing, before he died the tribe would be so well organised that people would clamour to be known as Arains': Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, *Father and Daughter. A Political Autobiography* (Lahore: Nigarishat, 1972), 23.
26. Speech of Sardar Muhammad Shafi, *rais* of Ganja Khan, at All-India Arain Conference, Jalalabad (Bijnor District, U.P.), March 1947: Chaudhri, *Tarikh-i Ara'iyan,* 172-73; the importance of lineage *(hisb o nisb)* in defining *sharafat* is also stressed at the very beginning of the first important published history of the Arains: Maulvi Muhammad Akbar Ali Sufi (Jalandhri), *Salim al-Tawarikh; yani Tarikh-i Qaum-i Ara-iyan* (Amritsar, 1919), 1–7.
27. Notes by Unionist Party Resident Secretary Afzaal Ali Hasnie, 25 April 1936 and 8 May? 1936 Unionist Party Papers, files marked E-23 and Mian Nurullah's case.
28. Circular letters from Muhammad Abdul Majid, Secretary Arain Parliamentary Board, 12 June and 19 June (Mian Abdul Aziz Collection, Lahore) to prominent Arains, the first inviting the biraderi ke buzurgan from Lahore tahsil to meet at Nawankot to consult on the selection of a candidate, the second inviting 200 Arain leaders from all over the province to come to Lahore to discuss the elections. Much of this correspondence also implicitly suggests the degree to which the anjuman was dominated at this time by a few prominent families, notably the Baghbanpura Mians. Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz, President of the Arain Conference, and Muhammad Abdul Majid, Secretary of the Arain Parliamentary Board, both belonged to this family. It is not surprising, in this light, that it was Muhammad Abdul Majid himself who ended up running for the Lahore tahsil seat after calling for a meeting of the Arain Parliamentary Board to select an Arain candidate for the constituency.
29. There were bitter recriminations in 1936 over Arains joining various political parties in violation of erstwhile pledges of unity given to the Arain Parliamentary Board. In the end, the Arain Parliamentary Board endorsed the Unionists: *Tribune* (Lahore), 12 November 1936; for a discussion of the unsuccessful Arain Conference efforts to pressure the Unionist Ministry to appoint an Arain minister after the elections, see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 94.

30. Letter from the Daftar-i Anjuman Ra'iyan-i Hind, Lahore to Friends of the Qaum, n.d. (1937?), signed by Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, MLA, Mian Abdur Rashid, Judge, High Court, Malik Din Muhammad, Hony. Gen. Sec., Mian Abdul Aziz, MLA; and Chaudhri Ghulam Haidar Umar, Asst. Gen. Sec., Mian Aziz Collection, Lahore.
31. *Al-Rai* (Lahore), 14 February 1939.
32. *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 13 October 1943.
33. Proceedings of the Managing Committee of the Anjuman Ra'iyan-i Hind, 28 October 1945; and editorial, 'To What Extent will this Apathy Go?' *Al-Rai* (Lahore), 8 December 1945.
34. *Al-Rai* (Lahore); 14 February 1939.
35. Douglas Merrey provides dramatic examples of how local biraderi conflicts (and other local conflicts of various sorts) disrupted both irrigation development and land consolidation in a western Punjab village in the 1970s. Merrey, 'Irrigation Poverty and Social Change', 627–728.
36. The system of customary law was superseded by the West Punjab statute in 1948 (though this did not in practice end the application of customary law in all rural inheritance and family cases). The transformation of the Land Alienation Act was more complex. Witnesses before an official committee formed shortly after partition to examine the legislation argued strongly the 'fundamentally unIslamic' character of the law, whose continuance was inappropriate now that Pakistan had been created. As Begum Shah Nawaz noted, the customary law and Land Alienation Act were alike in being part of a British structure of authority created to encourage divisions and rivalries among Punjabis. They stood in the way, she said, 'of the full application of the personal law of the *shari'at*, ':*Report of the Alienation of Land Inquiry Committee, West Punjab, 1949* (Lahore: Government Printing, 1949). In fact, the Land Alienation Act was not wholly repealed, as the protection of land in the hands of Punjab's farmers was thought to be critical to the prosperity of the province, but 'tribal' definitions (with a few minor exceptions) were expunged from the act.
37. For some indication of these trends in urban biraderi politics, see Philip E. Jones, 'Changing Party Structures in Pakistan: From Muslim League to People's Party', in Manzooruddin Ahmed (ed.), *Contemporary Pakistan: Politics, Economy and Society* (Karachi: Royal Book Co., 1980), 121. In the cities biraderi organisations probably continued to play a role in the political connections developed by some prominent politicians.
38. Ibid., 132–33.
39. *Viewpoint* (Lahore), 12 November 1976.
40. This has been discussed by many authors: See, for example, Rasul B. Rais, 'Elections in Pakistan: Is Democracy Winning?', *Asian Affairs*, 12, 3 (Fall 1985), 43–61.
41. This of course is an over-simplification. Islamisation did appeal to certain political parties and certain segments of the population. For some discussion of Zia's 'Islamic' policies, see, Anita Weiss, *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State* (Syracuse University Press, 1986).
42. See, for example, Theodore P. Wright, Jr, 'Biraderis in Punjabi Elections', *The Journal of Political Science*, XIV, 1, 2 (1991), 79.

Punjab Agriculture during the Great Depression

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This article examines the impact of the price falls brought about by the Great Depression on the Punjab's agrarian system. It is argued that farmers were not driven back into subsistence agriculture, nor was there an increase in the permanent alienation of land. Rather than introducing a transformation, the Great Depression continued established trends.

India like other primary producing countries experienced a sharp fall in prices with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 (Table 1). The slump in agricultural prices was greater than that of industrial goods in the West. For, whereas the general level of primary produce prices halved between 1929-30 and 1930-31, prices of manufactured goods declined by only 30 per cent.[1] This paper aims to assess the impact of the price fall on the Punjab's agricultural sector. It focuses in particular on whether there was a marked increase in the permanent alienation of land and a decline in land prices.

The Punjab provides an important case study for the Depression's impact on Indian agriculture. The region had forged ahead with the production of such crops as wheat and cotton following the large-scale introduction of irrigation in the late nineteenth century. Whilst such areas as Bihar and Bengal faced growing difficulties, the Punjab was transformed from a deficit to surplus region.

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Table 1
Prices of Individual Crops (Annas Per Maund)

Years	*Wheat*	*Barley*	*Bajra*	*Maize*	*Gram*	*Rape seed*	*Raw Sugar*	*Cotton*
1921-24	74	44	66	60	56	109	110	199
1925-28	73	49	72	62	66	119	98	155
1929-32	38	29	39	35	36	66	68	90
1933-36	39	26	32	32	32	67	61	88
1929-30	50	37	55	54	60	92	101	111
1930-31	25	21	28	23	30	61	66	71
1931-32	33	23	26	24	29	56	61	87
1932-33	43	32	37	39	36	56	44	90
1933-34	34	23	27	29	28	53	52	68
1934-35	36	25	28	28	31	70	73	81
1935-36	38	26	34	34	32	70	64	109
1936-37	48	32	38	37	38	76	53	94

Source: *Season and Crop Report, Punjab* (annual).
Notes: Figures in the first half of the Table represent average prices during the respective four years. In the years given in the table 1921 stands for 1921–22 and so on.

Did this complex picture of regional variation in agricultural performance remain unchanged during the Depression years? How relevant to the Punjab is the volume of literature which has emerged on the subject of the Depression in the recent past.[2] The literature has emphasised the distress faced by the different social classes (landlords, rich peasants, debtors, agricultural labourers) during the Depression and the resulting agrarian unrest. They have also commented on the disruption of the international balance of payment relationship (evidenced by the export of gold on a large scale) and on the transfer of capital, hitherto committed to land and rural moneylending and the cash crop trade, to business and industry in the market town and city. Several scholars have also stressed the Government of India's failure to meet the challenge of the Depression by devaluing the currency, undertaking public works and following a policy of stabilising prices and securing credit.

Before examining the impact of the Depression on Punjabi agriculture, it is necessary to highlight the differences between [illegible] provinces. Quite unlike

rend elsewhere,[3] increase in the cultivated area was keeping pace with population growth because of the canal-building (and colonisation) programme in the dry and sparsely populated areas (the Crown wasteland) of the western Punjab from the 1880s onwards.[4] The region was also expanding cash crop production at a faster rate than in many or most other provinces. This was evidenced by that: (*a*) exports were growing at phenomenal rates (between 1889–90 and 1919–20 raw cotton export from Punjab increased by four times and that of grains and pulses doubled[5]; (*b*) population pressure in the agricultural sector was much less than in the subcontinent as a whole (59 per cent in 1921 as against 69.8 per cent in India as a whole); (*c*) percentage of irrigated area and area sown with cash crops (especially cotton) was increasing (Table 2); and (*d*) the 1920s witnessed the beginning of the use of improved varieties of seeds in cotton, sugarcane and wheat cultivation.[6] Third, it was after a long period of upward trend, when agricultural prices had been increasing at a faster rate since the termination of World War I and the peak for different crops was reached between 1924–25 and 1928–29, that the slump came, thus making in some respects the distress more acute than would otherwise have been. For while on the one hand this price

Table 2
Area under Cultivation and Irrigated Area
(Thousand Acres)

Crops	*1921–24*	*1924–28*	*1929–32*	*1933–36*
Wheat	9,435	9,464	9,227	9,374
Minor Cereals	7,042	6,449	7,023	6,706
Cereals and Pulses	23,052	21,424	21,844	22,488
Bajra	2,969	2,613	3,309	3,162
Gram	5,119	4,161	4,179	4,956
Cotton	1,625	2,394	2,106	2,627
Sugarcane	437	434	442	489
Oilseeds	1,290	1,085	1,243	865
Cash Crops	3,352	3,912	3,615	3,982
Total Sown Area	31,286	30,388	30,821	32,206
Canal Irrigated Area	9,298	9,705	10,074	10,194
Well Irrigated Area	3,301	3,810	3,985	4,069

Source: *Season and Crop Report, Punjab.*
Note: In the years given in the table, 1921 stands for 1921–22 and so on.

resulted in an improvement (involving a larger cash outlay) in the standard of living of a section of the landowners, it also helped vastly increase the volume of debt in the province.[7]

CROP PATTERNS

We propose to indicate the trends in crop pattern and total sown area with the help of quadrennial averages of crop acreage during the period 1921–22 to 1936–37 (Table 2). Statistics on crop production have not been presented. This is because, though the acreage data can be taken as a reliable index of the extent of cultivation in a year,[8] in all probability the range of underestimation in the yield rates of crops as worked out by the Agriculture Department increased over time.[9] In other words, though we can assume that total crop production increased faster than acreage (through improvement in yield per acre of certain crops) it will be difficult to be confident about the magnitude of this increase. However, wherever possible we have referred to the trends in individual crop output.

The picture that emerges from these acreage statistics makes it abundantly clear that the slump in agricultural prices did not lead to a decline in total cropped area—as a matter of fact the sown area increased slightly during eight years from the onset of the worldwide Depression. Thus, the pattern was the same as in world agriculture as a whole, i.e., total production increased even though prices slumped.[10] Incidentally, the area served by government canals also continued to expand during these years.[11] This is important because *abiana* (water rates) had been considerably enhanced from 1924–25 onwards. Then, as agricultural prices slumped, the government yielded to public demand, and granted special reduction of water rates (and land revenue) from 1930–31, and in the next year the rebate amounted to Rs.8.7 million.[12] Finally, from 1933–34 onwards, water rates charged for all the individual crops were reduced by about one-sixth to one-fifth. But clearly these concessions fell far short of the cut in agricultural prices (Table 3). Yet, canal irrigation continued to spread to newer areas. The expansion rate was now lower, but the underlying trend is clear—canal irrigation expanded, thus falsifying the prediction of the Abiana Committee that 'unless

Table 3

Total Revenue and Irrigation Receipts of the Punjab Government (Million Rs)

ars	*Total Revenue Receipts*	*Irrigation Receipts*
21–22	86.5	33.3
22–23	94.3	36.4
1923–24	102.2	39.2
1924–25	108.6	43.0
1925–26	113.9	45.7
1926–27	108.7	38.0
1927–28	109.0	40.8
1928–29	104.3	37.4
1929–30	105.4	39.4
1930–31	100.1	36.1
1931–32	96.1	38.1
1932–33	98.7	36.8
1933–34	103.8	44.2
1934–35	105.0	40.2
1935–36	102.4	39.9

Source: *Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1901–36* (Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry Publication No. 52), 14.

[water] rates are reduced the Irrigation Department is sure to lose a part of its customers. The agriculturalist will begin to replace high-rated crops by low-rated crops, and generally to content himself with as little irrigated area as possible.'[13]

With regard to the impact of falling prices on the performance of individual crops, there is a clear contrast between sugarcane, gram and minor cereals on the one hand and wheat on the other. Wheat acreage was slightly lower all through the eight years—1929–30 to 1936–37. On the other hand, the area under minor cereals (especially bajra) and gram expanded quite significantly. The trend in sugarcane cultivation was the same during through the Depression years as a whole, but the expansion rate was not as pronounced. Cotton formed a category by itself. Prices declined by one-fourth between 1921–24 and 1925–28, but acreage was about 50 per cent higher during these last four years. Prices fetched by the crop declined by another 40 per cent during the first four years of the Depression, but this was accompanied

by only a marginal contraction of the cropped area. The pattern changed during the last four years of the Depression (1933–36) in the sense that the same price level now witnessed a marked expansion in area devoted to cotton cultivation. Thus, during the Depression years as a whole (1929–36) cotton acreage remained at about the level of the 1925–28 period, but was much higher compared to the years 1921–24 when prices had reached a peak. Overall, acreage under the most important subsistence crop (wheat) slightly declined in the face of falling prices; acreage under minor cereals, gram and sugarcane expanded; and cotton cultivation remained at about the level of the four years immediately preceding the depression.

Two questions need to be addressed in this connection: (*a*) why did the Depression years witness an upward trend in sown area (i.e., total production)? (*b*) what led to the variations in the response of the different crops? With regard to the first, it is true that because the area under cereals and pulses accounted for about 70 per cent of the total crop acreage and the larger part of the production of these crops was retained in the villages for on-farm consumption, repayment of debt in kind and payment in kind for hired labour and menials *(kamins)*,[14] the impact of falling prices was limited. But this explanation is not adequate because it still begs the question why the production of cash crops and that part of the output of foodcrops which was sold in the market remained inelastic or even increased when prices slumped. We may try to answer this question by referring to the considerations behind the production decisions of three broad groups: (*a*) small farmers, (*b*) medium cultivators and (*c*) rich peasants and large farmers.[15]

Under normal circumstances the first group of operators depended wholly on family labour; and most of their production was meant for on-farm consumption. Secondly, their rent burden did not increase with the fall in agricultural prices, because most of them partly or wholly operated on sharecropping *(batai)* terms.[16] But even a small cultivator had to sell a part of his produce to meet certain cash needs—revenue for owned land, water rates, debt servicing and cash rent to the extent (about 10 per cent) of the total cultivated area that was held on cash terms. At a time when these cash needs became more burdensome, cash credit

was drastically in short supply. This is obvious because: (*a*) professional and agriculturalist moneylenders were finding it extremely difficult to recover the money they had lent earlier during the years of rising prices; (*b*) the slump in prices meant that many agriculturalists who earlier had a loanable surplus were no longer in a position to help their clients; and (*c*) those among the agriculturalists who had a surplus over current expenses and the professional moneylenders were now extremely careful about advancing fresh loans.[17] The same could not have been true as far as lending in kind was concerned, but this did not solve the problem of the contraction of cash credit. Thus, overall the small and marginal cultivators had no ground to abstain from trying to increase their marketable surplus and thus expand total production. It is also necessary to emphasise that the same tendency was strengthened by yet another consideration—family labour had no opportunity cost. The response of the medium farmers was similar, because though they were not usually in debt to the moneylenders their cash needs were greater. Moreover, they also did not have non-agricultural employment opportunities.

The rich peasants and big farmers sold the larger part of their produce (or almost the whole of it) in the market, and primarily or almost wholly depended on hired labour. This group was not normally in debt to the moneylenders. On the other hand, they had themselves lent money to the other groups. At first sight it would appear that these operators would be able to scale down their total agricultural production in the face of falling prices. But several considerations precluded the possibility of such a response. First for many years in the past, especially the period of rising prices mentioned in the foregoing pages, these operators had become used to a lifestyle which involved greater cash expenditure for goods and services of non-agricultural origin. But prices of industrial goods and other items of purchase did not decline as much as agricultural prices did. The rich peasants and big farmers were at a disadvantage also in the sense that at a time when their cash needs greatly increased in real terms, their borrowers were finding it extremely difficult to repay their cash loans. Second, land had no alternative use, and whether cultivated or not the revenue demand of the government had to be met. Thus, the surplus farmers and big landowners/grantees

who had a larger involvement with the market (both as buyers and sellers) were under even greater pressure to increase rather than to reduce production. It is important to mention here that in many cases hired labour was paid in kind, and to that extent the cost of production did not increase. Moreover, though initially cash wages did not decline as much as prices did, they must have declined more steeply as the Depression continued. Again, in all probability family labour which had earlier been withdrawn from agricultural operations now partly substituted wage labour.

Thus, the sown area tended to expand in the face of falling prices because all groups of farmers felt the need to increase production. This is by no means to suggest that in this way they were able to neutralise the impact of the slump in prices. It is worth mentioning here that the Depression years witnessed large-scale 'distress sales' of gold, worth at least Rs. 50 crores from October 1931 to June 1934.[18] Thus, there was clearly an urgent need for cash. Such a situation naturally did not leave any scope for reduction of agricultural production.

With regard to the trends in canal irrigation, one would expect that a reduced area would have been irrigated during the Depression years, because this would have enabled the cultivators to reduce their cash expenditure. In other words, even if the cultivators had to expand their total sown area, dependence on canal water should logically now have been much less. But there are several reasons why this did not happen. First, in many parts of the province, especially the tracts where perennial canals were constructed, agricultural operations were not possible without canal water if weather conditions were not exceptionally favourable. Needless to mention, in such cases water rates were in the nature of a fixed cost. Second, crop yield per acre was much higher in irrigated land, and this yield was also more secure in the sense that crop failure rate was much lower, whereas price charged (per acre) for canal water was moderate, thus implying that a large part of the enhanced yield due to canal irrigation accrued to the irrigators. In the past this incentive had led to a vast expansion in canal irrigation on virgin lands and (cultivated) land served by other sources of irrigation (especially wells). Just as the landowners were under pressure to increase production in the same way they were under pressure to continue to irrigate

their land. It may be mentioned here that even during the Depression years water rates collected by the government did not account for more than 10 to 15 per cent of the total value of crops grown.[19] One may ask in this connection: Why then did well irrigation expand faster than irrigation from public canals (Table 2)? One factor behind this development was the improvement effected by the government in the method of lifting water from wells. Moreover, it is possible that as agricultural prices were low a section of the small and medium cultivators who had sufficient family labour and bullock power fell back on their unused wells in order to reduce their 'paid-out' cost of production. Earlier, canal irrigation was found more cost-effective and this led to the replacement by canal irrigation of a considerable part of the well irrigated lands of the province. The trend was now reversed in as much as wherever possible greater reliance was placed on well irrigation by a section of the cultivators. Such a tendency must have been particularly strong in areas where abiana (water rates) accounted for a large part of the value of produce. This latter possibility is suggested by the fact that though all the canal tracts were not equally suitable (in ecological terms) for every crop, uniform water rates were introduced by the government from 1924–25.

The task of explaining the changes in the crop-mix will be a more difficult one. However, some possible lines of investigation may be suggested. To begin with, let us take a look at Baker's analysis of the experience in Madras agriculture. He mentions that 'the overall acreage under commercial crops did not decline after 1930 [but]' he continues, 'the changing pattern of demand dictated a transfer of acreage from crops that were relatively cheap to produce, such as groundnut and local cotton, to crops that required more expensive inputs, such as good quality cotton, sugar, spices, fruits and vegetables.[20] But this contention is inconsistent with his other comments. First, in the preceding paragraph he asserts:

> The immediate effect of the depression was to inhibit the flow of credit within the village with the result that there was a definite drop in the acreage under cultivation in the plains in the three years after 1928–29. The commercial crops suffered most.

But obviously, the area under commercial crops could not have, at the same time, remained stable and declined. Second, if, as he explains in detail,[21] credit was so important in agricultural production in general and cash crop cultivation in particular and it had drastically contracted during the Depression years, Baker has to explain how the cultivators could switch to the more expensive crops. Third, if he is of the opinion that the cultivators then preferred crops which required more expensive inputs, how does it fit in with his other assertion that as a result of the pressures of the Depression 'the *mirasidars* cut down their outlay on cultivation'?[22] Thus, it does not seem that Baker has any really coherent views on the subject of changes in the cropping patterns during the Depression years. Baker starts off by saying that he does not intend to enter into the controversies ('academic minefield') about the origins of the Depression but that he would 'view the event from the paddyfields of Asia rather than from the pavements of Wall Street'.[23] The need for such an approach is not in question, but his understanding of the problem is flawed by gross inconsistencies.

To turn to the factors behind the observed changes in crop-mix in the Punjab, the upward trend in sugarcane cultivation was clearly due to the fact that, following the grant of tariff protection in 1932, the number of sugar factories increased from 7 to 32 within a year.[24] Incidentally, the increase in output must have been more marked because the area under new varieties of seedlings was expanding at this time. With regard to cotton, the decline during the first four years of the Depression (1929–32) was entirely due to the contraction of area under the American variety (4F). Cultivation of American long-staple cotton declined even though the irrigated tracts of the province were eminently suitable for it, and the fall in price was not more marked than in *desi* (indigenous) cotton. Incidentally, though this new variety did not so much produce higher yield per acre, the quality of the produce was far superior, and consequently it fetched a higher price. Prices of both the desi and American varieties improved from 1934–35, and consequently cotton acreage picked up. It is also possible that, as mentioned earlier, wages of hired labour now declined more or less proportionately. In this connection we should also recall that water rates for all crops were reduced by about one-fifth from 1933–34.

Ulyanovsky has taken the drop in wheat cultivation as proof of his generalisation that the area under crops (rice, wheat, jute, cotton) declined sharply in regions of their monoculture. He has argued that in the 'regions of monoculture production of output that could not be sold in the world market, the direct producers were forced to introduce other crops, mostly food products that would at best partly ensure him against hunger and death'.[25] His analysis is defective on several counts. For example, he does not explain why wheat production could not 'ensure him against hunger and death.' What is, however, most relevant in the present context is that though wheat acreage declined, production must have increased in the province, because there was a considerable expansion of the area sown with high-yielding varieties. As mentioned earlier, we do not know to what extent yield rates improved, but there must have been some improvement. The fact that the decline in the acreage under this crop did not continue for long was due to the fact that after declining considerably, wheat prices began to improve. This was due to three developments. First, wheat prices were not affected by the drop in exports, because India hardly exported any wheat at this time. Wheat prices slumped because Australian wheat reached the big Indian port cities much more cheaply by sea than upcountry wheat. Some idea about the magnitude of the problem may be had from the fact that while the cost of transporting a maund of Punjabi wheat to Karachi by railway and from there to Bombay by sea amounted 15 annas and 8 paisa, the cost of delivery of Australian wheat to Indian ports amounted to no more than 8 annas.[26] Discontent among Punjabi landowners was particularly a matter of concern to the British government, and accordingly it took the unprecedented step of imposing a protective duty on wheat. Second, abandonment of the gold standard by Britain resulted in a devaluation of the rupee (via the pound) by about 25 per cent.[27] Third, from 1933–34 abiana for wheat acreage was reduced by about one-fifth.

Among the other crops, there was a marked expansion in area sown with bajra during 1929–32. This was because the fall in prices was less marked during these years. The same was true with regard to the area under oilseeds. Bajra cultivation declined during 1933–36, but the area under gram expanded in the same

period by about one-fifth. Part of the explanation seems to lie in the fact that the fall in gram prices was now relatively less marked.

To summarise the discussion so far, the total sown area as well as production increased during the Depression period. Among the individual crops, the area under wheat and cotton declined during the first four years (1929–32) but increased during the next four. The pattern was just the opposite in the case of bajra and oilseeds.

LAND TRANSFER

The question of land transfer—its magnitude, direction, impact on agrarian social order, prices per unit of land sold or mortgaged—drew much attention from the contemporary observers of the agricultural scene of the province, and the colonial government even passed protective legislation (Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1901) to prevent the sale of land from the agriculturalists to the members of the 'non-agricultural tribes'. This legislation, in turn, led to new controversies with regard to its impact on the supply of agricultural credit, the rise of a class of agriculturalist moneylenders and the extent of *benami* transactions by the professional moneylenders to acquire land from agriculturalists. Meanwhile, the appreciation in land prices, which did not appear to be matched by either improvement in productivity or increase in rental value, continued to receive attention from public leaders as well as members of the colonial bureaucracy. Data available from different sources enable us to have some idea about the impact of the Depression on the land market both at the provincial and district levels. In this paper we propose to highlight the main features of this impact at the all-Punjab level.

The area sold had remained more or less stable till 1928–29, and this trend continued during the Depression years (Table 4). It is true that the first few years witnessed a certain decline in permanent alienation, but this was more than neutralised by the increase during 1933–34 to 1936–37. Thus, even though there was a severe credit contraction and the burden of cash needs greatly increased with the slump in agricultural prices, land sales in the Punjab did not register an upward trend. The

pattern is different as regards prices. Land prices had been fast increasing from the late nineteenth century. Though this trend was not reversed during the Depression years, the rate of appreciation now slowed down. This was in sharp contrast to the experience in the auction market in the colony districts where land prices suffered a marked downturn. The experience in the area of land mortgage was similar—the area mortgaged annually during the eight years of the Depression remained at about the level of the corresponding period immediately before it. But the adverse impact of the Depression was felt in two areas. First, mortgaged value per acre now declined by more than one-fourth (28 per cent). Second, the disparity between the cultivated area mortgaged and redeemed in a year became more marked during this period. The result of such a trend is obvious—an increase in the accumulated area under usufructuary mortgage in the province by about 800,000 acres (Table 4).[28] Like the 'distress sales' of gold, this pattern in the field of land mortgage (i.e., continued practice of mortgaging land even though price fetched per acre and the prospect of immediate redemption was much less) leaves no doubt about the tendency of the Punjab landowners to resist permanent alienation of land even under the most difficult circumstances.

What was the impact of the slump in agricultural prices on the relative performance of the 'agriculturalists' and 'non-agriculturalists' (as defined under the Land Alienation Act) in the land market? The share of the latter group was declining during the first two decades or so after the implementation of the protective legislation. The trend was reversed during the 1920s. As the Depression set in, the share of non-agriculturalists in both purchase and mortgage further increased.[29] In other words, as a result of the sharp cut in their cash earnings the agriculturalists lost further ground in the land market. One might argue that the share of the professional moneylenders in land purchase was actually higher than indicated by the officially published data, because benami transactions by them could now have been more frequent. But it would be risky to guess whether the provisions of the protective legislation were contravened more during the Depression than in the earlier years.

A brief reference to yet another aspect of the impact of the

Table 4
Statistics on Land Transfer

Years	*Area sold*	*Price*	*Percentage sold to*		*Total Area mortgaged*	*Value*	*Cultivated area redeemed*	*Percentage mortgaged to*		*Area under usufructuary mortgage*
	(thousand acres)	*(Rs per acre)*	*Agricul-turalists*	*Others*	*(thousand acres)*	*(Rs*)*	*(per cent)*	*Agricul-turalists*	*Others*	*(thousand acres)*
1901–5	228	47	65	35	231	60	100	70	30	3,358
1906–10	217	64	82	18	290	83	130	75	25	3,300
1911–15	237	97	91	09	314	86	110	76	24	3,238
1916–20	209	156	89	11	356	120	119	81	19	3,131
1921–24	211	225	88	12	339	129	84	78	22	2,916
1925 28	226	258	81	19	361	122	68	76	24	3,087
1929–32	190	262	79	21	373	100	45	70	30	3,470
1933–36	219	262	77	23	378	80	52	62	38	3,885

Source: *Punjab Land Revenue Administration Report* (annual), Statement XXVI.
Note: * Mortgage money per rupee of revenue of area mortgaged.

Depression will be in order. Data generated by the Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry indicate that families which owned 50 acres or more increased their share of the total cultivated area of the province by more than 10 per cent between 1924 and 1939. It would then appear that the Depression gave a powerful stimulus to a greater concentration of land ownership among the members of the upper stratum of the rural society (i.e., the upper section of the rich peasantry, landlords/large grantees and professional moneylenders). We find it difficult to believe that these families acquired as much additional land as the data would indicate. For an increase of about 13 per cent in their share would mean that they purchased all the land sold between 1924 and 1929. This is highly unlikely.[30] But the validity of the underlying trend is not in doubt. Nor is the explanation far to seek. As land prices remained virtually unchanged in the face of a 50 per cent cut in agricultural prices the richer families were now in the most advantageous position to dominate the transfer market. In other words, though other social groups were also purchasing land, it was only the members of the upper stratum of the society who gained most in net terms. Incidentally, there are grounds to believe that these groups had been increasing their share of the total cultivated land of the province since the late nineteenth century when the government launched the canal construction and colonisation programme. For, though the peasant grants (normally of a maximum of 50 acres) accounted for more than half the colony lands, the holdings of a small group of grantees and auction purchasers were much larger in size, sometimes of several thousand acres.[31]

The fact that land-ownership became more concentrated at the top of the social hierarchy (i.e., merchant moneylenders and the upper section among the agriculturists increased their share of the total mortgaged land) had significant implications for the agrarian social structure of the province. For these developments accelerated yet another trend that had set in much earlier—expansion of the area cultivated by subtenants. Thus, whereas the area operated by them increased by 3.4 million acres between 1901–1902 and 1931–32, during the next five years the increase was of the order of 0.9 million acres. In the earlier period the primary factor behind the increase in the incidence of tenancy was the extension

of cultivation in the canal tracts. For, instead of launching la scale farming on capitalist lines, the grantees and auction purcha leased out the entire or larger part of their holdings to subtenan mostly on batai or sharecropping terms. It is true that sale a mortgage were also a contributory factor in this respect, especial in the older districts. For, as is well-known, the profession moneylenders and the landlords or surplus farmers who acquir additional land through purchase or on mortgage often resort to the same practice (of employing subtenants). But this w of secondary importance as a factor behind the high inciden of tenancy. However, the pattern changed during the Depressio period in the sense that sale and mortgage of land to these grou became the more important reason. This is obvious because thoug the tenant-cultivated area increased by 0.8 million acres, can irrigation expanded only marginally.

To summarise the main points, commercial farming did nc suffer a serious setback as prices slumped. For the total are as well as the area under cash crops remained more or less inelasti during the eight years from 1929–30 to 1936–37. Thus, onc the cultivators were drawn into the orbit of market-oriente production, several considerations precluded their return t subsistence farming. Second, relative inelasticity in crop acreage despite a severe contraction in cash credit, suggests that this kind of credit did not play the critical role which is normally attributed to it in agricultural production in general and its commercialisation in particular. Third, the Depression witnessed a marked increase in land mortgage with a fall in mortgage value. But there was no increase in the permanent alienation of land nor a decline in land prices. Fourth, as families who were not self-cultivators acquired more land through direct purchase and mortgage, the Depression may be said to have expanded the area cultivated by subtenants mostly on batai terms. Finally, while the industrial sector expanded during the Depression years, the continuing trade in agricultural produce and transactions in the land market render it highly unlikely that significant resources were being transferred to the urban sectors. Unlike elsewhere in India, the Depression thus changed very little in Punjabi agriculture, except for accelerating, or for that matter retarding, developments which were already under way.

Notes

1. Cited by C.J. Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy, 1880–1955: The Tamilnad Countryside* (OUP, 1984), 40.
2. Ibid., 115–27, 164–68, 185–90, 249–53, 262–65, 296–302 and 437–46; Dietmar Rothermund, *An Economic History of India* (New York, 1988), Ch.8;*India in the Great Depression, 1929–39* (New Delhi, 1992), Chs.4 and 6; and *The Indian Economy Under the British Rule* (New Delhi, 1983), Part 3; Neil Charlesworth, 'The Impact of the Interwar Depression on Agriculture in the Bombay Presidency: A Case of Further Arrested Development?', in C.J.Dewey (ed.), *Arrested Development in India: The Historical Dimension* (New Delhi, 1988); B.R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914–47* (London, 1979).
3. George Blyn, *Agricultural Trends in India, 1891–1947: Output Availability and Productivity* (Philadelphia, 1966).
4. For details see, among others, Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885–1947* (New Delhi, 1989).
5. *Report on the Internal Trade of the Punjab by Rail and River* (annual). Wheat exports accounted for about three-tenths of the average annual production of wheat during the first two decades of the current century: For details see H. Colvert, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab* (Lahore, 1922), 156.
6. In 1938–39 about half of the wheat area and 64 per cent of the area under sugarcane and in 1945 70 per cent of cotton acerage were sown with improved varieties: *Report on the Operations of the Department of Agriculture, Punjab* (annual).
7. Estimated size of debt increased from 90 crores of rupees in 1921 to 141 crores in 1930: M.L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* (4th edn., Bombay, 1947), 16.
8. V.G. Panse, *Report on the Scheme for the Improvement of Agricultural Statistics* (Simla, 1946), 14.
9. M.M. Islam, 'Trends in Crop Production in the Undivided Punjab' in Dewey (ed.), *Arrested Development in India.*
10. Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy,* 117–18.
11. From 33 per cent in 1887–96 to 44 per cent in the decade 1916–26.
12. Rothermund, *India in the Great Depression,* 20.
13. *Report of the Abiana Committee* (Lahore, 1934), 26.
14. This is assumed on the basis of the proportion (60 per cent of wheat production retained in the villages: *Report on the Marketing of Wheat in India,* (Bombay, 1947), 16.
15. The farmers who cultivated a maximum of 10 acres may be regarded as small. On the other hand, those who operated 25 acres and above may be regarded as rich or surplus farmers. These two groups operated respectively 21 and 27 per cent of the total cropped area of the province: For details see Mridula Mukherjee, 'Commercialisation and Agrarian change in Pre-Independence Punjab', in K.N. Raj et al. (eds.), *Essays on the Commercialisation of Indian Agriculture* (New Delhi, 1985).

16. Sharecroppers cultivated 36 per cent of the total agricultural land of the province during the quinquennium ending 1931–32.
17. M.L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab village* (London, 1934), 319.
18. Total export of gold from India during this time was worth 200 crores of rupees: For details see ibid., 21.
19. This is indicated by a comparison of the total abiana paid by the irrigators and the value of gross produce in the irrigated tracts of the province: The relevant data are available from the *Annual Administration Report,* Punjab Public Works Department, Irrigation Branch, various years.
20. Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy,* 164–65.
21. Ibid., 164.
22. Ibid., 188.
23. Ibid., 116.
24. B.S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab, 1901–1939* (New Delhi, 1975), 268.
25. R. Ulyanovsky, *Agrarian India Between the World Wars* (Progress Publishers, 1981), 185.
26. Ibid., 216.
27. Rothermund, *India in the Great Depression.*
28. Area under usufructuary mortgage was actually higher than indicated by these data. For, while the statistics on transfer were recorded every year, the area encumbered with usufructuary mortgage was attested every fourth year. As the quadrennial attestation of villages took place in rating, the total area under mortgage for the whole province represents the actual state of affairs of one-quarter of the villages in the country, the statistics of the remaining three-quarters of estates being taken from the results of quadrennial attestations held in the previous years: *Report of the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab for the Agricultural Year* (hereafter *Punjab Land Revenue Administration Report), 1930–31,* p.12.
29. For details of this evidence, see ibid., various years.
30. Naved Hamid and Mridula Mukherjee, who argue that a class of big landlords was emerging in the Punjab under British rule, completely miss this point: For details of their views see Naved Hamid, 'Dispossession and Differentiation of the Peasantry in the Punjab During Colonial Rule', *Journal of Peasant Studies,* 10 (1982); and Mukherjee, Commercialisation and Agrarian Change'.
31. For details see Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism,* Chs. 2, 7 and 3.

Persian Sikh Scripture: The Ghazals of Bhā'ī Nand La'l Goyā

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This is an essay concerning the virtually unexamined Persian ghazals of the late seventeenth century Sikh poet, Bhā'ī Nand La'l Goyā. Specifically, I intend to analyse the third ghazal in the poet's *Dīvān* and compare this with the first ghazal of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfeẓ to which Goyā's poem alludes. Such allusion allows Nand La'l to demonstrate his contention that the Sikh path is the only one along which seekers of the Truth should travel. It is this purpose which informs the entire text. To Goyā, Ṣūfīs are bound to remain strapped to the wheel of existence, forever coming and going.

I

Although part of Sikh canonical literature, *bāṇī*, the poetry of Nand La'l Goyā is little known to many of those who today profess an allegiance to the teachings of the 10 Sikh gurūs. Approved for recitation within the gurdwara, these works are seldom if ever recited. Language may be identified as the principal reason for this ignorance. The authentic works of Nand La'l are all in Persian, a factor which has restricted their circulation to a very small, educated group. There is, moreover, virtually no scholarly literature available on the subject. Of course there are Punjabi translations, but such works suffer from serious flaws.[1] These often read more Sikh understanding into the poetry than the text itself permits, and are altogether ignorant of the rhetorical

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and prosodical features of the Persian ghazal. The taste of the original, a *masala* recipe if you will, with a spicy mixture of ingenious puns, double-entendres, assonance, and fantastic aetiology, is thus lost. This paper, if I may continue the metaphor, will focus mainly on the meat itself, the ideas articulated by the poetry. Like a true Indo–Persian dish, however, the spices are absolutely essential, and will be added wherever necessary.

Specifically, I intend to analyse the third ghazal in the *Dīvān* of Nand La'l and compare this with the first ghazal of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfeẓ to which Goyā's poem alludes. In this particular case, such allusion allows Nand La'l to demonstrate his contention that the Sikh path is the only one along which seekers of the Truth should travel. It is this purpose — to offer Sikhism as an alternative to Islam — which informs the entire text. To him, Ṣufīs are bound to remain strapped to the wheel of existence, forever coming and going. The assumption that Nand Lal's style is an open one with which the followers of many traditions could easily identify is therefore not borne out by a close scrutiny of his Persian ghazals.[2]

II

In describing the particular way in which a Sikh religious ceremony is conducted, the modern Sikh 'code of conduct', *Sikh Rahit Maryādā*, under the section headed *kīrtan*, the congregational singing of hymns, states:

> *saṅgat vic kīrtan keval gurbāṇī jāṁ is dī viākhiā-sarūp racnā bhāī*
> *gurdās jī te bhāī nand lāl jī dī bāṇī dā ho sakdā hai.*[3]
> Within the community of believers only the utterances of the Gurūs (as found in the Ādi Granth and in portions of the book of the tenth Gurū, the Dasam Granth,) or the commentaries of Bhāī Gurdās, (the *Vārān Bhāī Gurdās,*) and Bhāī Nand Lāl, (the *Dīvān-i Goyā,*) may be sung as *kīrtan.*

Here the *Dīvān* of Nand La'l Goyā is, in effect, placed on an equal footing with the writings of the Gurūs, giving it canonical status. One should not, however, exaggerate its significance.

The *Sikh Rahit Maryādā* refers to the Nand La'l collection of poems as 'commentaries' (*viākhiā-sarūp*) because, like the ballads of Gurdās Bhallā, they provide no significant additions to Sikh theology. The *Dīvān* elucidates Sikh theology commensurate with the Ādi Granth, but in a genre and a language that was not traditionally Sikh, but rather typically Ṣūfī—the Persian mystical ghazal.

Unfortunately, a great deal of legend has attached itself to the figure of Nand La'l, so much so that a true picture of the historical man has become a very difficult thing to reconstruct. This difficulty is compounded by the complete lack of references to Nand La'l outside of traditional Sikh sources. Contemporary Indo–Persian accounts of the Sikhs, *tazkireh* (biographical notes on contemporary poets), court documents, all are silent. Even the prose writings of Goyā himself say very little about his personal life.[4]

According to Sikh tradition, however, Nand La'l was born a Hindu Khatri in 1633 in Ghazna, Afghanistan where he was educated according to the curriculum of the period, a curriculum in which both the Persian and Arabic languages, the Qur'ān, the Hādīth, and works on mysticism such as Hujwirī's *Kashfu'l-mahjūb* and Rumī's *Mathnavī-ye Ma'navī* were stressed. After his father's death in 1652 he left for Multan where he became a court munshī. Here he married a Sikh woman, and took a keen interest in her faith, eventually becoming an adherent. From 1678–79 he was in the employ of the future Mughal emperor Bahādur Shāh, after which he joined the retinue of the tenth Gurū. He left for Multan after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh, and died there in 1712. While with the Gurū, he became the chief poet in the *majlis*, 'an assembly or court', composing ghazals, *rubā'īyāt*, *abyāt*, and all other standard forms of Indo–Persian poetry.[5]

Since the eleventh century with the writing of Hujwirī Dātā Ganjbakhsh's handbook on Ṣūfī mysticism, the *Kashfu'l-mahjūb* in Lahore, India had been home to numerous Ṣūfī orders. Ṣūfī modes of thought and worship were so appealing to Hindus that many, either directly or indirectly, were converted to Islam. The majority of Muslims did not understand the theological formulations of Islam. Desiring a more emotional religion they

naturally turned to the Ṣūfīs who presented God as *yār*, 'the Friend', and as *ma'shūq*, 'the Beloved', rather than the incomprehensible, abstract entity of the theologians. Although not a direct influence on the thought of Gurū Nānak, Sufism did marginally contribute to the sant tradition of northern India from which the first gurū drew much of his theology.[6]

By the time that Nand La'l's association with the Sikh faith commenced, the Sikh religion had already flourished for approximately 200 years. It seems likely that the interest of a Perso–Arabic-trained munshī like Nand La'l would have been in the textual tradition of the scripture, not in the popular Sikh tradition of urban and rural Punjabis,[7] for the former presented the undiluted essence of the Sikh faith. Sikh tradition acknowledges this fact, for Nand La'l's name is prefixed with the term *bhāī*, an honorific for those who demonstrated a capacity to interpret the Ādi Granth and communicate the wisdom of the gurūs, and were publicly recognised for their piety.[8] The interests which dominate Goyā's ghazals, moreover, are very reminiscent of those permeating the sacred Sikh scripture, particularly the repeated emphasis laid upon the infallibility of the remembrance of the Divine Name as the sure means to liberation.

Although the *Dīvān* itself attests to the Sikh tradition to which Goyā subscribed, it does not attest to the socio-political environment in which Goyā wrote. Tradition holds that Nand La'l lived during one of the more prolific periods of Sikh history. Although the faith began peacefully under the direction of Gurū Nānak (b. 1469)— whose teachings in the vernacular appealed to many Punjabis, particularly peasants because of his emphasis upon the dignity of honest labour, equality and internal devotion— by the time of the fifth Sikh Gurū, Arjan, the Panth (literally, 'path') had come under threat — a threat which, according to tradition, became manifest in the death of Arjan while in Mughal custody. Tradition continues that this event was interpreted by Sikhs as a martyrdom and that it led Arjan's son, Hargobind, to initiate the conversion of Gurū Nānak's Panth into a militant community.[9] It was in Gurū Hargobind's time that Nand La'l was born.

Nand La'l's period witnessed increasing hostility between the Sikhs and Aurangzeb's Mughal government; the execution of

the ninth Sikh Gurū by that government in 1675; the subsequent gurūship of Gurū Gobind Singh; and the establishment of the militant Khālsā brotherhood by the tenth gurū in 1699. Nevertheless, these events do not figure in Goyā's ghazals. When the rare reference to Goyā's context occurs in the *Dīvān* the main concern is with the present cosmic age, the Kaliyug, the era of ultimate degeneracy in the cosmic cycle, not with the contemporary conditions of late seventeenth century northern India. The message here is religious not political; the issue is to highlight the fate of righteous.[10]

It is the ghazals in this *Dīvān* with which we are concerned.[11] In its form, the ghazal is a short poem of a dozen or so *baits* ('couplets'). It maintains a strict formal unity; the metre must be uniform throughout, it must have the same end rhyme (*qāfiyeh*) throughout. The observation of such injunctions is meant not only to demonstrate the poet's skill, but to highlight the musicality of the verse, a significant element when one recalls that ghazals were often recited or sung. The poet's dexterity is also shown in the way he manipulates the time-honoured rhetorical conventions of the ghazal, such as the harmony of images (*tanāsub*); the beautiful attribution of cause (*ḥosn-i ta'līl*); puns (*tajnīs*), particularly the perfect pun (*tajnīs-i-tāmm*); and amphibology (*īhām*). Often, the last bait includes the *takhalluṣ*, 'the sobriquet of the writer.' In this final bait the author may praise his own poetic skill, express his state of mind, or long for mystical union with God. The genre demands that each bait be a self-contained unit which may be detached and quoted, since it contains the expression of a complete idea. A ghazal is, therefore, primarily a collection of baits, and for this reason the poem cannot, in many cases, be said to possess any thematic unity.[12] Where the first bait may criticise external observances, the next may speak of love, the third may long for wine, and the fourth may lament separation from a beloved object. Since the bait is self-sufficient each word may contain any number of meanings, making it allusive in the extreme, assuming the reader's complete familiarity with any allusions to the Qu'rān, the Ḥadīth, to the poetry of other poets (Persian, Central Asian and Indian) and to Islamic lore.[13]

Such allusions would have easily been inferred by the late

seventeenth century north Indian audience for which Nand La'l wrote. The educated in this period, regardless of the particular religion to which they adhered, were reared in Perso–Islamic culture. As the official language of the Mughal court was Persian, it was only natural that those who sought to benefit economically or socially from it would learn the language, as well as the culture for which the language was a vehicle. Though many did indeed imbibe the culture, they did not necessarily follow the faith of their rulers. Many Hindu court scribes, for example, wrote in Persian, yet retained their faith and identity.[14]

An examination of the *Dīvān-i Goyā* demonstrates that the same held true for Nand La'l. Although individual ghazals may lead one to believe that Nand La'l adhered to Ṣūfī ideas and interpretations, the *Dīvān* as a whole clearly demonstrates his Sikh bias. Specific terms that recur throughout the *Dīvān* point to an interpretation which differs from that of the Ṣūfī mystical poets. Thus, while the terminology is generally Ṣūfī, the concepts are undeniably Sikh. Terms such as *sālik* ('traveller' [along the mystical path]), *gharīb* ('stranger'), *rind* ('rogue'), *gadā* ('beggar'), and *mardān-i ḥaqq* ('the men of God') that are used to characterise Muslim Ṣūfīs, for example, are used to characterise those whom Nand La'l considers Ṣūfī, the *gursikhs*, the Sikhs of the Gurū. At times the concepts behind the terminology are, in fact, Muslim. But when this occurs, the term is turned around, acquiring a derisive meaning from the Sikh point of view. The ghazals, in other words, have a cumulative effect.

Of course, it is only natural to assume that Nand La'l was strongly allied to the Ṣūfī tradition, since many elements in the thought of the Sikh Gurūs which the poet attempts to emphasise have affinities with Ṣūfī concepts.[15] In their work, an emphasis is found upon remembering and repeating the name of God (*zikr*), the unity of God (*tauḥīd*), a revelation in creation, the transcendence and immanence of God, expressions of God in terms of light, a human organ which requires purification (*dil*), a doctrine of grace, a stress on the pain involved in separation from the Beloved, an ascent to union through a series of stages (*maqāmat*), a cleansing of self and an ultimate union with the Divine (*fanā*). Ṣūfī symbolism thus easily accommodates Sikh ideas. But when Nand La'l uses these, it is to the Sikh concept that he alludes.

There is, moreover, the fact that in some fundamental respects Nand La'l's poetry is in direct conflict with that of the Ṣūfīs. The most obvious example of this is his acceptance of the doctrine of karam (Sanskrit: karma).[16]

III

To illustrate the above we will examine the third ghazal in the *Dīvān-i Goyā* which imitates and comments upon the above-mentioned ghazal of Ḥāfeẓ.[17] It should be noted that for Nand La'l, commentary on Ḥāfeẓ's ghazal is, at the same time, a commentary on sūfism since in India the Persian poet was considered a representative of the Ṣūfī path.[18] Nand La'l here responds to what he considers the pessimistic view of human life expressed by Ḥāfeẓ and offers solutions from the Sikh perspective. Although scholars have stressed the difficulty in interpreting Ḥāfeẓ our concern here is with Nand La'l's interpretation of his poetry alone.[19]

Let us begin with the first bait of their respective ghazals.

Ḥāfeẓ	Goyā
alā yā ayyohā al-sāqī ader ka'san va navel hā//keh 'ashq āsān namūd avval valī āftād moshkilhā	*bedeh sāqī marā yak jām-i jān rangīnī-ye delhā//bechashm-i pāk bīn āsān konam īn jomleh moshkilhā*
O cup-bearer, quickly bring the vessel, fill it and pass it around the ring.// First it appeared that love was easy, but afterwards problems (moshkil) arose. (1:1)	O cup-bearer, give me a goblet of the soul- /life-giving goblet [of wine] (jām-i jān) which gives colour to hearts,//so that with a clear sighted eye I may solve all these problems (moshkil). (3:1)

To listeners with a thorough understanding of the conventions of Persian mystical poetry, Nand La'l's bait is straightforward and coherent: the difficulties of life can be easily solved with the cup of the wine of divine intoxication. Ṣūfīs could thus easily understand such a couplet. As noted above, however, this bait may be interpreted in ways that would not provide a representative

statement of Nand La'l's *Dīvān*. The term *jām-i jān*, for example, which appears in the first *meṣrā'* (hemistich), seems to allude to the common Ṣūfī symbol for enlightenment, the wine in the legendary, all-seeing goblet of Jamshed.[20] It is particularly open to misunderstanding.

There are a number of baits in the *Dīvān* which on the surface allude to the intoxicating Ṣūfī draught, positing wine as the key to true mystical insight.

sāqiyā barkhez o hān por kon āyāgh // tā za nosh-i ū konam rangīn dimāgh
O cup-bearer! Come and fill the cup // so that I can redden my palate with its drink. (47:1)

beyā āy sāqī-ye rangīn za mai por kon āyāgh īnjā // nasheh-'i la'l-i mai gūnat za haqq bakhshad sarāgh īnjā
Come here, O rosy cup-bearer, and fill our goblet with wine // [for] the intoxication of your wine-coloured ruby[21] lips offers the cup of Truth here. (4:1)

There are other baits, however, which show that for Nand La'l the effects of this 'Ṣūfī wine' are certainly not enlightening. The bait which follows the latter couplet cited directly above, for example, highlights the impotence of this wine.

ānāl-ḥaqq az lab-i manṣur garchūn shisheh qolqol kard // neh keh ārad tāb īn ṣahbā kojā jām-i dimāgh īnjā
[Even] if the 'I am the Truth' gurgles from the lips of Manṣur [al-Hallāj] like the [wine] bottle, // it is not because this wine brings *tāb* (burning). What place does the cup of intoxication have here? (4:2)

The blood coming out of the throat of the famous Ṣūfī martyr, Manṣur al-Ḥallāj, is here likened to the wine bottle.[22] In another bait the wine is something to be altogether avoided.

goyā za nageh yār keh makhmūr gasht īm // kī khāhash sharāb por ashrār mīkonīm
O Goyā! Since we became intoxicted from seeing the Friend,// how can we desire the sin-inciting wine? (59:5)

To Sikhs there is no doubt that the wine to which Nand La'l refers in 4:2 and 59:5 above is that of Ṣūfī intoxication. When the reference is, however, a positive one (4:1, for example), the goblet is filled with the Sikh 'wine' which destroys duality. The allusion to Sikh wine is stronger in the following bait.

mudām bādeh kash o ṣūfī-ye ṣafā mībāsh // tamām-i zuhd show o rind bīnava mībash
Always drink wine and be a pure Ṣūfī. // Wash asceticism away completely and become a helpless ruffian (*rind*). (40:1)

The wine here is clearly not Ṣūfī since drinking it produces someone who, in fact, transcends the Ṣūfī, a 'pure' Ṣūfī.[23] For Sikhs this is the wine described in the compositions attributed to Mardānā, the Muslim minstrel (*ḍūm*) who is believed to have accompanied Gurū Nānak on his travels. These compositions use the particular Punjabi process of distilling wine as a metaphor for making divine wine. His third *ślok* describes this wine:

kāṁyāṁ lāhaṇi āpu madu amrit tis kī dhār. satsaṅgati siu melāpu hoi liv kaṭorī amrit bharī pī pī kaṭahi bikār.[24]
Make the body the still and your 'self' the wine whose unbroken stream is the divine nectar. Join with the true *saṅgat* (the company of believers) and drink cupfuls of this wine which will destroy all sins.

Nand La'l has no need for Ṣūfī wine. For him, as we have seen, it is impotent. Just as worthless for Goyā is the Ṣūfī path to which Ḥāfeẓ alludes. The second meṣrā' of Ḥāfeẓ's bait is typically Ṣūfī, emphasising the difficulty and the suffering involved in traversing what Jalāl-ud dīn Rumī calls 'the way filled with blood.'[25] On this path the first step was taken on the *rūz-i alast*, the day of the pre-eternal covenant. According to Sura 7:171, when Allāh pulled humanity from the loins of the yet-to-be created Adam and asked them *alastu bi-rabbikum*, 'Am I not your Lord?' they answered *balā shahidnā*, 'Yes! we witness it.' From the time of Sanā'ī (d. 1131) this *balā* (بلیٰ) 'yes' was interpreted as *bala* (بلا) 'affliction' and thus on the 'day of alast' humanity willingly agreed to tread the path of love filled with sorrow,

grief and affliction, and to bear every calamity that God would bring down on them during their lives to test their love and devotion. Only when the heart was destroyed was one prepared for higher spiritual life.[26] As Nand La'l makes clear in his allusion to Ḥāfeẓ such difficulties are easily dispelled along the path to which he refers. This is a path altogether different from that of the Ṣūfīs, as the following bait illustrates through īhām, ambiguity:

gar za rāh-i shauq sāzī sīneh ṣāf // zūd bīnī kheshtanrā bi gazāf
If you cleanse your breast by // from [following the] path of love (*rāh-i shauq*), // you will quickly see yourself without idleness. (48:1)

Both meanings are relevant here. For Goyā the genuine Ṣūfī is one who transcends the rāh-i shauq and travels along the true path of love.

It should also be noted, moreover, that just as the true mystical path is not designated by terms commonly associated with the Ṣūfī path so too are those who travel along it not assigned common Ṣūfī epithets. A term for both the Ṣūfī to whom God is near and a stage along the Ṣūfī path is *ḥairān*, 'awe'.[27] Within the *Dīvān*, however, the majority of baits in which this term appears clearly indicate that Nand La'l has reversed it, making it a derisive one from the Sikh point of view:

jomleh-'i 'alam bī tow ḥairān ast o bas // sīneh as hejr-i tow baryān ast o bas
The entire world is just perplexed (*ḥairān*) without You. // The bosom is just roasted on account of separation from You. (39:1)

khodā bemānad za ghairat jadā o man ḥairān // ḥadis-i shauq-i tow as baskeh beshamār āmad
God remains separate [from us] on account of [His divine] jealousy and I [remain] perplexed (*ḥairān*) // The story of Your love is endless. (19:6)

Only when the Sikh is separated from God is he ḥairān. The connotations are certainly not pleasant. Nand La'l, however,

does have ghazals in which ḥairān is viewed in a positive light. In such cases, the poet reinterprets this term to correspond to the Sikh state of *vismādu*, 'ecstacy engendered by awe'. In the Ādi Granth such a reinterpretation is clearly recognised when Gurū Nanak's famous discourse with the Ṣūfīs is placed before *Āsā dī V.ār*, 1:7. Although the terminology in the Gurū's discourse is Ṣūfī, the concept is Sikh.

bhagati teri hairanu dardu gavāvahi[28]
I am *hairānu* at your bhagati (love, devotion) which dispels the pain of separation (*dardu*).

vismādu nād vismādu ved vismādu jīa vismādu bhed vismādu rūp vismādu rang[29]
Vismādu are [the varied forms] of speech, *vismādu* is knowledge. *Vismādu* is creation and *vismādu* the distinctions [therein]. *Vismādu* are the forms [of creation] and *vismādu* their varieties.

It is also in this light that the following bait must be read:

har keh gūyad tow cheh bashī o cheh gūyad joz-i tow // gasht ḥairān hameh 'alam hameh dar 'ain-i jamāl
Everyone says, 'What are You?' and asks, 'What else is there besides You?' // The whole world becomes *ḥairān*, all in the essence/eye of [Your] beauty. (52:8).

Just as the Ṣūfī state of ḥairān is often derided from the Sikh perspective, so too is the Ṣūfī concept of annihilation (fanā), the merging of the individual self with God. Again, Nand Lal's use of īhām, allows for this interpretation in the following bait:

fanā pazīr bovad harcheh hast dar 'alam // neh 'ashiqān keh asrār-i 'ashq āgāh and
In the world everything is transitory/everything is capable of *fanā*, // [except for] lovers (*'ashiqān*) who are aware of the secrets of love. (27:2)

In other words, those whom Nand La'l considers lovers are not interested in fanā. Rather, it is *sahaju*, the condition of ultimate,

inexpressible beatitude, the ultimate state of mystical union with *Akāl Purakh* ('the one beyond time') that they seek.

IV

The next relevant baits in our discussion also allude to both paths, demonstrating the different perspectives on life in the world of the two religions, Sikhism and Islam.

Ḥāfeẓ	Goyā
marā dar manzil-i jānān chēh aman-i 'aish chūn har dam // jaras faryād mīdārad keh bar bandīd maḥmalhā	*marā dar manzil-i jānān hameh 'aish o hameh shādī // jaras bīhūdeh mīnālad ko jā bandīm maḥmalhā*
In the caravanserai of the Beloved what security of life [is there] for me when every moment // the bell dangling from the camel's neck calls out, 'Bind your pack-saddles [It's time to go].'(1:3)	In the caravanserai of the Beloved everything is everlasting joy and eternal delight for me. // The bell dangling from the camel's neck laments in vain, 'Where shall we bind the pack-saddles?' (3:2)

Ḥāfeẓ compares the world with a caravan alighting place. Every moment the bell of a departing camel announces that lodging here is only temporary and that all must soon quit this place. This bait alludes to the insecurity and uncertainty which plague all Ṣūfīs starting out on the path. For Nand La'l the world is a delightful place in which security is eternal. The reason for his exuberance is the belief that Akāl Purakh is immanent in creation, particularly within the human heart. Those who thus tread the path to which Nand La'l alludes are certain for they need only to open their eyes to the revelation that lies around and within them. In the Ādi Granth, that aspect of Akāl Purakh which permeates the world, which He himself allows humanity to perceive is the *nām*, an expression for all that constitutes the nature and being of God.[30] A sufficient understanding of this is the means to liberation. And so, for Nand La'l:

zikr-i vaṣfash bar zabān bāshad lazīz // nām-i ū andar jahān bāshad lazīz
The recital of His praise becomes sweetness on [my] tongue // His Name (*nām*) [fills] the world with delight. (34:1)

In fact, so glorious is this world in which dwells the *nām* that paradise pales in comparison.

har gaz beh sair raużeh-i riżwān nemīravad // goyā kasī bejānab kū-ye botān gozasht
O Goyā. If a person passes by the lane of the beautiful people (i.e., the world), // [he] will never [want to] stroll the garden of paradise. (7:5)

In this bait Nand La'l reverses a Muslim term for paradise, *raużeh-'i riżwān*, infusing it with negative meaning from the Sikh point of view. In effect, it is a rejection of the typically Islamic view of paradise. The rejection of paradise is also characteristically Ṣūfī,[31] but the reverence which Nand La'l accords this world is not. This esteem is typically Sikh.

The next bait in Goyā's third ghazal lays great stress on the belief in the splendour of this world in which Akāl Purakh resides. He again alludes to another bait of Ḥāfeẓ in which the uncertainty and insecurity of the Ṣūfī is laid bare.

For those upon the Sikh path, there is no insecurity and no uncertainty.

Ḥāfeẓ	Goyā
shab-i tarīkh o bīm-i mauj o gerdābī chonīn hāyal // kojā dānand ḥāl-i mā sabokbārān sāḥalhā The darkness of night, the fear of the waves, and such a terrifying whirlpool. // How can those people who walk on the shore light burdened know our condition? (1:5)	*khodā ḥāżar bovad dā'īm bebīn dīdar-i pākashrā // neh gerdābī darū hā'al neh daryā o neh sāḥalhā* God is always present. See His pure face! // In it there is no whirlpool which terrifies, no sea, no shore (3:3)

V

The world as the creation and habitation of Akāl Purakh implies that the true seeker of God need not withdraw from society in order to achieve liberation. This idea that liberation is not found in renunciation is often repeated in the Ādi Granth, and constantly implied in the *Dīvān-i-Goyā*. Although not a direct allusion to a bait of Ḥāfeẓ, the fourth couplet in Nand Lal's third ghazal makes this implication clear.

cherā bīhūdeh mīgardī beṣahrā o bedast āy dil // chū ān sulṭān-i khūbān kardeh andar dīdeh manzilhā
Come heart, why are you aimlessly walking about in the desert and in the plain // when that Sultan of the beautiful people has [already] built his dwellings in your eyes? (3:4)

Goyā's last bait, however, in terms characteristic of the Ādi Granth — 'wherever you look [God is present]' (*jah jah dekh*)[32] — alludes to the final bait of the Ḥāfeẓ poem.

Ḥāfeż	Goyā
ḥozūrī gar hamī khāhī az ū ghāyab mashow ḥāfeż // matamā talqa man tahva da'ad-donya va ahmelhā O Ḥāfeż, if you always desire his presence, do not be absent from him. // When you find the person you love, abandon the world and its cares. (1:7)	*chū ghair az zāt-i pākash nīst dar har jā keh mībīnam // bogū goyā kojā begozāram īn donyā ahmelhā*[33] Since in every place I look there is nothing but His pure essence, // O Goyā, tell [me] why should I forsake this world and abandon it? (3:5)

For Goyā — and, by implication, the Sikhs — renunciation is rejected. All one need do is look within oneself.

īn mata'-i ḥaqq beh pīsh-i ṣāḥibān-i dil bovad // chūn beṣaḥrā mīravī dar gasheh vīrāneh nist
This merchandise of Truth is [right] in front of those who have a heart (*ṣāḥibān-i dil*)[34] // Why are you wandering about in the desert? In the corners of a ruined place [the treasure] is not found. (10:5)

In Punjabi commentaries on this bait the allusion is lost.[35] From their perspective this couplet is simply a reference to Gurū Nānak's emphasis on a disciplined worldliness,[36] and the analysis ends there. This bait, however, does much more than heap scorn on those who practice asceticism. In a *ḥadīth qudsī*, 'an extra-Qur'ānic revelation', Allāh said, 'I was a hidden treasure that wished to be found,' and created the world for this purpose.[37] It was mentioned above that in Ṣūfī poetry one's self must be destroyed through the pain inflicted by the Beloved, a necessity for eventual union with the Divine. The heart is thus compared to a ruined place, *vīrāneh*. Persian poets constantly played with the image of the treasure found only among ruins, and it is to this idea that Goyā alludes. It is, moreover, this belief that Goyā rejects. It is not the idea that God dwells in the heart which Nand La'l discards,[38] but the notion that one's heart must be destroyed through affliction before finding the hidden treasure. It is again a rejection of the Ṣūfī path.

VI

In an attempt to demonstrate Nand La'l's intention to differentiate the Sikh path from that of the Ṣūfī, the third ghazal of the *Dīvān* is the best poem with which to begin. Goyā's allusion to Ḥāfeẓ's ghazal certainly demonstrates that for him the paths were different and that the one to which our poet himself referred was, in fact, the only path worthy of travel. As the paths are different so too are those who travel along them. By reinterpreting terms which are used to designate Ṣufīs, Nand La'l alludes to the person whom he considers the true *qalandar* (wandering Muslim ascetic):

> *hazār takht-i marṣṣa' fatādeh dar rāh and // qalandarān-i tow tāj o nagīn nemīkhāhad*
> Thousands of [gold and] jewel encrusted thrones have fallen by the wayside. // Your *qalandarān* do not want a crown (*tāj*) or a signet-ring (*nagīn*). (27:1)

On one level the second meṣrā' is simply a continuation of the first. On another it is a clear distinction between the Muslim

qalandar and the Sikh. The term *tāj* designates both the crown of temporal authority and the head gear of the qalandar, usually a conical hat.[39] With this in mind the difference becomes clear.

In the next bait Nand La'l alludes to the genuine gadā (beggar):

> *gadā-ye kū-ye torā mail-i bādashāhī nīst // havā-ye sulṭanat o shauq-i kajkolāhī nīst*
> The beggar (*gadā*) on Your lane does not long for a kingdom. // He has no desire to be an emperor nor is he enraptured by the *kajkolāh*. (9:1)

The *kajkolah*, the young beautiful person with 'his cap awry,' a reference to Ṣūfī ḥadīth in which the Prophet Muhammad saw God as a young man with his cap askew,[40] became a standard Ṣūfī image of the saucy Beloved (God). Clearly, the gadā in Goyā's bait is not Ṣūfī. For this 'beggar' (i.e., Sikh) the kajkolāh holds no fascination. Nor does the Sikh pay heed to the common Ṣūfī symbol of the Beloved as cypress tree:

> *ghair ān sarv-i ravān har gaz nayāyad dar naẓar // tāqad-i ra'nā-ye ū dar dīdeh-'ī mā jā gereft*
> Never did anyone look at anything but the stately cypress // until His blossoming figure took root in our eyes. (13:3)

The bait which follows the reference to the kajkolāh alludes to the fact that is indeed the Sikh of whom Nand La'l speaks:

> *har ān keh momalkat-i dil gereft sulṭān shod // kasī keh yāft torā hamchū ū sipāhī nīst*
> All those who capture the kingdom of the heart become kings. // There is no [greater] warrior (*sipāhī*) than that person who finds You. (9.2)

The allusion to the Sikh is clear in the use of the term *sipāhī*. In ghazal poetry the term is very rare and never used to describe the religious warrior, only the opposing enemy.[41] In Sikh usage, however, the term is certainly revered. Often coupled with sant, the compound term designates the ideal Sikh who combines the piety and spirituality of the true believer with the courage

of the true soldier,[42] an ideal which was manifested, according to tradition, in the person of the tenth gurū. This reference is certainly intriguing since it may well shed some light on the evolution of Sikh ideas during the period in which Nand La'l was writing.

Another intriguing reference appears in the final bait of the eleventh ghazal:

> *sha'ir-i goyā zindagī-bakhsh ast chūn āb-i heyāt // balkeh az pākīzgī za āb-i baqā khāhad gozasht*
> The poetry of Goyā is life-giving like the water of life. // Even more so, because of its purity it will surpass the water of *baqā*. (11:6)

Here Goyā's poetry transcends the highest Ṣūfī state, *baqā*, 'continued existence within the Beloved after annihilation (fanā)'.[43] Nand La'l makes clear in this couplet that the Ṣūfī notion of baqā has no place in Sikh teachings. This bait is, of course, very much in line with the common ghazal technique of the poet praising his own work in the final couplet. There is, however, a strong hint to Sikh doctrine, an allusion magnified in the following bait:

> *ḥarf sair az ḥaqq nayāyad hīch gāh // bar lab-i goyā keh ḥaqq bakhshandeh ast*
> Except for 'God/Truth (*ḥaqq*)' no other word (*ḥarf*) will ever come // from the lips of Goyā because he is 'Truth-offering/ God-giving'. (8:5)

From a Sikh perspective, Goyā's self-praise is neither empty nor vain. It is an allusion to the Sikh belief in the Gurū Granth, the mystical, indwelling presence of the eternal Gurū within the hymns of the Ādi Granth. The terms *ḥaqq* and *ḥarf*, 'truth' and 'word' respectively, used in the same bait seem to point in this direction since both *sachu* (Truth) and *sabadu* (Word) are two of the terms which are used by Gurū Nānak to characterise the divine self-expression.[44] The poetry of Goyā is Truth offering because it provides insight into the teachings found in the Ādi Granth in which the eternal gurū resides. This may therefore

be one of the first allusions to the formal doctrine of Gurū Granth subsequently enunciated, according to tradition, just before the tenth Gurū's death in 1708,[45] shifting weight onto the claim that while the gurūs were alive the Adi Granth symbolised their personal presence for those *sangats* who lived too far from the human Gurū.[46]

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis dealt, in part, with some of the intriguing elements which may be found in the *Dīvān-i Goyā*. There are, of course, many other such features which require analysis. Tradition assumes, for example, that the audience for whom Nand La'l wrote was the classically educated majlis surrounding the court of Gurū Gobind Singh. In reality, however, the audience Goyā had in mind is unknown. That it was not for the common Sikh is obvious. Had these been his readers he would have written in the vernacular. The purpose which informs the text is to offer Sikhism as an alternative to Islam. This makes it seem doubtful that it was for educated Sikhs that Nand La'l was writing. It is quite certain that he was addressing his poetry to Ṣūfīs. The question of proselytisation thus arises, as does the question of Nand La'l's relation with ṣūfīsm. Although tradition maintains Nand La'l converted many Muslims to the Sikh faith,[47] the standard interpretation of his *Dīvān* states that his style was 'generously open, one with which the followers of many different traditions could easily identify.[48] On the surface this is, of course, true. Presenting the Sikh path as one to which Ṣūfīs, on first contact, could relate would demand no less. As I have attempted to demonstrate, however, a close examination of his ghazals indicates a desire to convert, a desire well in keeping with the spirit of the Ādi Granth.[49] And thus, the importance of this analysis.

Also, despite Nand La'l's close association with Gurū Gobind Singh his *Dīvān* lacks the militant spirit so characteristic of late seventeenth century Sikhism. This may, of course, have contributed to its limited circulation and to the fact that Goyā's work was not included in the Dasam Granth. The conspicuous absence of the name 'Singh' clearly demonstrates that Goyā did not join the Khalsa. Such a stand by this famous disciple

of the tenth Gurū may tell us something regarding the relation of the Khalsa brotherhood to the larger Sikh Panth, a question which has plagued Sikhs for the last century.[50] In order to determine this, Goyā's relationship with the Khalsa needs to be explored. For this one will need to examine more than just Nand La'l's *Dīvān*. There are hints to the militant Khalsa discipline within his ghazals (the bait in which the sipāhī figures, for example), but these are both few and vague. A partial answer may come from an examination of particular metaphors or similes in which militancy is implied.[51]

The examination of the third ghazal has demonstrated that the chief goal of the *Dīvān-i Goyā* is to aid in apprehending the divine reality. In doing this, Nand La'l uses mystical Ṣūfī poetry as a vehicle but distinguishes the ideas found in traditional Ṣūfī poetry from those of the Sikh gurūs. Standard Ṣūfī terms are reinterpreted to designate Nand La'l's Sikhs. The many similarities which exist between the ideas of Goyā and those of the Ṣūfīs stem from affinities which exist between *gurmat* and the mystical path of Islam. But that is where the similarity ends.

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Notes

1. The following provide the Persian in Gurmukhī script accompanied by Punjabi translations: Gaṇḍā Singh (ed.), *Bhāī Nand Lāl Granthāvalī* (Patiala, 1989); and Haribhajan Singh (ed.), *Sāchī Prīti: Ghazalān Bhāī Nand Lāl Jī Ṭīk* (Amritsar, 1967); the ghazals in the original Perso–Arabic script are presented in Mahān Singh Giānī (ed.), *Taṣnīfāt-i Goyā* (Amritsar, 1963); and Gaṇḍā Singh (ed.), *Kulliyāt-i Bhāī Nand La'l Goyā* (Malaysia, 1963). The *Dīvān* in Gaṇḍā Singh's edition is partially based on the undated, incomplete manuscript found at Khalsa College in Amritsar (ref. no. SHR2311, fols. 103-112). Note also two Urdū translations: Bābā Brij Ballabh Singh Bedi's *Prem Pitārī: Ghazlīyat-i Farsī Bhā'ī Nand La'l Ṣāḥib Takhallus*

Goyā (Lahore, 1912); and Sayya 'Abad Hussain, *Ghazlīyāt-i Bhā'ī Nand La'l Goyā* (Patiala, 1973).

2. Put forward in W.H. Mc Leod, *The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society* (New York, 1989), p. 95.
3. *Sikh Rahit Maryādā* (16th edn., Amritsar, 1983).
4. The *Dastūr ul-Insha*, for example, is a collection of letters which Nand La'l composed while working in Multan. This collection simply refers to court cases, deaths, burials and other incidents which would have come to the attention of a court scribe (munshī), the post that Nand La'l occupied.
5. This brief, traditional biography is taken from Gaṇḍā Singh, *Bhā'ī Nand La'l Granthāvalī*, 9–13; Annemarie Schimmel's article 'Persian Poetry in the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent, in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Persian Literature* (New York, 1988), 405–21 mentions the various texts with which students in India from the thirteenth century onwards had to be familiar.
6. For a background on Ṣūfism in India see Annemarie Schimmell, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden, 1980); the Ṣūfī contribution to the Sant tradition may be found in W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*. (Oxford, 1968), 158–63.
7. For examples of popular Sikh tradition see W.H. McLeod, *Early Sikh Tradition* (Oxford, 1980).
8. Hari Ram Gupta, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I (2nd. rev. edn., New Delhi, 1984), 379–86.
9. For a background consult M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurūs, Sacred Writings, and Authors* (Oxford, 1909), 6 Vols.
10. The following two baits may be taken as an example:

    az gozashtan hā cheh mīporsī darīn dahr-i kharāb // bādshāh khāhad gozasht to ham gadā khāhad gozasht
    What can you ask for the sake of passing in this ruined time? // The king will expire and the beggar will also expire. (11:5)

    kīst emrūz keh sowdān-ī nagārī dārad // bādshāh hast darīn dahr keh yārī dārad
    Who is it who today possesses passion for the Beloved? In this era he is a king who has a Friend. (29:1)
11. The *Dīvān* also contains nineteen *rubā'īyāt* (quatrains) and four *abyāt* (couplets).
12. This is, of course, open to some debate: See, for example, M. Hillman, *Unity in the Ghazals of Ḥāfeẓ* (Minneapolis, 1976).
13. See Finn Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody* (Weisbaden, 1982).
14. Incidentally, many Hindus wrote elegies on the martyrdom of Ḥusain. See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), 105–107.
15. W.H. McLeod, 'The Influence of Islam upon the thought of Gurū Nanak', in *History of Religions*, VII:iv (Chicago, 1968).
16. The following bait demonstrates this :

ṣad kār kardeh'ī keh nayāyad bekār tow // goyā bekon keh bāz beyāyad bekār 'umar

You have done hundreds of things that were not fitting for you. O Goyā, do [things] in such a way that life may come back to you. (47:5).

17. Imitating past masters of the genre was not considered plagiarism. By adhering to the metre, rhyme and subject matter of the original, the new poem attempted to 'improve' or even surpass it by giving it a slightly different interpretation: See M.E. Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate; The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period,' in *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 136, 1 (Stuttgart, 1986), 70–71.
18. Annemarie Schimmel often states that the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfeẓ was considered by many Indian ṣūfīs as next in importance to the Qur'ān and Rumī's *Mathnavī*: See *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 171.
19. J.C. Burgel, 'Ambiguity: A Study in the Use of Religious Terminology in the Poetry of Ḥāfeẓ', in *Intoxication, Earthly and Heavenly: Seven Studies on the Poet Hafiz of Shiraz* (Geneva, 1991), 7–39; the full text of the ghazal appears in A.J. Arberry (ed.), *Fifty Poems of Hafiz* (Cambridge, 1962), 37. The baits in this paper are numbered as found in Arberry's book.
20. See Arberry, *Fifty Poems*, 150.
21. The term *la'l* (here, 'ruby') may be a play on Goyā's name.
22. See Louis Massignon, *La passion d'al-Ḥosayn ibn Mansour Al-Ḥallāj, martyr mystique de l'Islam exécuté à Bagdad le 26 mars* 922, (Paris, 1922), 2 Vols.
23. A similar technique permeates the compositions of the Gurūs. The 'true Muslim' or 'pure Muslim', and the 'true Hindu', are, in fact, those who have transcended both Hinduism and Islam: See McLeod, *Gurū Nānak*, 161.
24. *Sloku Mardānā*, 3, Ādi Granth, 533.
25. Rumi, *Mathnavī-ye Ma'navī*, Vol. I R.A. Nicholson (ed. and trans.), (London, 1925). This phrase (*rāh-i por khūn*) is part of the introduction.
26. Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York, 1982), 107–108.
27. J.S. Trimingham, *The Ṣūfī Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), 152–53.
28. *Āsā Rāgu*, Ādi Granth, 422.
29. *Āsā dī Vār*, 1:7, Ādi Granth, pp. 463–64.
30. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak*, 195–99.
31. Ṣūfīs love the Beloved for the sake of the Beloved alone, not for the hope of paradise: See the prayer of the famous female mystic, Rabe'a al-Adawiya in A.J. Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya'* (London, 1990), 51.
32. See Gurū Nanak's *Sirī Rāgu* 31, Ādi Granth 25.
33. This word appears as *ahlalhā* in every copy of the *Dīvān* I have seen. The Punjabi and Urdū commentators invariably translate the word as 'peoples', *ahlhā*. However, this word does not fit the metre nor the understanding of the ghazal. It thus seems to be a misspelling of the Arabic *ahmelhā*, 'abandon it'.

34. That is, those who are aware that God dwells within the human heart.
35. Haribhajan Singh, *Sāchi Prīti*, 86.
36. See, for example, Gurū Nanak's *Sūhi*,8, Ādi Granth, 730:

    añjan māhi nirānjan rahīai joṉ jugati pāīai
    The path of true Yoga is found by dwelling in God while yet living in the midst of the world's temptations.
37. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (North Carolina, 1975), 139.
38. Note, for example, the rhetorical question posed in ghazal 9, bait 4:

    kudām dideh keh dar way sawād-i nūr-i tow nīst // kūdam sīneh keh ū makhzan-i ahla nīst
    Where is the eye in which the blackness of your light does not reside? Where is the heart which is not a divine treasury?
39. Trimingham, *Sufī Orders in Islam*, 268.
40. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 290.
41. Terms used to describe Muslim warriors were *mujāhid* and *ghāzī*.
42. W.H. McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 55.
43. For a description of baqā' and fanā' see F. Rahman 'Baḳā' wa-Fanā' in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edition), I:2, 951.
44. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak*, 191–94, 203–204.
45. For a description of the traditional doctrine of Gurū Granth see W.Owen Cole, *The Guru in Sikhism* (London, 1982), 55–64.
46. Harbans Singh, *Heritage of the Sikhs*, (Delhi, 1983), 43–44.
47. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 379–86.
48. The quote is from McLeod, *The Sikhs*, 95. However, this sentiment is shared in Gaṇḍā Singh (ed.), *Bhāī Nand Lāl Granthāvalī*, 14.
49. For this element in the Ādi Granth see Pashaura Singh, 'The Text and Meaning of the Adi Granth', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1991.
50. This question is dealt with, in part, in W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity* (Oxford, 1989).
51. Note the following bait:

    mā nemīyārīm tāb-i ghamzeh-i mazhgān-i ū // yak nagāh-'i jānfizāyish bas bovad dar kār-i mā
    We are unable to bear the impact of his flirting eyelash. One soul-refreshing glance is sufficient for our affair. (2:2)

The eyelash is often compared to either a set of spears or to a company of soldiers. In the latter, when the two eyelashes meet together in a wink it is often likened to platoons engaged in battle.

Minor Voices: The Evolution of the Punjabi Press in North America

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The Punjabi press has played an important role as a vehicle of cultural and political expression of the Sikh community of North America. Though not as old as some of the European migrants' newspapers, the Punjabi press has nevertheless been established for over eight decades. More than one hundred titles have appeared during this period, including half a dozen weeklies, several monthlies and a variety of other regular publications. In the early years, a number of politically inspired publications were intrumental in arousing strong political consciousness among the Sikh community of North America; their impact was felt in the Punjab also. This essay brings together a chronological list, narrating the important events in the establishment of the Punjabi press. The article points towards a greater understanding of the Punjabi media as a vital record of the cultural expression of the Sikh diaspora in Canada and the United States.

During the last eight decades of its existence, the Punjabi press of North America has passed through several phases reflecting the profile of its readers and the fortunes of its proprietors. As a record of the changes within the Sikh community, it has hardly been used in research. Apart from language, one of the chief difficulties in utilising these records is their inaccessibility; many of the serials have simply disappeared without trace, others remain uncatalogued, and there is an urgent need for collecting them in a central place or a library. The value of such serial

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publications as records of issues and concerns as understood and discussed by Punjabi readers is yet to be realised.

The aim of the paper is to catalogue various titles and examine, very briefly, the historical development of the Punjabi press in North America. The term 'press' is liberally interpreted to include all such publications as have appeared weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and serially.[1] The data for this study came from a variety of sources, but mostly through a series of interviews with a number of Punjabi journalists and records of publications. Listing of the Punjabi press in official and semi-official directories is rather haphazard. For the later years, the coverage has improved only marginally.[2] While no claim is made that the data presented here reflect all periodical publications, the study is perhaps the first attempt at a comprehensive collection of data over the entire period. All minor and major publications were sought to be included. The essay is organised into three sections: pre-1947, post-1947, and post-1984 developments. Finally, our approach to the evolution of the Punjabi press is broadly historical. Due to common origins and more importantly the continuing common readership of the Punjabi media in Canada and the United States, the term North America is employed throughout the paper to refer to publications in the two countries.[3]

THE PIONEERS: PRE-1947 PERIOD

The establishment of the early Punjabi media presents a paradox. The first paper was issued as early as 1907. The *Circular-i-Azadi* (Memo for Freedom) was the first newspaper aimed at a small Punjabi population. Launched from San Francisco by Ramnath Puri in 1907, this was printed in Urdu.[4] However, its readership was confined to Sikhs settled in Vancouver, Washington and some areas of California. It ceased publication within a year when its editor had exhausted all his inspiration and funds. Although financial constraint was the usual reason for the closure of all such papers, it was never a sufficient deterrent for others to venture into the field. From the first decade of the twentieth century, a spate of newspapers were started from Vancouver or San Francisco. As the number of Punjabi readers

could hardly justify such journalistic adventures, it is necessary to ask what the motive behind these early publications was.

By the year 1910, there were about 7,000–8,000 Sikhs settled in the Pacific states. Out-migration from Hong King, Singapore and other Far Eastern centres started in a small way around the turn of the century, and by 1905 the Sikh presence in the Seattle–Victoria–Oregon areas was quite noticeable, their arrival being described as the 'tide of turbans'.[5] This migration coincided with the rising tide of anti-oriental feeling among the European labourers, who had earlier expressed this hostility against Japanese and other Far Eastern races in many ways from physical intimidation in factories to mob attacks on the residential areas of the migrants. Just as Sikhs were reaching the shores of Victoria and Oregon, a number of workers of European descent were discussing ways to organise their resentment into a powerful lobby. This was duly expressed in 1907 when an organisation aptly named the Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) was inaugurated. The AEL was formed in California in the aftermath of the Vancouver riots, which affected a number of Asian workers.[6] The persistent hostility that had been simmering for years was now brought out in the open.

The majority of Sikh migrants being unskilled found their first jobs in the lumber mills of Oregon, Seattle or Victoria. Others became farm workers; the seasonal demands for labour took them from Imperial valley to Sacramento Valley, Fraser and Bakersfield. Wherever they went, they huddled together in various labour colonies. Common habits and fear of racial attacks by the white workers kept them together and united, and they lived either on farms or in shared residential areas. Sikhs arriving in North America during this period possessed the limited aim of earning and saving a fortune and then going back to Punjab. The consideration of return was paramount in determining their outlook.

This pragmatic attitude was transformed as other Indians arrived. A few disaffected and educated Bengali and Punjabi Hindus had arrived amidst them, some being pursued by Indian authorities. Others, more richly endowed, came to America in pursuit of higher education. Although living in some comfort and little

troubled by the hardships and racial slurs felt by ordinary Sikhs, they nevertheless had a higher cause to espouse. Sikh workers facing problems of communication and bureaucratic hassles with the immigration authorities eagerly welcomed this help from their educated brothers. The issue of immigration and deportation for a number of Sikhs forced them to look for external assistance. Guru Dutt Kumar and Hussain Rahim were the first to become friends of the distraught Sikh community of Vancouver. Kumar used his English teaching classes for Sikhs to issue a call for revolution. He also took the opportunity to launch his *Swadesh Sewak* from Vancouver in 1909—a revived title which he used to edit in Punjab. Issues of this paper are full of immigration cases and appeals to the British and Canadian government, for due consideration of each case. Resolutions passed by Khalsa Diwan Society found their way into the columns of *Swadesh Sewak.*

Another paper which aimed to awaken fellow Indians was launched by Tarknath Das.[7] After staying at various places he came to Vancouver, and, with the help of some of his Sikh friends, launched a monthly, *Free Hindustan.* He also visited the Portland area where Indians had formed a Hindustan Association. He then shifted to Seattle where he found an interpreter's job with Victoria's immigration officials interviewing the newly arriving Sikhs. Das devoted his off-duty time to building contacts with these 'simple-minded rustic' Sikhs. However, both Das's paper and job were to go, as the British authorities put pressure on British Columbians to close this organ of 'sedition'. Das left, and for a short period revived his paper with help from the editor of *Gaelic American* using the latter's printing press. The paper survived with numerous breaks until 1910. It was finally closed when authorities seized all its copies and served a notice on Das, who had once again surfaced in Vancouver.

However, developments within the small Sikh community had proceeded rather rapidly. Teja Singh, a student at Columbia University was called upon to look after the interests of Sikhs in Vancouver, and Dr. Sundar Singh, a medical graduate and socialite from Glasgow, also arrived in Canada.[8] Sundar Singh tried rather unsuccessfully, to assume the leadership of Sikhs by starting several short-lived papers from Vancouver. First

he brought out *The Aryan* in 1911, then he issued a paper called *Sansar* from Victoria, British Columbia in 1912. This appeared spasmodically for three years. All of these papers carried features and articles relating to the social, cultural and religious life of the Sikhs. Many articles in English were specifically aimed at white readers to assure them of the good intentions of the newly settled 'strangers'. *The Aryan* publicised Sikh causes: in its August 1912 issue it informed its readers with ironic wit:

> ... last year (1911) there came to Canada 11,932 Chinese and 2,896 Japanese of whom 1,037 were women. These figures were given by the Dominion Medical Officer stationed at William Head, near Victoria, B.C. Our Hindu readers will be glad to learn that one Hindu was also allowed to land during the same period.

These papers tried to send messages 'home' regarding the conditions abroad. Thus *The Aryan* gave a lot of space to the condition of Hindus in Pacific States and asked for help from India. The term Hindus was commonly used for migrants from India, though at the time the majority of them hailed from Punjab and were Sikhs. It was only in the 1960s that another term, 'East Indians' replaced the earlier category of 'Hindus'. In the March–April 1912 issue, *The Aryan* quoted a Canadian newspaper which described the situation of such 'Hindus':

> The smoke-coloured Hindus, exotic, unmixable, picturesque, a languid worker and a refugee for fleas, we will always have with us, but we won't want any more of him. We don't want any Hindu women. We don't want any Hindu children. The Sikh may be Aryan stock; I always thought he was of Jewish extraction. He may be near white though he does not look it. British Columbia cannot allow any more of the dark meat of the world to come to this province.

Copies of *The Aryan* were posted to Khalsa College students in Amritsar and to other prominent persons of Punjab. Teja Singh became chief spokesman for the Sikhs, he effectively

settled the vexed question of the Canadian authorities' proposal to settle Sikh migrants in British Honduras by rejecting this proposal. He also led a delegation to Ottawa with a plea for fair treatment to Sikhs. Through his travels between Vancouver and California, Teja Singh rallied Sikhs for a united front. He inspired them to pool their earnings to build a gurdwara, where community matters could be discussed. This initiative materialised when the newly formed Khalsa Diwan Society in Vancouver acquired an old church and converted it into a gurdwara in 1907. Teja Singh's role among Canadian Sikhs became a subject of concern for British Surveillance, and the Canadian authorities requested United States officials to keep an eye on the activities of this 'dangerous' individual and a number of other 'Hindu' students.[9]

Another delegation was sent to London. The pleading of Sikh leaders in London was fruitless as the Canadian authorities introduced further legislation to curb Asiatic immigration. A 'continuous journey' clause was quietly passed to ensure the virtual impossibility of any Indian undertaking the costly gamble to settle in Canada. However, the government had underestimated the ingenuity of Sikhs stationed in the Far East determined to reach North American shores. After hectic consultation with legal experts and eager passengers, a Sikh businessman, Gurdit Singh, commissioned a Japanese ship which just about fulfilled all Canadian legal requirements.[10] As the ship Komagata Maru sailed across the Atlantic from Hong Kong, immigration and settlement became major issues. After lengthy proceedings the Komagata Maru passengers were refused permission to disembark at Victoria. This single event turned many passive and 'litigant' Sikhs into radical revolutionaries. While many had accumulated grievances, some of them had acquired considerable fortunes by buying lands especially in the Stockton area. Among these Jwala Singh bought a large tract of land and offered facilities for Teja Singh and other Sikhs to stay at his farm. He also instituted scholarships for Indian Students at Berkeley, and five students had availed of these by 1911. Besides financing the building of a gurdwara in the area which became a focus for political mobilisation and religious worship, Jwala Singh was also sympathetic to the cause of revolution as preached by Indian

Table 1
The Punjabi Press (1905–47 Period): Newspapers and Periodicals

Year	*Title*	*Editor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1907–8	Circular-i-Azadi	R. Puri	San Francisco	M	U/E	Pol.
1907–10	Free Hindustan	Das/Coll.	Vancouver/Seattle	Bi-M	E	Pol.
1909–11	Swadesh Sewak	Harnam Singh	Vancouver	M/Occ	P	Pol.
1910	Pardeshi Khalsa	Hira Singh	Vancouver	M*	P/U*	Rel./Pol.
1910	American-India Samachar	Hira Singh	Vancouver	M	P	C/E
1911–12	Khalsa Herald	Kartar Singh	Vancouver	M	E	Rel./Soc.
1911–13	The Aryan	Sundar Singh	Vancouver	M	E	C/E/Rel.
1912–14	Sansar	Sundar Singh	Victoria	M	P/U	Rel.
1913–14	Gadr	Har Dayal	San Francisco	W	P/U	Gadr
1915–17	Hindustan Gadr	Ram Chandra	San Francisco	W	P/U	Gadr
1914	Shamsher Khalsa	Coll.	Stockton	M*	P	Pol.
1914	The Hindustanee	Hussain Rahim	Vancouver	M	E	Gadr

Continued...

Year	*Title*	*Editor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1914–15	Theosophical News	Kartar Singh	Toronto	M	E	Rel.
1914–17	Canada and India	Kartar Singh	Vancouver	M	E/P	C/E
1917	Yugantar	Bhagwan Singh	San Francisco	M	P	Gadr.
1918–20	Young India	Lajpat Rai	New York	M	E	Pol.
1920–21	Independent Hindustan	Coll.	San Francisco	M	E	Gadr
1924–28	U.S. of India	Coll.	San Francisco	M/Occ.	E	Gadr
1928	The Hindustan	Coll.	San Francisco	M	P/U	Gadr
1928–34	India and Canada	Kartar Singh	Vancouver	M	E/P	C/E
1930–31	Gadr Dhandora	Coll.	Hankow*	Bi-M	E/C	Gadr
1932–34	Sansar Sangh	Coll.	Peiping*	M/Occ.	P/U	Gadr
1944–45	The Sikh Voice	KDS	Vancouver	F	E/P	Rel. C/E

Notes: *=Unconfirmed; Editor: KDS=Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver, Coll.=Collective; Language: P=Punjabi, E=English, U=Urdu, C=Chinese: Frequency: W=Weekly. F=Fortnightly. M=Monthly. Bi-M=Bi-Monthly. Q=Quarterly. Occ.=Occasionally; Coverage: C/E= Current Events, Rel.=Religious, Lit.=Literary, Pol.=Politics, Soc.=Social.

students. On Sunday the religious congregation debated the issues faced by the community. These included, for the articulate, 'the experience of slavery and humiliation both here and back in India.'

The Gadr Press

Har Dayal, a Hindu intellectual, arrived in America in 1911. He was for some time on the faculty of Stanford University, but was forced to leave as his activities attracted the attention of the authorities. He undertook a tour of colonies of Sikh labourers and farmers in California and Oregon, and worked towards an organised political struggle. Fired by patriotic feeling, many Sikhs from Stockton and in the lumber mills of Victoria and Oregon donated generously to Har Dayal's appeals with money and offers of volunteer work. With Har Dayal's lectures the ideals of Indian students and resources provided by Sikh labourers materialised into a party, the Hindi Sabha. It held several rallies and meetings in areas of Sikh settlement in California.

However, its most important activity was the acquisition of a house in San Francisco with the purpose of producing a weekly paper titled *Gadr*. An office of the Gadr party was established in San Francisco at 5, Wood Street, which was renamed Yugantar Ashram. A printing machine was imported from England, equipped to print in the Gurmukhi script of the Punjabi language in addition to Urdu. The first issue of *Gadr* appeared in November 1913. It contained the aims and constitution of the party and a leading article by Har Dayal. On page one, it printed the announcement:

> Wanted: fearless, courageous soldiers for spreading mutiny in India: Salary: Death; Reward: Martyrdom and Freedom; Place: The field of India.

It also stated the Gadr Party's objectives:

> Today, there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's language, a war against the British raj. What is our name? Gadr, What is our work? Gadr. Where will Gadr break out?

In India. The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink.

As a four page sheet, each issue carried a lead article, inspiring poetry and notices on how to prepare for the forthcoming struggle to overthrow British rule in India. Features on the Irish struggle and the imminent war between Germany and England filled regular columns. Articles were composed and written by volunteers. The printing machine, initially operated by hand, was later run with electricity. Sikh volunteers who had little education but were full of romantic–revolutionary ideas dominated both the association and the newspaper. Several of them experimented with poetry; this feature became so popular that the poems published in the *Gadr* were later collected together in pamphlets. Many articles were similarly put together and published as serials by the *Gadr* party. Such pamphlets in Urdu, Punjabi and occasionally in other languages were subsequently published by printers in Lahore or Amritsar. It is difficult to give a gist of the range of writings in *Gadr* weekly, but the poetry sections give the flavour of its special appeal to Sikhs.

The following is a sample of couplets appearing in earlier issues:

Why do you disgrace the name of Singhs
how come! you have forgotten the majesty of lions
had the like of Dip Singh been alive today
how could the Singhs have been taunted?
People say that the Singhs are no good
Why did you turn the tides during the Delhi mutiny?

The *Gadr* at one stage, had a print-run of 4,000 per week. However, *Gadr* was soon to have another editor. Har Dayal was arrested on 29 March 1914 on the charges of spreading anarchist views, but was released later when he found it 'wise' to leave first for Geneva and then for Germany. However, within the first 18 months of his leaving, the party workers were able to produce 'tons of literature' as Har Dayal noted in an article specially sent for the second anniversary of the paper from Germany.

From there, Har Dayal also appealed to his fellow countrymen that 'now there is no time to wait, get ready to leave for the country, I'm with you in every situation until my last breath.'[11] Inspired by Har Dayal, who continued to write for the paper, several hundred Sikhs sailed for India. Apart from Punjab, the *Gadr* was despatched to Canada, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, the Malay States, Siam, Singapore, Trinidad, and Honduras. The Gadr activities were not restricted to Punjab or North America alone. Bhagwan Singh and his associates had formed a branch of the Gadr Party in the Far East; Balwant Singh went to Singapore where he emerged as the man behind the mutiny of 5th Infantry Sepoys in February 1915. In Punjab it created a stir, and was promptly banned by the authorities. Among the proscribed literature of the British Punjab, copies of the *Gadr* weekly figure prominently.[12] The returning passengers on Komagata Maru were believed to have been reading the *Gadr*. From 1913 onwards the revolutionary network of Sikhs and other Indians abroad produced several papers. Thus, alongside *Gadr, The Hindustanee*, edited by Rahim, also came out in 1914. Published from Vancouver, it espoused the cause of Indian freedom.

The propaganda drive of the Gadr movement had an impact beyond the shores of America. Not only did it inspire several hundred Sikhs to leave for Punjab, it also ushered a new consciousness among its readers.[13] Copies of the *Gadr* were read during the sea voyage by many Sikhs returning from America to India. They were determined to wage a war on reaching the Punjab, though their leader, Har Dayal, was soon to change his own mind regarding revolutionary activity. By 1915 it is estimated over 2,000 Indians from North America left for Punjab and other parts of India. Most of them were Sikhs. However, the government of Punjab was fully aware of the incoming exiles, and several were arrested and tried for conspiracy. Many received long sentences, and their leaders faced the gallows.

Just after two years of the launching of *Gadr* and the collapse of the revolution in Punjab, Yugantar Ashram was ridden by factions. With the departure of top leaders to India, the paper changed hands. Ram Chandra a former editor of *India*, published in Gujranwala and *Akash* from Delhi, arrived at the Yugantar

Ashram in January 1914. He changed the title of the paper to *The Gadr Weekly*. However, the Gadr headquarters were soon engulfed by factions. Ram Chandra was alleged to have embezzled party funds for his personal use. Bhagwan Singh, who returned from a tour of the Far East after preaching and collecting money for the revolutionary cause, was given a cold reception by Ram Chandra who had emerged as the controller of the Yugantar Ashram and its considerable finances. Bhagwan Singh and Santokh Singh contended for the Gadr Party leadership. Bhagwan Singh, besides demanding proper accounts from Ram Chandra, ran a parallel paper in 1917 titled *Hindustan Gadr*. At the same time he also started a Punjabi monthly, the *Yugantar*, in May 1917. The factional dispute deepened when Ram Chandra expelled Bhagwan Singh and Santokh Singh, and announced this unusual step in a special supplement of his own paper. These internal squabbles reached a climax during the San Francisco Conspiracy Case in 1919 when Ram Chandra was shot dead in the court. Several of the Gadr activists were found guilty, indeed the prosecution's case rested in many instances on the contents of *Gadr* papers.[14] Even after the conclusion of the Lahore Conspiracy Case, the Gadr leaders in America continued to support their vision of revolution and freedom. After a lull of a few months at the headquarters of the Gadr Party in 1919, in the aftermath of the San Francisco Conspiracy Case, there were some fresh efforts to revive the party. Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh went round the Pacific coast to collect funds. They successfully launched *Independent Hindustan* in September 1920. This was followed by yet another paper in 1923, called the *United States of India*, in English. A paper called the *Hindustan Gadr Dhandora* was set up from China and distributed in the Far Eastern countries, some copies being smuggled for Sikh troops stationed there.

The Gadr Party papers underline the relationship between overseas Sikhs and the Punjab. Even after the conclusion of the active phase of the Gadr movement, many American Sikhs continued to subsidise several publications sympathetic to the cause of freedom. Among these, the *Daily Akali* of Lahore, *Akali te Pardesi* of Amritsar and *Desh Sewak* of Jalandhar received financial backing from the Gadr funds.[15] Individual leaders visited

Punjab to revive the struggle. Ratan Singh came from America via Moscow, much impressed by the Soviet Revolution, to edit the journal *Kirti* from Amritsar. Starting in 1926, this was a monthly financed mainly by funds from Punjabi exiles. It tried to revive the Gadr leaders' revolutionary methods to liberate India from British rule. It also appealed for equality based upon the Soviet model of proletarian revolution. With the Gadr-inspired publications in decline from the 1920s, new outlets for Punjabi journalism in North America diminished quite rapidly. The Gadr exodus to Punjab and the government policy imposing severe restrictions on any further immigration led to a sharp decline in the Punjabi population in North America. By the 1930s the Gadr activities of San Francisco shifted to Stockton. The Gadr Party papers evoke the images of an exiled minority intending to help its motherland. Unfortunately not all of the Gadr Party papers have been preserved.[16]

A few of the non-revolutionary papers which came out during the interregnum were produced by two pioneering Sikh journalists. Kartar Singh tried his hand at a string of papers, including *The Khalsa Herald*, and the *Theosophical News*, and finally revived the old title *India and Canada*, significantly adding the words *A Journal of Interpretation and Understanding*. From the 1920s through the 1940s, the Sikh community of Vancouver remained very small and consequently well-knit. The gurdwara acted as a central place for meetings. Many Sikhs were well aware of the misrepresentations made by the media, particularly during the Komagata Maru episode. Another problem was also on the horizon which could affect them. Canadian authorities had started discussions about the advisability of granting franchise rights to the people of British dominions, and the Sikhs feared they would again lose out. A meeting was called by the Khalsa Diwan Society to discuss and convey the community's views to the Canadian government. The Khalsa Diwan Society stressed the need for a community newspaper in 1941 when it resolved, 'to start a newspaper so as to enable Sikhs to ventilate[sic] their grievances and bring to light their problems', and, 'in the absence of own newspaper, we have been experiencing great hardships'. Although it is mentioned that *The Sikh Voice* was published

by the society as a result of this resolution, no copies of this paper, like several other such titles, seem to have survived.

SECOND PHASE: POST-1947 PERIOD

From 1948 to 1960, there was a long lull. Just two papers were started. The first called *The Canadian Khalsa* was brought out by Giani Tara Singh from Port Alberni. This was a monthly with English and Punjabi articles, news items of interest to its Sikh readers, immigration laws and news of Canada. It lasted for two years from 1948 to 1950. The only other pioneering monthly was the product of several lumber workers-cum-writers. This was titled *East Indian Lumber Worker* and lasted from 1950–53.

The rapid growth in the Sikh population through large-scale migration in the 1970s also made room for publications inspired by market considerations. Though the main centre for political activities of Sikhs in Canada still remains, as in the past, the Khalsa Diwan Society of Vancouver, Sikh organisations have been formed in many large cities. The demography of new Sikh settlers, particularly in Canada was conducive to this atmosphere of market led publications. More than half of the total Sikh population in Canada lives in the metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Toronto.[17] Further, many Sikhs were by now well-established in retail and wholesale business looking for avenues to advertise their products. Some Punjabi businessmen in fact set up printing related concerns. Among the independent ventures of the late 1970s one outstanding example is that of Tara Singh Hayer who launched his newspaper *Indo-Canadian Times* from Vancouver in 1978. This was the first paper to use a typeset Punjabi machine. From a fortnightly, it became a weekly as the demand increased. For the first time, non-political publications became possible.

Many new Punjabi organisations were formed in the early 1970s. The impetus for this came from the homeland, Punjab. After the formation of the Punjabi Suba in 1966, the Akali Dal gained ascendancy. Between 1967–72 and 1977–80 Akali Dal-led coalitions ruled in the Punjab. A number of ministers from

Table 2
The North American Punjabi Press (Post–1947 Period): Newspapers

Year	*Title*	*Editor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1965–67	Indo–Canadian	Inderjit S. Kohli	Toronto	F/M	E/P	Pol. C/E
1968–69	Panjabi Weekly	Tara S. Bains	Vancouver	W/F	E/P	Pol. C/E
1970–72	India News and Views	Malkit S. Parhar	Vancouver	F/M	E	Pol. C/E
1970–72	Punjab Samachar	Dr. Sekhon/Chohan	Los Angeles	F	P	Pol. C/E
1971	Panjabi Patrika	Tara Singh Hayer	Toronto	F	P	Pol. C/E
1971	India Calling	Anant Singh	Toronto	F	E	Pol. C/E
1972–73	Poorab Pacham	*	Vancouver	F	P	Lit.
1973–75	Lok Awaz	Coll. CPI (M)	Vancouver	F	P/U	Pol. C/E
1973–77	Asia Times	Manjit S. Safri	Toronto	F	P	Pol. C/E
1974–76	Parivartan	Karm Singh	Vancouver	F	P/E	Lit. C/E
1975	Panjabi Asia Times	Tarlochan S. Gill	Toronto	F	P	C/E Lit.
1975	Canadian Sikh Samachar	Coll.	Vancouver	F	P/E	Rel. Pol.
1977–90	Ranjit	Narinder S. Johal	Vancouver	F	P	Pol. C/E
1977	Sanjh Savera	Gurmel Brar	Molton/Ont.	W	P	Pol. C/E
1978–	Indo-Canadian Times	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	W	P	Pol. C/E
1979–81	Punjab Affairs	R.S. Gnyai	Toronto	Bi/M	E	Pol. C/E
1981	Pardesi Punjab	Gurdip S. Chohan	Toronto	F	P	C/E Lit.
1981–82	Punjab News	T.S. Hayer	California	W	P	C/E
1982–88	Canada Darpan	Darshan Gill	Vancouver	F/W	P	Pol. C/E
1982–83	Punjab News	Dr. Sekhon/Chohan	Delano	M/F	P/E	Pol. C/E
1983	Suraj	G. Singh	El-sobrante	F/W	P/E	Pol. C/E
1983–84	Qaumi Samachar	Akali Dal Assoc.	Burnaby	F	P	Rel. Pol.

Continued...

Year	*Title*	*Editor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1984–	Sikh Weekly	Amarjit Singh	New York	W	E/P	Pol.
1984–	Sangharsh	Sukhdev S. Dardi	Vancouver	F	P	Pol. C/E
1984–85	Sikh Times	R.S. Saberwal	Palo Alto	W	E/P	Pol. C/E
1985–	Awaz-e-Quam	ISYF	Toronto	W	P	Pol. C/E
1985	Fulwari	Surjit Sangra	Vancouver	F	P	Pol. C/E
1985–	World Sikh News	M.S. Sidhu	Stockton	W	E/P	Pol. C/E
1986–	Chardhi Kala	Harpal S. Khalsa	Vancouver	W	P	Pol. C/E
1986–	Itihas	Jagdev S. Nijjar	Toronto	W	P	Pol. C/E
1987	Tasveer	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	F	P/E	Films
1988–	Express News	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	W	E	Local
1988	Panj Darya	Gurdial S. Kanwal	Toronto	F	P	Pol. C/E
1989–91	Canada Darpan	Surjit Sangra	Vancouver	F	P	Pol. C/E

Notes: Language: P=Punjabi, E=English, U=Urdu; Frequency: W=Weekly, F=Fortnightly, M=Monthly, Bi/M=Bi-Monthly; Coverage: C/E= Current events, Rel.=Religious, Lit.=Literary, Pol.=Political; Editor: ISYF=International Sikh Youth Federation, CPI(M)=Communist Party of India (Marxist), Akali Dal Assoc.=Akali Dal Association of North India, Coll.=Collectively owned or edited, *=Unknown or unconfirmed.

Table 3
The North American Punjabi Press (Post–1947 Period): Periodicals

Year	*Title*	*Editor/Propreitor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1948–50	The Canadian Khalsa	Giani Tara Singh	Port Alberni	M	E/P	Rel./Pol.
1950–53	East Indian Lumber Worker	Coll.	Vancouver	M	E/P	Labour
1961–62	The Canadian Sikh	Gian Singh	Victoria	M	E/P	Rel.
1971–72	The Hind Mazdoor	Coll.	Toronto	M	P	CPI (ML)
1971–75	Chingari	Hardial S. Bains	Vancouver	Occ.	P	Naxalite
1971–75	Lok Awaz	Hardial S. Bains	Vancouver	Occ.	P	Naxalite
1972	Jivan Sanjhan	Gurdial S. Kanwal	Vancouver	M	P	Lit.
1972–73	Navin Dharti	Gurdial S. Kanwal	Vancouver	M	P	Lit./C/E
1972–73	Parivartan	Dr. Gill	Vancouver	M	P	Lit.
1973	Poorab Prakash	Amrik Pooni	Vancouver	M	P	Lit.
1972–77	Sikh Sansar	Dr. N. S. Kapany	Redwood City	Q	E	Rel./Hist.
1973–85	Watno Door	Surindar Dhanjal	Edmonton	M/Q	P	Lit.
1974–75	Ekta	Raminder Singh	N. Westminster	Q	E	C/E
1975	Sikh Samachar	Pooran S. Gill	Vancouver	M	P	Rel.
1976	Lokta	A. Soofi/H. S. Dhaliwal	Vancouver	M	P	CPI (M)
1976	Western Sikh Samachar	Purn S. Sudhar	Vancouver	Q	E/P	Rel.
1978	Sat Sandesh	Radhasami	Montreal	M	E/Fr.	Rel.
1979–80	Indo-Canadian	Inderjit S. Kohaly	Richmond	Q	E	Pol./C/E
1979	Nidharak Canadian	Surain S. Muhim	Vancouver	M	P/E	Pol./C/E
1979–81	Kesari Jot	*	Mississauga	M*	P	Rel.
1979–	The Asian Tribune	*	Toronto	M	E	Pol./C/E

Continued...

Year	*Title*	*Editor/Propreitor*	*Place*	*Frequency*	*Language*	*Coverage*
1979–	The Khalistan	Coll.	Toronto	M	P/E	Pol. Rel.
1980–83	Rachna	R. Ravi/T. S. Hayer	Vancouver	M	P	L
1979–80	New India	IPANA	Vancouver	Q	E/P	Pol./C/E
1980–81	India Now	IPANA	Vancouver	Q	E	Pol./C/E
1980–81	Sikh Sewak	Coll.	Vancouver	M	P/E	CPI (ML)
1980–84	Beads of Truth	Coll.	Los Angeles	M	E	3-HO
1981–	Wangar	IPANA	Vancouver	Occ.	E/P	Pol.
1981–	The Farmworker	CFU	Vancouver	Q/Occ.	E/P	Labour
1981	Darpan	Darshan Gill	Fort Nelson	Q	P	Lit.
1981–82	Aastha	Ravinder Ravi	New Aiyash	M	P	Lit.
1982	Naveen Dharti	Gurdial S. Kanwal	Vancouver	M	P	Lit./C/E
1982–83	Sikh Samachar	Hardial S. Johal	Vancouver	M	P	Rel.
1982–84	The Nation	*Coll.	Ottawa	Occ.	E	Rel.
1982–86	Navrang	Darshan K. Bains	Vancouver	O	P	Film
1982	Khalsa Advocate	Mohinder P. Singh	Vancouver	M	E/P	Rel. Pol.
1982	Sandesh	Coll.	Ottawa	Occ.	E/P/U	Pol./C/E
1982–83	Naad	Coll.	*	M	E	Pol.
1982–84	Vancouver Star	Balwant S. Chandi	Vancouver	Occ.	P/E	Pol./C/E
1983	Chandi	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	M	P	Rel.
1983	Khalsa Times	Mohinder Pal S.	Vancouver	M	E/P	Pol./Rel.
1983–84	Sikh Times	Mohinder Pal S.	Yuba City	M	E	Pol./Rel.
1984–	The Truth	Dr. R. M. Singh	Quebec City	Q	E	Rel./Pol.
1984–86	The Spokesman	Dr. R.K. Singh	Toronto	M	E	Pol.
1985–	The Sword	WSO	Edmonton	Q	E/P	Rel./Pol.

1985–	Sahitak Kirnan	Mohinder S. Ghah	Yuba City	Q	P	Lit.
1985–88	Shamsheer Dast	ISYF	Vancouver	M	E/P	Rel./Pol.
1986–	Jago	S. Kanwal	S. Jose	M	P	Lit.
1986–	Sikh News and Views	Coll.	Willowdale	Occ.	E/P	Rel./Pol.
1987–	Surti	R.S. Rania	Toronto	M	E/P	Arts
1987–	The Sikh Herald	Ragbir S. Samagh	Toronto	Q	E	Rel./Pol.
1987–	Tasveer	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	M	P/E	Films
1987–88	Sikh Dharma News	3-HO	Los Angeles	Occ.	E	Rel.
1987	Kalm	Darshan Gill	Vancouver	M	P	Lit.
1987–	Nawin Awaz	Hardial Bains	Vancouver	M	E/P	CPI (ML)
1988–	Keeping up Connections	3-HO	Los Angeles	Q	E	Rel.
1988–	Sikh Times	T.S. Hayer	Vancouver	M	E	Rel./Pol.
1988	Sanwaad	Sukhinder	London (Ontario)	M	P	Lit.
1989	Watan	Sadhu/Hundal	Vancouver	M	P	Lit.

Notes: Proprietor: Coll.=Collective. IPANA=Indian People's Association in North America. CFU=Canadian Farmworkers' Association, WSO=World Sikh Organisation, ISYF=International Sikh Youth Federation, 3-HO=Happy, Healthy and Holy Organisation (Harbhajan Singh Khalsa) based in Los Angeles; Language: P=Punjabi, E=English, U=Urdu, Fr.=French; Frequency: M=Monthly, Occ.=Occasionally, Q=Quarterly; Coverage: C/E= Current events, Rel.=Religious, Lit.=Literary, Pol.=Politics, CPI (M)=Communist Party of India (Marxist), CPI (ML)=Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), Hist.=History; *=unknown or unconfirmed

Punjab and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee officials undertook tours of Sikh settlements abroad.[18] Sikhs in Canada and United States set up their organisations on the lines of Sikh politics in the Punjab. The Shiromani Akali Dal Association of Canada was formally organised in 1975, while a similar National Akali Dal Association of North America was formed in California in 1977. These newly formed organisations set up their publicity papers. The American Akali leaders started the *Suraj Weekly* under the editorship of Dr. Sukhmander Singh, while the Canadian Akali Dal brought out the *Qaumi Samachar*. However, both papers were short-lived. The events of 1984 in Punjab destroyed the credibility of the Akali Dal overseas. Both the papers were immediately drowned as angry Sikh readers switched to newly launched papers propagating an independent Sikh homeland—Khalistan.

During the 1970s, Punjab also witnessed a resurgence of the communist movement, particularly within a section of the Sikh youth. While the main Communist party was split in two in 1964 due to Sino–Indian hostilities, a further break-up came from the Naxalbari movement of West Bengal when a number of Sikh youths joined this revolutionary struggle. The Punjab Naxalite movement lasted just two years, with most of its activities taking place in the years 1969–1971. It was brutally crushed by the state authorities. Many graduate students who took part in this movement found their ways overseas, particularly to Canada. Here they took up their pens for the cause they had left behind. Many papers of this category appeared in the mid-1970s from various Canadian cities, like the *Hind Mazdoor, Lok Lahir, Watno Door, Lokta* and *Sikh Sewak*. Besides a small band of Naxalites, two other groups of Punjabi Communists in Canada also launched their papers. A CPI (M) affiliated East Indian Workers' Association of Canada was formed. In a separate move, Hari Sharma, a don at the Simon Fraser University set up the Indian People's Association of North America as a pan-Indian organisation. He launched papers such as *New India, India Now* and *Wangar* from Vancouver. With the exception of *India Now*, the other two papers were in Punjabi and English. *New India* was produced to voice opposition to Indira Gandhi's emergency rule in India,

imposed in 1975. These papers were produced as the occasion demanded. Hardial Bains, a Stalinist leader, also set up several short-lived papers from Vancouver. The latest of these ventures, launched after the failure of *Sikh Sewak*, is called *Nawin Awaz*.

The origins of some of the leftist papers must in some measure be attributed to the high esteem in which 'writers' are held in Punjabi society. As one writer put it 'if you start a magazine, you are established as a writer'. Leftist papers, which have attracted mainly the educated among the Sikhs, had propaganda drives as their main aim. Optimistic dreams of socialist transformation of society were the ideals without any reference to the actual situation in socialist countries. Solidarity with working classes, regardless of the experiences of their readers, was still their motto. Considerable space was again reserved for factional feuds. These leftist journals were all aimed at Sikh readers to woo them to the revolutionary cause. Three Marxist groups, since their formation in the early 1970s, have competed with each other, decrying the other groups as 'reactionary' or henchmen of imperialism.[19] Punjabi leftist groups have demonstrated their devotion to the revolutionary cause by publishing such journals despite their limited appeal.

Many periodicals listed in table 3 were produced by creative writers of the Punjabi language. The typical procedure was to collect and edit the material from a writer's home, post it to a Delhi of Punjab printer, import the printed magazine back and distribute it by post or personally. The first purely literary magazine in this class was *Jeevan Sanjhan* edited by Gurdial Singh Kanwal in 1971. Initially, it was written by hand and duplicated. But soon the editor arranged for its printing from Delhi. This paper appeared under a new name, *Navi Dharti*, before closing down towards the end of 1972. Another early effort by three writers of Naxalite persuasion was *Watno Door*. It continued to preach revolutionary ideas from Edmonton until its demise in 1983. The list of such publications is quite long. The latest in this genre is *Kalm* started by Darshan Gill—already an established editor of a leftist weekly. While it is fair to say that either personal ambition or political propaganda were the raison d'etre of much of the Punjabi press till the early

1970s, after this a number of publications were started to cater to the catholic tastes of Punjabi readers. Publications providing light entertainment, film gossip and romance proliferated during the 1970s. The latest addition to this genre is the fortnightly *Tasveer*, competing with the already existing *Fulwari* and *Navrang*. *Tasveer* was started in 1987 by an established editor-cum-publisher, Tara Singh Hayer from his office in Surrey. The monthly *Navrang* was edited by Darshan Kaur Bains, and it carried regular features for women. Commercial considerations have mattered to independent publishers. However, in the absence of articulate advertising agents, the full potential revenue is not even aimed at, much less realised. Sikh religious sects also demanded separate papers for their creed and propaganda. A paper called *Beads of Truth* was launched by Harbhajan Singh Yogi's 3-HO centre in Los Angeles; a similar but short-lived production, aimed at Radha Soami devotees, was launched from Montreal.

THIRD PHASE: POST-1984 PERIOD

Drastic changes affecting the diaspora Sikh community were unleashed by the unexpected invasion of the Golden Temple by the Indian authorities in June 1984. The full impact of this crucial event is still being felt and is hard to document. Its impact on the Punjabi media was immense. Independent newspapers such as *Indo-Canadian Times* immediately projected their pro-Sikh stance. The campaign for Khalistan—an independent country for Sikhs—received popular support through the columns of several existing newspapers. Fresh journals were set up by new political alliances and organisations with the dissolution of the Akali Dal. Of the new organisations in the post-1984 period, the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) was most prominent, spanning Canada, the United States and Britain and even some European countries. Some American Sikhs launched another organisation, the World Sikh Organisation (WSO), headed by Didar Singh Bains—a millionaire Sikh farmer from Yuba City. These organisations launched their respective newspapers. The WSO started a weekly paper called *World Sikh News* in January 1985 from Stockton. The ISYF of Canada

launched *Awaz-e Qaum* which is essentially a fax copy of a British-based Punjabi paper.[20] It has acted as a major campaigning weekly for an independent Sikh state since 1985. Harpal Singh Khalsa, leader of a break-away faction of ISYF produces another weekly; the *Chardhi Kala*. *Sangharsh* and *Itihas* were started by individuals as a direct result of the Indian army action. These post-1984 papers illustrate the agonising pain, heart-searching and sheer anguish among Sikh readers affected by political developments in the Punjab. As a result of the events of 1984, an already competitive industry has also become embroiled in personal and factional feuds, leading on occasions to violent incidents. *The Sikh News*, a weekly set up by an enthusiastic Sikh from New York underlined the acute dilemma as follows:

> ... The Sikh nation's cause has to be fought simultaneously on three fronts each requiring a different strategy, tactics and weapons. The three fronts are (a) the hearts and minds of our own people; (b) the international community; (c) the Indian government. We cannot neglect any front or we may win battles but lose the war. How do the Sikh community appear to the world? Are we like the Jews struggling to right a momentous wrong or like the Palestinians with little sense of the past, a chaotic present and little hope for the future? If the shoe fits, wear it.[21]

New monthlies have appeared, among these *The Sikh Times*, *The Truth* and *Shamsheer Dast* from Vancouver, *The Sword* from Toronto, *Jago*—a Punjabi literary and religious monthly from San Jose—all launched again as a direct result of the events of 1984. The International Sikh Organisation, a splinter group of WSO, has its own publication *The Sikh Herald* from Toronto. The events of 1984, have however, given some encouragement to the use of better technology, in one case leading to trans-national cooperation in the production. Thus, the ISYF now produces its weekly in Toronto via fax from its London paper. Similarly, the WSO journals are set in Canada and printed at different places in the United States for easy distribution. Although the discussion of the Punjabi press in the mainstream media

of the two countries has been virtually non-existent, after 1984 this situation has somewhat changed. In the post-1984 period, Indian governmental agencies have also used their leverage to discipline those advocating Sikh separatism. Air India advertisements are given only to those which reflect the 'integrity of India' policy.[22] The Punjab crisis has, rather adversely, begun to dampen the trend towards bilingual publications. The weeklies which have appeared since 1984 are in Punjabi only, while some monthlies have also appeared in English.

However, despite major changes in the Punjabi media in the post-1984 period, even a cursory glance through the tables reveals the highly unstable nature of the Punjabi press. Only a couple of weeklies have passed the 10-year mark. What are the prospects for the Punjabi media? How likely is it that the Punjabi language newspapers will survive, given that Punjabi is taught only to a small number of young Sikhs? Leaving aside the rural California Sikhs, the majority of first generation Sikh settlers in America are literate in English and Punjabi. For this reason, the Stockton-based *World Sikh News* has acquired a wide currency among the American Sikhs. This should be compared with the present circulation figures of Punjabi language newspapers and journals. For the *Indo–Canadian Times*, the largest weekly, the print order is just over 10,000 copies. Until the early 1970s all publications relied on hand writing the Punjabi section or getting it typeset by printers in Punjab—a method particularly common to literary magazines with no deadlines to meet. In 1978 Tara Singh Hayer initiated the use of Punjabi typesetting, and now all weeklies are set with computer typesetting. Proprietors often telephone for the latest news from Punjab by the Thursday deadline. News, articles, pictures are almost all borrowed from Punjab dailies, monthlies and local papers. Only in recent years has the machinery used undergone substantial change. As computerised typesetting of the Punjabi alphabet has become available, various proprietors have rushed to acquire this facility. Travel agencies, sweet shops, clothes and fashion shops are all sources of advertising revenue. Only large papers employ a regular agent for advertising. Instead, personal networks and frantic visits to various towns by the proprietors ensure a steady influx of advertising revenue. The

full-page advertisement rates are relatively low. Community institutions such as the gurdwaras, pay to advertise important events. Increasingly the Punjabi pop industry has become a major advertiser. Concerts, newly released discs and variety programmes are now announced and paid for by such bands. State agencies have occasionally used the ethnic press for announcements of vacancies or other public notices.

It is reasonable to assume that changes in the profile of Sikh communities will direct the Punjabi press towards bilingual publications, a process already understood by some of the proprietors. A greater focus on Sikh youth and professionals, social tastes and women's issues must be catered for by any new publications. Corporate financial backing for the Punjabi press is another alternative which may affect the industry's fortunes in decisive ways. The only effort in this direction so far is the *World Sikh News*, with the financial backing of several Sikhs. This paper consequently has a better appearance than its rivals, though it is uneasily balanced between its competent English section and the rather hurriedly assembled 'pull-out Punjabi section'. Another Punjabi businessman trying to diversify his media activities is Tara Singh Hayer; he has launched an evening paper aimed at the local white readers.

CONCLUSION

The Punjabi media of North America in its eighth decade compares rather favourably with the journalistic endeavours of other ethnic communities from Europe and the Far East.[23] The American Punjabi press has drawn upon Punjab not only for its subject matter, but also for technical support, including the importing of rota presses and of editorial expertise. During its pioneering decades, it significantly influenced its local readers and the growing Sikh diaspora as far afield as Singapore and Hong Kong. Moreover, stringent measures undertaken by British authorities in the early twentieth century to curb 'propaganda and seditious ideas' coming from the North American Punjabi media are a testimony to its vitality and impact in the homeland. The fact that similar steps have been considered against a section of the overseas Punjabi

media in the post-1984 period, confirms the enduring relationship with the Punjab.

The fate of the Punjabi press, like other ethnic media, is intricately linked with the complex process involved in the cultural reproduction of ethnic minorities. Early periodicals provide an interesting example of the politically motivated media, the journals associated with the Gadr movement seem to have a striking parallel to the post-1984 publications. By providing diverse narratives of social, cultural and religious life, the Punjabi ethnic press continues to serve as a mirror image of the Punjabi community, and in several ways the fortunes of the Punjabi press ultimately reflect those of its readers. The Punjabi media tells us more about the mental, emotional and historic world-view of the Punjabi diaspora than any other source. It remains one of the best sources for the study of overseas Sikh community life, but so far few studies have tapped its full potential. While some notice of Punjabi press has been taken, especially in Canada, the contours of social life depicted by the Punjabi press still remain rather unnoticed. It is hoped scholars will henceforth undertake the more difficult task of assessing the impact of the overseas Punjabi media on its local Sikh societies as well as the Punjab.

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I am also grateful to two anonymous referees who made some helpful comments; not all of these are incorporated. The usual caveat applies regarding responsibility for any mistakes or interpretations.

Notes

1. The term Punjabi press here covers all newspapers and journals in Punjabi, English, Urdu and other languages produced either by Sikhs or mainly for the Sikh/Punjabi readers in the United States of America and Canada.
2. See, for example, entries in *Canadiana: National Bibliography of Canada* for various years.

3. Some scholars have attempted a partial listing of these papers: See a few efforts by Gurcharn S. Barsan, 'East Indian Canadian Periodicals Publications: A Preliminary Check List', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 5, 1-2 (1976), 41–46; N.G. Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature* (Delhi: Manohar, 1970); and *Banned: Proscribed Literature in British India* (Missouri: University of Missouri, 1971); Norman Buchignani, A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East Indians in Canada', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 9 (1977), 86–108.
4. Its address was 3700 California Street, San Francisco. Later its editor moved to Magnolia Street, Oakland.
5. For a sample of occasional but vicious propaganda against incoming Sikhs and other oriental peoples, especially the Japanese, see articles in such journals as *The Collier's Magazine, The Forum, The Survey*; for a discussion of media portrayal of South Asians in Vancouver press, see Indra Doreen, 'South Asian Stereotypes in the Vancouver Press', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2, 2, 166–89.
6. The background to the Vancouver riots and the formation of the Asiatic Exclusion League is given in several books; see in particular, Joan Jensen, *Passage from India* (Yale University Press, 1988); a general account of Sikh settlers is to be found in Norman Buchignani and Doreen Indra with Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McCelland and Stewart, 1985); for America, see Labrack, *The Sikhs of California*, 1904–1986 (New York: AMS Press, 1988).
7. Tarknath Das, born near Calcutta, came to America in July 1906 via Japan, where the Indian government had issued a warrant against him for taking part in anti-governmental activities. Tarknath Das' later career spanned a post at the Columbia University.
8. Sant Teja Singh's role among Canadian Sikhs remains poorly documented. His autobiography *Jiwan Kahani* (Gurdwara Baru Sahib, 1989), does not shed much light on his activities in Canada.
9. William Hopkinson was deputed to shadow a number of leaders of East Indians. His reports led to an ever-widening net of charges of spying and sedition: see Hugh Johnston, 'The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908–1918', *BC Studies*, 78 (Summer 1988). Hopkinson was shot dead by Mewa Singh in a court room in October 1914 when he was giving evidence. Mewa Singh is remembered by the Punjabi Media every year as a martyr to East Indians' cause.
10. Hugh, Johnston, *The Voyage of Komagata Maru: the Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1979).
11. See Emily Brown, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1975)
12. Many poems appearing in the *Gadr* were later collected into pamphlets. These were titled *Ghadar dian goojan* (Songs of Revolt) series.
13. Mark Naidis, 'The Propaganda of the Ghadar Party', *Pacific Historical Review*, 20 (1951), 251–60; S. Vatuk, 'Protest Songs of East Indians from the West Coast', *Folklore*, 7 (1966), 371–82. See Barrier, *Banned*, for

the sensitivity shown by the Government of Punjab towards the Gadr publications and efforts to censor it.

14. The Gadr movement has attracted some studies: Harish Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organization and Strategy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983) Khushwant Singh and Satendra Singh, *Ghadar: India's First Armed Revolution* (Delhi, 1966); Sohan Singh Josh, *Hindustan Ghadar Party*, 2 volumes (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1977–78),; Naidis, 'The Propaganda of the Ghadar Party', provides an analysis of the Gadr propaganda.
15. See Gurharpal Singh, *Communism in Punjab* (New Delhi: Ajanta, 1993); Also see details in the Sedition Committee Report 1918, chaired by Mr. Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt; F.C.Isemonger and J. Slattery's *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, 1913–1919* is the most detailed account of the movement by two senior police officers of the Punjab government.
16. Nowhere are all old files of the Punjabi media preserved, except some of the Gadr Party papers. Some Pacific state's libraries hold odd copies of selected titles, often their collection is haphazard and random. Among notable depositories are, the University of British Columbia, Special Collections Section with cuttings from early papers, similar is the case of the Archives of British Columbia at Victoria. Some of the Gadr publications have been preserved at Berkeley's South East Asian Library. In Punjab, the Gadr Memorial Library in Jalandhar has preserved some old files, while the National Archives of India in New Delhi has more substantial material than Jalandhar or Berkeley. Kesar Singh Dhillon in Oakland, California kept many rare papers relating to the Gadr, he also published an occasional series, *Call of the Martyrs*, as the bulletin of the Hindustan Gadr Party Memorial Committee during the years 1964–69.
17. In the absence of specific enumeration of Sikhs in the two countries, the data relating to the Sikh population is at best an informed guess.
18. Sant Fateh Singh, a Sikh leader from Punjab, visited Britain immediately after the acceptance of the demand for a Punjabi-speaking province in 1966. Another Sikh leader, Parkash Singh Badal, the then Chief minister of Punjab, and other ministers of the Akali government visited Britain and North America in the early 1970s. Gurcharn Singh Tohra—head of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar—and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal—president of Akali Dal—also toured abroad in this process of political consultation.
19. For the communist movement in Punjab, see Bhagwan Josh, '*Communist Movement in Punjab, 1926–1947* (New Delhi, 1979); and Gurharpal Singh, 'Communist Movement in the Punjab until 1967.' University of London, unpublished Ph D thesis, 1987).
20. For the inter-penetration of some of the publications across the Atlantic and on Britain's Punjabi journalism, see Darshan Singh Tatla and Gurharpal Singh, 'The Punjabi Press', *New Community*, 15, 2 (January 1989), 171–84.
21. *The Sikh News*, 2 September, 1984, 'If the Shoe Fits'.
22. The proprietors are acutely aware of the Indian governmental agencies'

power and tactics to sway their editorial lines. This is also clear from some of new titles aimed at Sikh readers with a committed stance against Sikh separatism.

23. The Punjabi press dates back to the establishment of British rule in Punjab: See, Barrier, *Banned*.

Amrita Pritam's Writing: A Critical Appreciation

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London

This article undertakes a critical appreciation of Amrita Pritam's writings. It locates the changing influences that have informed Pritam's work and make her one of the most distinguished writers of Punjabi fiction and poetry. The authors' work, it is argued, cannot be classified into neat literary compartments because its over-riding characteristic is the merging of creative boundaries.

I

The distinguished Punjabi poetess and writer of fiction Amrita Pritam (born 1919) has such an extensive literary output—some 20 collections of poetry, over 35 novels and novellas, 10 collections of short stories and several books of essays, travel diaries and autobiography[1] written over five decades, that a brief review can barely outline a few of the significant features of her work.

As she is also a prominent public figure, Amrita Pritam's works receive more than the normal attention paid to literature. She has been involved with international organisations like Afro–Asian Writers; she has been invited to conferences on peace; she has been a frequent visitor to foreign countries especially East Europe. Translations of her works, mainly poetry, are available in several languages, including Bulgarian and Albanian. A rebel in her teens, a forceful critic of the subjugation of women under patriarchal social institutions and outmoded custom, she has spoken

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out against oppression and injustice. Her editorials in her own literary journal *Nagmani*, and her public pronouncements against communal violence, religious fanaticism and issues such as dowry deaths have added to her public persona. She was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1986 and continues to be a media personality.

Not surprisingly she has been the target of much criticism and overt hostility. Her works have been censored or banned by academic and governmental bodies. Stories like 'Ik Shahr did Maut' (The Death of a City) were declared obscene and taken off university courses.[2] A poem, 'Nau Suphne' (Nine Dreams) about Guru Nanak's mother, dreaming of the child she is carrying in her womb, almost became the subject of a court case.[3]

It is difficult to place Amrita Pritam's writings in neat literary compartments like naturalism, social realism, romanticism, because an over-riding feature of her work is the merging of creative boundaries. Because she has written about the exploited and oppressed sections of society, mainly rural women, and about public issues such as war and capitalist manipulation she has sometimes been counted among Punjabi progressive writers like Sant Singh Sekhon.[4] However, her poetry and fiction rarely remain on the level of realism—either as social realism or what Lukacs revised as critical realism. What begins as simple reportage soon changes into lyrical romanticism; situations of political and social conflict are personalised and individualised. Her characters may have been based on persons drawn from particular groups such as her fiction dealing with college students[5] or village priests,[6] but are in no way to be regarded as types. When she has researched carefully into the life of a real person and meticulously described the squalor of particular areas of Lahore and Bombay, as in her novel *Bulava (The Call)*[7] the product is a mixture of realism and fantasy.

Pritam's emotional intensity, which can sometimes lapse into sentimentality, has tended to place her with romantic writers. However, the romantic elements of imagery, symbolism, metaphor, often based on her wide knowledge of the various mythologies of the subcontinent, do not hide the realistic core of the work. This is especially marked in her love poetry where the connections with autobiography are particularly close. She provides ample evidence from her much read autobiography, originally published

as *Rasidi Ticket (Revenue Stamp)* and revised as *Life and Times,*[8] of her relationship with the Urdu poet and lyricist, Sahir Ludhianvi, which inspired her volume of poetry, *Sunehure (Messages)*, that won her the Sahitya Akademi of India's award for 1956. Surjit Singh Dulai describes the collection as 'one long call to love voiced in a hundred different tunes' reminiscent of Kalidasa's love poetry.[9] Each poem depicts one phase of the relationship, and the stylistic details serve to highlight the reality of her love. In 'Ve Pardesiya' (O Traveller) the excitement of a new friendship begins. There is progression in successive poems which express the joy of union. 'The seven notes of life's music...filled the vessel of beauty to its brim'.[10] Then the inevitable end when Sahir leaves and Amrita evokes the names of Sassi and Punnun as she views the miles of desert before her and the 'valley of sterility'.[11]

Amrita Pritam's ability to clothe the emotional intensity of love with the reality of the social and cultural milieu which her poetic personality inhabit creates a more complex texture of love poetry than conventional romanticism. In 'Bread of Dreams' the woman narrator of the peom dared to eat the 'bread of dreams' but the news soon spread to 'big wings', 'long bleaks' 'cruel teeth', and 'sharp claws'. The woman's dream could not last, and the bread was snatched from her hands leaving hands and cheeks scarred.[12]

Conservatives who want to keep their daughters segregated from men lest their virginal purity be defined are satirised in Pritam's poem, 'The Guardians', for along with their zeal ostensibly to protect the girls is a sanctimoniousness, as they feel they are merely doing their social duty, vividly expressed thus:

> How anxious they are/About this neighbour's daughter/And that neighbour's son/How careful of their welfare....
> Spending hours/Looking through cracks/And through keyholes...
> Peering under broken blinds/And craning round corners...[13]

II

Amrita Pritam as a feminist writer does not conform to the expectations of many feminist theorists in some of her ideas.

Certainly, she is a critic of the oppression and subjugation of women through patriarchal domination in the family and the many obsolete customs that enforce a double standard of morality. She is clearly critical of the economic dependence of women upon men, and in her own life always tried to earn her living both during and after the breakdown of her marriage. In one of her best poems on the subject, 'Annadata' (The Breadwinner), the wife addresses her husband as the one who provides her with her daily bread and whom she must obey as she has obeyed her father. She stands silently before her breadwinner, who as the baker can knead and roll her into any shape he wishes—as his plaything, as his servant. She cannot answer back, conscious as she is of being—weighed down by the weight of his bread. He will plunge her 'in the lava' of his body, but he will not get her love.[14]

In a similar vein she describes the neglect of a pregnant wife who waits for her husband. He may be enjoying himself at a wine shop or a brothel while she sits and waits.

Night half gone
Half to go:
I sit under the roof
Of your father and your father's father
By low candle light
Expecting your unsteady feet
The hateful smell of wine
On your breath....
I, yes, I
I, the mother of your child to be born.[15]

Motherhood is a contentious issue in the context of women's liberation in feminist thinking these days. The demands made by child bearing and child rearing have become a focal point of debate. For the older generation of Indian women writers, like Pritam, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai, motherhood is a very important aspect of women's self development. As the loving mother of two children and a fond grandmother Amrita Pritam understands the heartbreak of women who are barren, though she cannot condone the treatment meted out to childless

wives. This is vividly described in her short story, 'Stench of Kerosene'[16] in which Guleri, a hill woman, childless after some years of marriage, is the victim of social custom. The mother-in-law persuades the husband to get a second wife to obtain a son while Guleri is visiting her parents. Overwhelmed by grief Guleri burns herself to death.

A more radical approach is found in Pritam's story, 'A Soundless Shriek'[17] in which two opposing views are presented. Nihal Kaur, the senior wife of a rich landlord, is childless despite consulting all available gynaecologists and *vaids*. She does not despair, but takes the initiative to find a younger second wife for her elderly husband who desperately wants a son and heir.. She rationalises her bitterness by treating the young co-wife, Veero, as her daughter rather than a rival. When Veero becomes pregnant she spoils her and accompanies her to Veero's father's house for the delivery. A son is born and Nihal Kaur looks forward to taking over its rearing to find the satisfaction of a surrogate mother. Her hopes are dashed when Veero confesses that the child is not the husband's, but the result of a liaison with the husband's clerk. Veero is unrepentant, even defiant. She was forced to marry an old man, and she is not going to continue with that life. She will not return, nor will she surrender her child. It will be a difficult existence because she will be punished for her 'sin', but at least she has the memory of having had someone young making love to her. [8]

Pritam's view that women need heterosexual love to fulfil themselves is a highly contentious issue for most feminists. The essence of women's liberation is to recognise and develop to the fullest the women's own potential. Undoubtedly, should she choose to love and share a life with another, she should have the right, but fulfilment is essentially from within the woman's own self. However, for Pritam, the supreme writer of love poetry, love in its fullest sense of physical union and psychological and emotional excitement and joy, should be open to women. Sexuality is for both men and women, and as one who has read and appreciated Henry Miller[19] Pritam parts company with American feminists like Kate Millett who find Miller's treatment of women as sex objects highly repugnant.[20]

Alka, the heroine of Pritam's novel, *Chakka Nambar Chhatti*

(translated as *A Line in Water*[21]), remains one of Pritam's favourite creations. Indeed, she has even written a poem to her, so moved was she by Alka's deep love for Kumar, a painter and Alka's mentor. Alka is liberated on one level, in that she is able to get away from her comfortable middle class home and father to stay in Kangra village and study painting with her beloved Kumar. However, she does not feel committed to her art to the extent of seeking self expression and creative release through her work. Her sole concern is the love she feels for Kumar with whom she longs to merge her very being. Kumar is apprehensive of emotional involvement, and finds whatever he needs in the arms of prostitutes whom he visits periodically. What moved Pritam so deeply is the point at which Alka wishes that she could be one of those prostitutes who gets Rs. 20 for having Kumar in her embrace. For Pritam, Alka's courage in being able to entertain such a thought is quite outstanding. In the poem dedicated to Alka it is this aspect which Pritam emphasises. She, Amrita, has not been able to cross what she describes as the 'Ramayanic line of honour', the poet's metaphor for the Hindu ideal wife, Sita. Alka, however, is prepared to go beyond that line and reduce herself to the level of prostitute in order to prove her love.[22]

Fifteen years after the publication of Alka's love for Kumar, Pritam created a more strongly defined liberated woman in Shirin, the main woman character in Pritam's novel, *Uninja Din (Unchas Din*[23] in the Hindi version). Shirin is a Muslim working class girl who lives with her father and his two wives in a Delhi *basti.* At one level Shirin is scarcely liberated. She is confined to the house where she helps her mothers do the household chores with the occasional visit to a relative who lives nearby or to the neighbourhood *paanwalla.* Her education is little more than rudimentary. She is, however, highly intelligent and enterprising. When Sanjay, a novelist and her father's close friend, begins to teach Shirin's brother, she gets his books and educates herself. Later, when the brother is being taught a compositor's trade, Shirin picks up his skills and tries to get her father to buy a printing machine so that she can become a machinist like him and eventually a partner in their own printing business. Her love for Sanjay is not allowed to become the dominant

force in her life, though Shirin is fully aware of the risk she runs by falling in love with a Hindu in a communally polarised Delhi. The novel situates the relationship between Shirin and Sanjay and the friendship between Sanjay and Shirin's father as the positive side of the bleak scene that is so pervasive throughout the subcontinent's religious communities retreating behind walls of bigotry and orthodoxy. When Shirin and Sanjay decide to get married they both reject the notion of religious conversion. They will not placate the communalists, nor will they escape from the *basti* to a safer place. The only road to survival is for India's different religions to coexist, to walk side by side in amity.

III

Pritam's skill in merging creative boundaries contributes to the freshness and interest of her public voice in literature. While the range of subjects which have aroused her anger or caused her pain is broad, the common thread that runs through her verse and fiction is the emotional response, her sense of outrage and sorrow which appear genuine and not the stylish reaction of a great deal of the rhetoric that has stereotyped progressive writing. She began writing poetry while still in her teens. As a rebellious young girl, growing up in a motherless house with an austere scholary father who got her married off before she was 17, her poetry initially betrayed a general sense of desolation at the inhumanity she found all around. Her first major collection, *Patthar Geete (Pebble Playthings)*, published in 1946, focused on the relations between man and woman including the poems discussed earlier—'Breadwinner' and 'Waiting'.

Partition forced Pritam and her family to leave Lahore where she had grown up, it became the most decisive event in her life. A witness to some of the horrors perpetrated by fanatical or politically motivated people on both sides of the newly created borders of India and Pakistan in 1947, Amrita's thoughts began to turn to her roots, her sense of being a daughter of Punjab now in the throes of mutilation. As she travelled by train to Dehradun and to Delhi she remembered Waris Shah, the great eighteenth century Sufi poet of the Punjab and his version of

Heer–Ranjha, the star-crossed lovers whose romance in Punjabi oral literature is part of the shared inheritance of all Punjabis. She was inspired by Waris's Heer to compose what is possibly her most famous poem. 'To Waris Shah'.[24] In her autobiography she recalls the dark nights on the train and the images of death and destruction which Waris had seen ravaging the Punjab at the end of the eighteenth century and the recent butchery and rape which were so fresh in her mind.[25]

The poem's power and emotional strength depend on Pritam's poetic craft. She uses a unified set of images, drawing upon the landscape of the Punjab, its people and the romance of Heer and Ranjha. She begins with an impassioned address to Waris Shah who wrote his Heer because one woman had been so cruelly treated. Now that thousands of Heers were being raped and killed, Pritam exhorts Waris to rise from his grave. Blood runs in the Chenab, and all five rivers have poison flowing in them. Punjab's rich earth sprouts venomous weeds, and the noxious air sucks life out of the people. No one sings; women do not sit by their spinning wheels; the boats on the rivers float rudderless. The Ranjhas of today have forgotten their flutes, and there are too many people ready to don the mantle of Kaidu. 'Waris Shah! Open your grave. Write a new page in the book of love'.[26]

Amrita Pritam's wide reading and her knowledge of Punjab's three main languages—Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu—and their literature, especially folk poetry and song which she has anthologised,[27] has enriched her Punjabi identity. In order to rekindle in her fellow Punjabis who had lost their awareness of such a composite Punjabiness, composed of the varied cultures of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu Punjab, she embarked on a path of writing in which her imagination and heightened sensibilities would seek out what she describes as the 'meaning of the poem' that is Punjab for her.[28] The milestone on that path is undoubtedly her best novel, *Pinjer (The Skeleton),* which should be read after her poem 'Frenzy', for it represents a broad humanism, the only antidote to communalism. The short stanzas of 'Frenzy' present a searing indictment of those who manipulate religion for their own ends:

When religion goes to people's heads
Steel is sharpened.
Tongues grow cruel
Poisoned by black snakes of hatred...
Behind the fanatics stand those who raise the flag and send children, young men and women as animals for sacrifice.[29]

Pinjer[30] can be read in different ways. It can serve as a long metaphor for Indian history or the history of the Punjab where successive rulers, having established themselves by naked force. proceeded to use religion for their own ends by directing their attacks at the weakest points of the older faiths. It can be interpreted as a realistic narrative of the experience of thousands of women abducted and raped as religious tension rose to a crescendo on the eve of and just after the partition. At another level it is Pritam's vision of the freedom women can achieve when they can transcend the harshness of daily life and comprehend a deeper truth about their existence. Above all, it is her solution for the different religions and cultures of the subcontinent to live in peace and dignity.

The narrative follows the abduction of Pooro, the daughter of a Hindu moneylender in a west Punjab village by Rashida, a young Muslim farmer who is avenging a dishonour done to his family. At first Pooro is desperate to escape and return home, though Rashida warns her of the treatment she will receive. He is proved right for Pooro's parents refuse to take her back, because their friends and neighbours will ostracise them since the abducted Pooro has been defiled. Ram Chand, Pooro's fiancé, is quickly married off to Pooro's younger sister, and the family migrates to Thailand. With neither hope nor fear Pooro goes back to Rashida who has as yet not touched her. His code of honour demands she be converted to Islam, and become his wife according to Islamic law. She is renamed Hamida.

At this point Pritam intervenes to make Hamida recognise the deeper truths of her new world. Now a mother, Hamida–Pooro gets to know other women in the village, and discovers through their unhappy lives that her own troubles are minor compared to some of theirs. Women married off to cruel husbands by equally callous fathers; women cast out for alleged immorality;

women dying of hunger and disease, the list is long. Hamida begins to accept life, and wants to forget that Rashida has wronged her. 'She fervently longed to make love to him. After all, he was her husband and the father of her son. This alone was true; this alone mattered.'[31]

Such an emotional response might appear very feeble set against the spirit of women's protest movements. Yet, in the context of what was happening in Pooro's village and all over the Punjab, her consciousness of the positive aspects of her life contains a sense of proportion. The novel builds up to a climax as partition takes place. 'Just as a peeled orange falls apart into many segments, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab broke away from each other.'[32] After the violence and terror the new governments of India and Pakistan agreed to set up programmes for the 'rescue and rehabilitation' of abducted women on both sides. Hamida has the opportunity of returning with one of the teams from India. Her brother has come to search for his wife, and she can accompany them back. Pritam could have chosen any one of several options open to her heroine. If this were a popular romance Pooro would go back, find Ram Chand still waiting for her and be reunited with her family. Or she could, in a serious novel return and dedicate her life to the service of others. Rajinder Singh Bedi worked out a third alternative in 'Lajwanti'—his brilliant story of an abducted wife returning to her husband. Pritam rejects all these possibilities. Hamida refuses to return. She will stay in Pakistan. She tells her brother that when the family welcomes his wife back in their midst she will also be with them in spirit. Pooro–Hamida symbolises for Pritam the unity of the Punjab and, on a higher level, of humanity when she concludes, Whether one is a Hindu girl or a Muslim one, whosoever reaches her destination, she carries along my soul also...[33]

IV

Pritam's 'public' writings of the sixties and seventies express a political outlook which was certainly left-wing though not affiliated to any of the communist or socialist parties of India. Basically, they are expressions of her subjective responses to

events around her—the war in Vietnam, the Civil Rights Struggle in the US, the wars between India and her neighbours.[34] She also relates political themes to her own sense of self. 'My Address' written shortly after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 contains references to the attempts made by the citizens of Prague to resist the invaders. They blotted out the names of the streets and the house numbers.

Today, I effaced my house number
the name of the street...
...if you must search me out
just knock at the door
in each street of each city of each country...
Wherever you find a free soul—that's my home.

In recent years Amrita Pritam has been absorbed by questions of metaphysics and existentialism. Always fascinated by the convolutions of human consciousness and its fluctuations through the various levels of the mind from the unconscious to the supra-conscious, she has used dreams, delusions, the fevered imagining of artists and delirium in her writings. Latterly, the quest has developed into what she describes as 'my journey from Draupadi to Draupadi.' She finds the symbol of Draupadi who in the *Mahabharata* was both the object and the subject of conflict intriguing. Though Draupadi was the last object to be put at stake by her husband, Yudhisthir, as he lost his gambling match she dared to question his authority to hand her over to the Kauravas. As the subject it was Draupadi who vowed to see the destruction of those who had dishonoured her, and tried to destroy the Pandavas. Pritam's creativity is now into the realm of incarnation and countless birth.[35]

Much of this kind of thinking she attributes to her study of an esoteric cult—Red Thread Zen. She finds in her literary creation a feeling akin to the inner agony experience by Zen Buddhists in which the outside world becomes a mere symbol. Should Pritam traverse this road her writing will be radically altered. It is precisely her recognition of the outside world and the interaction between it and her sensibilities as expressed in the lives and feelings of her characters and the personae of her poetry that has made her such an interesting and challenging writer.

NOTES

1. For a comprehensive bibliography of Pritam's works up to the end of the sixties see *Mahfil,* Amrita Pritam Number, V, 3 (1968–69); for later works see Sahitya Akademi, 'Meet the Author' (Delhi, 1988).
2. Amrita Pritam, *Life and Times* (Delhi: Vikas, 1989), 107–108.
3. Ibid., 136–37.
4. Surjit Singh Dulai, 'Pragativad in Punjabi Literature', *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature,* II (1974), 108–14.
5. See Amrita Pritam's novels, *Jilvatan* (1968) and *Jebkatre* (1975); the latter has been translated into English as *The Rising Sun* (1977) by Krishna Gorowara.
6. Amrita Pritam's *Yatri* (1971).
7. *Bulava* (1960) was based on the life of painter and poster maker, Faiz. See interview with Rama Jha, *Indian Literature,* XXV, 5 (1982).
8. Amrita Pritam, *Rasidi Ticket* (1976), translated into English by Krishna Gorowara (1977), New Edition, *Life ana Times* (1989) 13–14.
9. Surjit Singh Dulai, 'Pebble Playthings to Serpent's Jewel', *Mahfil* (1968–69), 63.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 64.
12. Charles Brasch in collaboration with Amrita Pritam, *The Black Rose* (Delhi: 5 Nagmani, n.d.).
13. Ibid., 22
14. Ibid., 20
15. Ibid., 23
16. Amrita Pritam, 'Stench of Kerosene', trans. Khushwant singh, in Khushwant Singh and Jaya Thadani (eds.), *Land of the Five Rivers: Stories from the Punjab* (Jaico, 1965).
17. 'A Soundless Shriek', translated from the Punjabi 'Ik Hauka' by Raj Gill, in; *The Skeleton and other Stories* (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1973).
18. Ibid., 108.
19. Amrita Pritam's introduction to Punjabi Poetry in *Indian Poetry Today, Volume I* (Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Rev. Ed. 1985), 89.
20. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Hart Davis, 1972).
21. Amrita Pritam, *Chakka Nambar Chhatti* (1964), translated into English as *A Line in Water* by Krishna Gorowara (Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1975).
22. Pritam, *Life and Times,* 125–26.
23. Amrita Pritam, *Uninja Din* (1979) Hindi Translation as *Unchas Din,* in Bharatiya Jnanpith Award Volume, *Amrita Pritam, Chune Hue Upanyas* (Delhi, 1982), 589–733.
24. Amrita Pritam, *Selected Poems* (ed.) Khushwant Singh, (Bharatiya Jnanpith Award Volume, 1982), 93–95.
25. Pritam, *Life and Times,* 20–22

26. Pritam, *Selected Poems*, 93–95
27. Amrita Pritam, *Punjab di Awaz* (Voice of the Punjab) (Collection of Folk Songs, 1952); and *Mauli te Meandi* (Sacred Thread and Renna) (1955).
28. Pritam, *Life and Times*, 109
29. Pritam, *The Black Rose*, 21
30. Amrita Pritam, *Pinjer* (Amritsar, 1950), translated into English by Khushwant Singh as *The Skeleton, 73.*
31. Ibid., 39
32. Ibid., 63
33. Ibid., 92
34. Mahendra Kulasrestha, translations of *Existence and Other Poems* by Amrita Pritam (Nagmani, Delhi 1967).
35. Amrita Pritam, 'The Relationship of the Red Thread', *Indian Literature*, 135 (1990), 126.

Understanding Punjab's Political Economy: Imran Ali's Interpretation

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Historical developments within the Punjab region during the past four decades have steadily added to its academic centrality in Modern South Asian Studies. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of such events as the 1947 partition and its accompanying migrations, the further subdivision of the Indian Punjab and the growing geopolitical and economic importance of the 'two Punjabs' in the successor states to the Raj.

During the 1980s the Indian Punjab proved Indira Gandhi's fatal undoing, whilst the Pakistani Punjab defied for 18 months the Premiership of Benazir Bhutto. Again, after the dissolution of the Nawaz Sharif government through a Presidential decree on 19 April 1993, the Punjab administration led by Manzoor Wattoo, a former Sharif-loyalist landlord, defied the reinstated Prime Minister until the establishment of the caretaker government of Premier Moeen Qureshi in July 1993. During the elections for assemblies in October 1993, the Punjab's centrality in Pakistani

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politics was reconfirmed. Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif both acknowledged that any party wielding power in the Punjab could easily destabilise a rival in the national government in Islamabad. Authority in the Punjab, Pakistan's most prosperous and populous unit has thus remained the only assured guarantee for national power.

Though in the case of Pakistani Punjab the defiance is largely symptomatic of personal squabbles rooted in dynastic ambitions among the landed elite, one does hear some solitary urban voices resenting the constant denunciation of the province as the cat's paw of the establishment, intent upon exploiting smaller provinces in the country. Occasional slogans like *jag Punjabi jag*! (Wake up, Punjabi, wake up!) appearing during times of political splits, especially before the elections, do reflect a reaction to what is assumed by many urbanite Punjabis as 'Punjab bashing'. From the days of an active Bangladeshi/Bengali nationalism to present day uneasy Sindhi pluralism, Pakistani Punjab has been attributed — not without substance — unilateral powers over other federating units. With an explicit preponderance in both the army and bureaucracy, a lion's share in the electoral seats in the National Assembly and visible dominance in the national economy serious suspicion among the emergent intermediate/middling classes across the country has focused on 'Punjabi domination'. Like the Bengali nationalists earlier, the bourgeoisie from amongst the Sindhi, Mujahir and Baluch communities—supported by their 'ethnic' *waderas*, entrepreneurs and jagirdars — conveniently see Punjab as the monopoliser of power and resources. Such a sense of alienation, not unusual in any plural society, has occasionally turned riotous due to political suffocation and administrative mismanagement. The lack of equilibrium between an overpowering state (largely perceived as Punjab dominated) and a trans-regional yet infantile civil society added to a sense of disenchantment generated by extensive land allotments and unbridled migrations into Sindh. In addition to its distinct visibility within the bureaucracy and armed forces, the sheer size of the Punjab both in population and resources does engender a sense of awe among the 'smaller' provinces.

Simultaneous with the Punjab's preponderance over the state in Pakistan, one comes across serious criticism about a lack

of a cultural and political cohesiveness among the Punjabis. A sense of nonchalance towards the Punjabi language, common irreverence towards any proposed superarching Punjabi identity, contrasted with willingness to assume the role of flagship of a *national* or trans-regional *Muslim* identity, have perplexed Punjab watchers. Thus, on the one hand, Punjab appears manifestly outgoing, accommodative, assimilative, cosmopolitan and trans-regional, whereas simultaneously there is a bleak absence of a sustained debate on a coherent Punjabi identity revolving around cultural, territorial or historical symbols. Punjab, to its observers, concurrently appears trans-regionalist and localist even at a time when ethno-regional forces have assumed greater proportions in South Asia and elsewhere. Such a dichotomy, as recent studies by P.H.M. van den Dungen or Imran Ali suggest, may be rooted in the 'Punjab tradition' emanating from colonial times. This prioritised administration over governance. Politics of co-option exercised through patronage with greater preference for rural and landholding agricultural interests lay at the heart of the Punjabi way of politicking. The dependency relationship, with locally powerful landed interests and a vetoing state apparatus, established a tradition which has survived for more than a century.

Such an official policy was adopted in the neighbouring Sindh as well where waderas, *pirs* and Syeds were guaranteed their local influence in return for complete loyalty. After the inauguration of the Guddu Barrage in 1932, followed by the designation of Sindh as a separate province four years later, land allotments did provide relief to the indigenous landed aristocracy. Sindh, compared to the Punjab, has been a younger partner in Raj-led policies in colonisation and land allotments, and is yet to settle down as undiminished migrations from abroad and upcountry have posed problems both for its landed elites and the emerging middle classes. On the contrary, Punjab, given its vast territory and a colonisation policy begun more than a century ago, witnessed stability which Sindh is yet to acquire. However, the politics of patronage operated successfully in both the provinces, until in the 1940s trans-regional movements like the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan broke down the quarantined provincialism as espoused by the regionalist parties like the Unionists. As amply elaborated by David Gilmartin, Ian Talbot and Sarah Ansari,

the League made its inroads in both the provinces, mixing *din* and *duniya* under a young, ambitious middle class at a very opportune time, though soon after independence an immediate relinking between the state and localist landed elite took place. Irrespective of the nature and form of government, the age-old equation engineered for mutual convenience goes on triumphantly. The historical legacy remains buoyant, though certainly not without ever-growing, multiple challenges of ethnic and class-based configurations which might assume more decisive dimensions given the pace of urbanisation and growing significance of intermediate groups. Demands for long overdue land reforms and the proportionate redefinition of electoral constituencies are already increasing tensions in the age-old bipartisan relationship which simply smacks of power monopolisation. More pervasive and freer media and economic diversification are invigorating the demands for reforms meant to empower the masses breaking the static and dynastic politicking which is weak on issues but strong on personalities. But the Punjab tradition (Indus Basin tradition?) persists triumphantly, making the entire polity hostage to forces of co-option, coercion and corruption.

For many analysts, Punjab could be an easy and convenient alibi for various disgruntled forces in the country, who, without challenging the imbalances within the Pakistani polity at large, would pin down their criticism on the 'big brother'. According to such opinions there is an urgency for some serious rethinking, as such views only add to the *retaliatory* attitude from within Punjab beside adding to existing anomalies. It is quite revealing to study the development of interdynastic, trans-regional (*supra-provincial*) alliances within Pakistan involving matrimonial and common economic interests among the feudatory families. Such an evolution is a unique development within the country which is not only trans-regional but also very interdisciplinary as one notices landlords, pirs, *sajjada nishin*, *makhdums*, waderas and jagirdars interlinked with the generals, senior bureaucrats and industrialists all across the country. Ethnicity or regionalism — long-time characteristics of the *traditional* ruling elite — have been totally sidelined in consummating such interest- and choice-based alliances. In a very subtle manner, the Punjab tradition has been both indigenised and expanded across the country to

support the trans-regional elitism besides forestalling any tangible threats to it.

In the Pakistani perspective, without a probe into the political career of the Punjab, following the re-emergence of the equation between the state and landed elite, any analysis of the polity will definitely remain incomplete. Simultaneously, commonly held perceptions about a largely mythical singular, monolithic Punjabi identity need to be reviewed in terms of politico-economic and linguistic variations within a large administrative unit. A major academic inquiry is needed to ascertain why the lower middle class Saraiki, Sindhi or Mujahir intellectuals, in their criticism, zero in on their compatriots from central Punjab rather than seeking a common front with them against the similar exploitative forces retaining powerful trans-regional tentacles. Such a moot point may also highlight the curious and often conflictive relationship between ethnicity and class formation.

There is no denying the fact that despite interregional fissures and localist politicking it was largely only with the participation of provinces like the Punjab, Bengal and Sindh with their Muslim majorities that Pakistan was finally realised. The popularisation of the Pakistan movement poses a very challenging question especially in the Punjab where the Unionist Party dominated politics. Without support from Punjab there would have been no 'breakthrough' for Jinnah, and given the limited following of the Muslim League in the province all through the 1930s, it comes as proof of his great statesmanship that he struck a deal with Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in 1937 through the Sikandar–Jinnah Pact. This proved to be the launch-pad for the League's entry and its subsequent conquest of the provincial party politics within a few years. However, such a breakthrough which could have been a harbinger for a strong civil society, a prerogative for Pakistan, could not be sustained for long as the old patterns in politicking struck back with more vigour in the new polity. The failure of reformist forces to charter a new socio-political order based on egalitarianism, constitutionalism and accountability only bespeaks of dented political traditions in a country which itself was surprisingly obtained through a constitutional, political struggle.

Imran Ali, in his well-documented study, attempts to com-

prehend the dilemma of 'political underdevelopment' and static economy in Punjab during the six decades preceding independence. He forcefully refutes the commonly held argument that the Punjab was a long-term beneficiary of the extensive canal system and the posthumous colonisation under the Raj. Unlike Gilmartin, his interpretation, though based on similar archival material, challenges almost a consensus-based 'myth' about the prosperity of the British Punjab. Thus he says, that 98 years of British rule 'seemed to be one not only of relative political peace and stability, but also of vigorous economic growth... require some qualification'. The economic growth in Punjab, according to Imran Ali, seems problematic as it remained uneven and contributed to the consolidation of ruralism retarding the processes of industrialisation and political development as seen in the post-1947 perspective. The creation of a 'hydraulic society' through colonisation made sparsely populated areas fertile yet simultaneously localised them in their interaction with the outside world. Even after almost a century, the economy of the canal colonies remains solely dependent on the irrigation system introduced in the nineteenth century with the persistent tribal/rural nomenclature under a feudatory paternalism reinforced and buffered by a strong status quo-oriented administrative set-up. Ali's treatise takes into account the interrelated themes of colonisation, entrenchment, militarisation, extraction and production as various stages as well as ingredients of the entire political economy of the British Punjab.

The colonisation of the newly canal-irrigated system, accompanied with extensive land settlement through a planned population transfer created a new agrarian society, presumed 'as the crowning achievement' of the colonial administration allowing a benevolent participation to the South Asians. The Raj encouraged 'individualisation in property rights, which was markedly different from the collective ownership experience of the Punjabi agriculturalists over the preceding decades, and multiplied the land sales by their owners under compulsion. The moneylenders started accumulating vast property which compelled the British to introduce the Land Alienation Act of 1900 and similar other legislation subsequently. But the dichotomic differentiation between 'agricultural' and 'non-agricultural' castes brought about by the

act left an enduring legacy in provincial politics. Despite such legislation, cultivators continued to seek credit from commercial and trading groups operating as moneylenders. As borne out by Malcolm Darling and other observers in the 1930s, most of the well-established Muslim landlords in the western Punjab were heavily indebted to Hindu commercial concerns. 'This heavy indebtedness to Hindu moneylenders became one of the major mainsprings of Muslim communal nationalism, for these debts could be revoked if the creditors were evicted, as they eventually were, from the western Punjab'. Moreover, while carrying out this major transformation, the state jealously maintained the existing social stratification and hierarchical order. The shrines were allotted special land grants both in the irrigated and *rakh* areas to cultivate their support against any possible threat to law and order. When the Akalis formed *jathas* and tried to seize gurdwaras and other Sikh holy sites in the 1920s, the government alarmed at the situation began allotting land to those who worked against such movements. Similarly, various Muslim pir and sajjada nishin families were allotted lands for helping in the recruitment of soldiers from their areas during the First World War. Just in one case of Makhad in Attock District, 15,000 acres of rakh land were allotted to the pir of Makhad in his home district, with the Governor thanking him 'in the sure knowledge that you will not relax your efforts as long as the army needs men'. As Ali suggests, 'the nexus between the military and land was a central institutional feature' of the colonisation policy with serious repercussions for the future state of Pakistan. The *menial* and other subaltern classes were left at the mercy of agricultural classes and other land grantees:

> The fact that the rural underclass did not experience social and economic mobility stemmed from its exclusion from the distribution of land. To complement their disadvantageous socioeconomic position, the landless poor were also deprived of political rights. They never obtained the power to vote under British rule, even after 1935 when the franchise was at its widest. The clearer expression of their political impotence lay in the fact that they could be kept away from landed resources so completely.

Such disinterestedness in the eradication of an injudicious social order, causing poverty and backwardness beside massive disempowerment, remained the hallmark of the official policies.

Even in the colonisation policies in the new doabs, the government followed its own imperial requirements like the consolidation of a class of intermediaries, maintenance of law-and-order (depoliticisation), extraction of massive revenue and military recruitment through the beneficiaries. These elements, according to Ali, resulted in a retarded growth 'and even underdevelopment'. The British maintained all along that they had favoured the Punjab by such a policy, whereas factually in its implementation numerous imperial prerogatives had been involved. Vast tracts of land were given to loyal agriculturalists who had helped the British in 1857, or were always forthcoming with recruits for the army and police. The pirs, sajjada nishin, and the religious leaders of the Sikh community were made feudal lords overnight, who used their newly acquired temporal, local and spiritual powers to the hilt, much to the continuing distress of the toiling peasantry and menial classes. The preferential land settlements not only intensified localist tendencies, hitting at the very core of a cohesive identity, they equally stagnated production. Ali, very lucidly, traces the history of the ruling families of Punjab/Pakistan under an imperial patronage and their support in the consolidation of the Raj itself by virtue of their emergence as a highly conservative group. The electoral success of the Punjab National Unionist Party in 1936:

> was an indicator of the retardation of nationalism in the Punjab, and of the continued strength of imperialist rule. The agrarian magnates who composed the power base of the PNUP, the likes of the Nuns [sic.], Taiwanas, Daultanas, and Mamdots, were to a man heavily involved with the canal colonies. This undoubtedly resuscitated the influence and authority that they used to ward off the incursions of nationalist organisations, such as the Congress and the Muslim League, and to hold the land stratum in continued alliance with British rule. When overt imperialism's days seemed numbered, and the Muslim agrarian leadership saw a parting of the ways, an important segment branched out to gain control of the Muslim League,

thereby to continue landlord dominance of politics in the successor state of Pakistan.

Doling out of the land on the basis of official priorities acted 'as the constraint on the emergence of agricultural capitalism', blocking 'the process of economic change'. The state itself took on a more pronounced and arbitrary role, which was evident all through the subsequent developments in the province. In the name of social stability and order the state strengthened the religious forces through generous land grants to shrines, expecting complete loyalty and military support from such institutions. The military benefits, among other things, included the maintenance of a certain number of horses and camels on the allotted land. The greed for land among the proprietors in the name of horse runs became completely insatiable over the years. Although the horse-mounted cavalry was outmoded after the First World War, it persisted as an effective means of land allotment and official patronage. The revenue system revolving around a *patwari* was unintelligible to the average agriculturalist and equally cumbersome for the senior officers. Administrative high-handedness manifested itself frequently in an 'intransigent system of assessment', though many reports suggested a fixed assessment. The vast amounts extracted from the land in revenues provided the state with astounding sources of income besides consolidating its authority over the province:

> These enhanced earnings could have been reinvested for the betterment of society. However, colonial rule failed to utilise this surplus for developmental purposes. Greater financial resources enabled it to increase the size of its bureaucracy as well as its police and military forces.... The sharing of an enhanced surplus between the state and owners of the means of production allowed for the continued adherence of the latter to their alien masters.

Though Punjab initially emerged as one of the most prominent areas of commercial farming in Asia, it equally proved to be an underdeveloped region in the socio-political context. The state's policies and objectives contrasted with the development imperatives of the society itself

> The state failed to provide a determined developmental stimulus; the many opportunities for it in the colonies were not utilized. The role of the state as an agent of improvement was aborted by the agitation of 1907, after which it became politically expedient for it to withdraw from an intrusive supervision of agrarian affairs.

Even agriculture itself turned static though the political results for the British were 'rewarding'. The state benefited from the revenues which were spent on non-developmental sectors like defence and bureaucracy, and official apathy towards mechanised agriculture and rampant corruption constantly hindered growth. 'Corruption was, undoubtedly, rife among native officials. There was widespread collusion between petty officials and grantees, which seemed to work against the interests of both state and society.' One cannot help but notice the distortions taking place at the time in the larger fabric of society, varying from a widening gulf between rural and urban communities to an imbalanced relationship between the agriculturalists and the rest. The regimentation of localist, caste-/*biradari*-based tendencies multiplied with raging competition to grab more land — the traditional symbol of *izzat* among the Punjabis. 'The strong impulsion toward the dominance of man over man, which subtenancy allowed, was deeply rooted in traditional practice and consciousness, whose mainsprings lay in semi-feudal rather than capitalistic urges.'

While the development of the nine canal colonies, land reclamation and allotment consummated feudatory interests in the province, the government felt at ease with a guaranteed loyalty from such dynasties. The nationalist movement could not make any headway into the province until the very last years of the Raj, and that too was eventually dominated by the landed groups. Far from a *national* role, even within the province localist affiliations did not allow the evolution of an all-encompassing *regional* identity. Segmentation on the basis of *ilaqa*, religion and biradari remained the order of the day. Urban intelligentsia, lower middle class political activists and ideologues belonging to various shades of opinions were constantly vetoed by overpowering forces like the PNUP which kept both the infantile middle class and the masses at bay. Land grants to former soldiers as jagirs made

military service a matter of pride and status for the Punjabis especially in north-western Punjab — something which has been rigorously retained by the successive regimes in Pakistan. The generous land allotments in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in Sindh, have only intensified — not unjustifiably — Sindhi resentment against the Punjabis and others.

Pakistan, where most of these canal colonies originated, inherited an entrenched, opportunistic feudal class, politically localist and socially oppressive. On the other hand, segmented masses and a stagnant agricultural economy suffering from serious technical and human problems did not help a ruralist Punjabi economy move into bourgeoisie capitalism. The co-optive and collaborative triad of the landed elite, bureaucracy and military can certainly be traced from the pre-1947 era. Over the subsequent decades, it has consolidated its hold on the fractious polity, and in the process only added to the strain on a fragile pluralism in the country. Ali's book raises a number of intriguing questions, and is a noteworthy addition to subaltern studies. He poses contentious questions without claiming to have all the answers. He begins his study on a promising note with a challenging proposition, yet opts for minute details on data regarding colonisation and settlements with an occasional reference to political fragmentation and localisation in the province. At times one does yearn for a more direct discussion on the issues raised in the preface itself. Excessive details sifted through a laborious exercise at Lahore's Board of Revenue appear superfluous, and could have been summarised so as to revert to the questions earlier posited by the author. Ali's postulations induce reflection yet somehow leave one largely unsatisfied. One wonders whether Punjab could have escaped fragmentation even if it had not been the field for official experimentation with a hydraulic society. Could Pakistani ruralism have been less effective without developing irrigation and colonisation schemes? One should not forget that long before colonisation, Punjabis were being inducted into the Army in massive numbers. The trans-Jhelum Pothowar area of military recruitment was only indirectly and incidentally affected by the changes in doabs. The *barani* areas provided the bulk of the armed forces for economic reasons, due to a thinly based subsistence economy and rapid fragmentation of smaller landholdings. Even

without recourse to the martial race myth, the people of Pothowar and Salt Range, with a little official encouragement, would have opted for military service. Certainly, army service brought an assured salary, mobility and social status, but land allotment only in a few, solitary cases. Again, it needs to be explored how the Pothowar region in the Punjab, owing to the military factor, transformed itself from a localist, rural to a lower middle class, mobile society — a process absent from the Saraiki-speaking region in south-western Punjab or in the neighbouring rural Sindh and Baluchistan.

Imran Ali's sources are largely unpublished official reports along with a comparatively small, select bibliography. Many other studies like those done in eastern Punjab or abroad, in addition to various dissertations and selections from the vernacular press, are somehow missing. But Ali himself desists from claiming that his book is a definitive study on the subject.

Book Reviews

Contents

Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), 358pp, Rs 280(hb).

This timely volume brings together a collection of essays written by Brass since his influential *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* which first appeared in the early 1970s. They reflect a continuing concern with the politics of ethnicity and nationalism with particular reference to India. This volume is equally divided between essays that are theoretical and comparative—and focus on the author's work on Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union—and those that examine themes in Indian politics. Of special interest to Punjab scholars are the two chapters which assess the Punjab crisis in India since the early 1980s.

Brass's point of departure is 'objective' instrumentalism which is not to be confused with the extreme instrumentation of rational choice theory. His argument is essentially two-fold. First, that ethnicity and nationalism are not givens but social constructions in which the elites play a pre-eminent role. Second, that ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena and are inextricably linked to the modern centralising state. These two perspectives generate common sub-types: ethno-centric and state-centric approaches to ethnicity and nationality formation.

In the Indian context, Brass argues, nationality formation had been relatively unproblematic during the Nehruvian era because clear guidelines were instituted for managing such movements and safeguarding the multi-national character of the Indian state. With the succession of Mrs. Gandhi, however, the compulsions towards centralisation increased, reflected above all in the demise of the Congress system and, in the early 1980s, in Mrs. Gandhi's courting of Hindu revivalism. In an illuminating comparative study Brass contrasts the difference in how Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi managed almost similar agitations (1960–61 and 1980–84). Whereas Nehru encouraged Sikh moderates and sought a principled settlement, Mrs. Gandhi in contrast undermined the legitimacy of Sikh

moderates by supporting militants in order to contain the former and ultimately to put the latter to the sword. In highlighting the centralisation in New Delhi as the critical variable that explains the Punjab problem, Brass further dismisses economic explanations and insists that such accounts are either ideological or inconsistent with Punjab's economic development vis-a-vis other states.

The main difficulty with this work is that, taken together, the essays represent only a marginal shift in the thinking of 'young' and 'mature' Brass. Some of the recent literature is acknowledged, but the rigidity with which ethnic groups are viewed as elite driven, or the state as a benign institution in leading and managing ethnic conflict and nationality formation in plural societies, is surprising. Such a position appears doubtful in a post-Ayodhya India where the Nehruvian model has not only been torn asunder but exposed as an accommodationist strategy par excellence. Yet, the author's fixation with Nehruvian conventionalism leads him to omit the burgeoning critique of Nehruvian 'principles' and ethnic neutrality. By suggesting that India's ethnic troubles can be resolved by a return to Nehruvian guidelines, decentralisation, regionalism and pluralism Brass is guilty of ignoring the centralising drives inherent in the Nehruvian state (which cannot be explained away by characterising Mrs. Gandhi as the Cleopatra of Indian politics), the practicalities of such a proposal in contemporary Indian politics and the serious dangers of such policies in states like Punjab and Assam, not to mention the volatile Hindi-belt. In fact, neither the Punjab crisis, especially since 1984, nor the phenomenal rise of the BJP, easily lend themselves to such a resolution. Against this background it would seem unreasonable to suggest, as Brass does, that Nehruvian machine politics provide an effective antidote to the politics of ethnic accommodation a la consociation theory. Indeed, the attack on the latter appears frail against contemporary and historical evidence and, if anything, to have backfired in reopening the debate about political, ethnic accommodation in India.

Despite these criticisms this volume will be of considerable interest to students of South Asian politics for its clarity and commitment. It may not address contemporary concerns head-on, but it is nevertheless, a sound exposition of the conventional

position which has dominated the study of Indian politics since the 1950s.

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Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), 292pp, £25 (hb).

Clive Dewey has produced a rich and thought-provoking analysis of the Anglo-Indian mind in this volume. He writes with a panache which is simultaneously entertaining and authoritative. Indeed, his comments on Malcolm Darling's supervisor at King's could form an equally fitting tribute to this volume, 'He was exceptionally considerate of his readers. The clarity of his exposition and the felicity of his prose swept them along in a warm glow of assent' (p.138).

Twenty years ago, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes* would have been outrageously controversial. Today it can be read alongside post-modernist criticism of the grand narratives of Indian nationalism and Marxism. The former will still cavil at the author's Eurocentricism, the latter at his 'failure' to admit ideas as being themselves the product of power configurations. Clive Dewey is not of course a self-consciously post-modernist writer. His work at another level of analysis may still be regarded as a function of traditional assumptions concerning Western supremacy and modernist rationality. But its saving grace is the primacy it gives both to local knowledge of Punjabi society and English intellectual history.

The volume's main thesis is that ideas, not interests, shaped the values of the Indian Civil Service. It claims that the latter as a whole oscillated between two paradigms—the urge to paternalistically impose British values and the desire for rapprochement and understanding. These faces of British imperialism are reflected in the careers of two middle-ranking Punjabi Civilians, F.L. Brayne (1882–1952) and Sir Malcolm Darling (1880–1969). Clive Dewey delves deep into their private papers and family histories to demonstrate how their upbringings conditioned their

subsequent careers in India. The values which Brayne acquired from his evangelical background culminated in his obsessive attachment to the Gospel of Uplift in the 'backward' Gurgaon district of the Punjab. Darling, who was moulded into a cultivated humanist by Socratic teachers at Eton and King's Cambridge, adhered to the need for understanding and befriending Indians, thereby bridging the gap between subjects and rulers. This was demonstrated not only in his celebrated 'rural rides' across the Punjab but also in his relationship with the maharaja of the tiny Maratha state of Dewas Senior in Central India. Both Darling and Brayne are depicted as ultimately failing in their different attempts to change India. Here Clive Dewey again picks up the post-modernist theme of heterogeneity, complexity and paradox. India could not be transformed either by individuals or the ICS in general because of its diversity. Perhaps a little unfairly, he depicts the scholarly Darling's failure as more heroic than the activist Brayne's.

The volume concludes with an overview of the Punjab Commission which provided the administrative context for the bulk of Brayne's and Darling's Indian careers. The author acknowledges that its civilians saw themselves 'and were seen by others as a *corps d'elite*.' (p. 201) He also highlights the ties its members forged with successive generations of the Punjab's 'martial castes.' (p. 212) This raises the issue whether Brayne and Darling were typical of the nine-tenths of the ICS cadre which served outside the Punjab. Was there something unique about the 'Punjab tradition' which heightened the two ideologies which Clive Dewey claims shaped British rule in the subcontinent? Does the Punjab's uniqueness require a more detailed acknowledgement, even at the risk of undermining the author's central thesis?

It is to be hoped that this important volume will reinvigorate discussion on the place of ideas in the exercise of British power in India. If this happens the author will be right in his declaration that he cannot believe that Brayne and Darling will be 'evoking' themselves in this work for the last time.

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Winand M. Callewaert and Peter G. Friedlander, *The Life and Works of Raidās,* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992), 335pp, Rs 600 (hb).

A considerable amount of hard work has gone into this study of the Sant poet Raidas (or Ravidas if one uses the name given to him in the Adi Granth). The book may have its shortcomings, but of the diligent and intelligent labour which lies behind it there can be absolutely no doubt.

The book is divided into four parts. First there is a very valuable introduction in English. This discusses what is known of Raidās's life, considers the sources of the *vāṇī*, traces its 'original' form, and concludes with a useful account of his beliefs. Second, there is an English translation of the *pads* and *sākhīs* (*śabads* and *śloks* to those accustomed to the Adi Granth). Third, there is a critical Devanagri text of what the authors regard as the best version of the vāṇī of Raidās. This is accompanied by detailed notes of alternate readings. And finally there are word indexes of both the *Pañc-vāṇī* and the Adi Granth collections, a truly impressive section with which the work concludes.

Two things need to be pointed out to readers of the book, and one more consideration will affect this review of it. The first is that the reader needs to know Devanagri as well as English in order to get full value from this work. At the same time the person who knows only English can certainly benefit from the introduction and perhaps also from the translated vāṇī. Second, the reader should be prepared to work hard in order to fathom certain complexities which the book involves. This particularly concerns chapter 2 of the introduction ('Sources for the *vāṇī* of Raidās'). And third, this review is being written from the point of view of one who approaches Raidas (or Ravidas) from the Adi Granth rather than from the *Pañc-vāṇī*. The authors clearly regard the *Pañc-vāṇī* as a much more important cluster of sources, though they do acknowledge that the Punjabi oral tradition (as reflected in the Adi Granth) is amongst the earliest available. This, one suspects, is at least partly due to the fact that they feel much more at home with the Rajasthani manuscripts of the *Pañc-vāṇī* than with the Adi Granth.

The merits of the work are considerable. The Devanagri has

been very well transcribed (faultlessly, as far as I can judge from the Adi Granth examples) and although the translation does not amount to great poetry it is certainly accurate. One can, of course, have some disagreements concerning particular words. Surely the meaning of *sahaj* is, in context, translatable. If one accepts this contention 57.4 could be 'in perfect bliss enfolded' instead of 'whatever exists through *sahaj*'. Instead of '*sahaj samādhi*' (100.3) one could have 'the ecstasy of bliss' An '*udas* servant' could be rendered 'a servant detached from worldly things' (99.3); and a modern generation is liable to misunderstand 'People were utterly ruined by getting fixed' (102.2). But arguments over meaning and expression are bound to arise in any exercise of this kind. The fact is that in general the translations are accurate and this is a considerable merit.

Likewise, the introduction is very useful, particularly as an analysis of the mechanics of oral transmission. The noting of different authors who are credited with the same works is helpful; there is an unusually good summary of chapters 1–3 on pages 78–80; and there is a valuable list of the genres (better, themes) of Raidās's songs on page 82. Chapter 4, 'The Teachings of Raidās', is illuminating to the extent that I now feel some change should be made in my *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion.* Here too, of course, one has one's minor differences. Friedlander goes a little far in describing the early Sikh attitude towards the Naths as one of 'animosity' (p. 53, cf. the janam-sakhi views) and personally I feel that he is rather too trusting with regard to hagiographical information.

But these are comparatively insignificant points. Other issues are rather weightier. Three such issues deserve mention.

First, there are some production errors. Several of these occur in footnotes which lack information or are wrong. For example, the quotation cited as footnote 13 (page 85) is inaccurate; and footnote 43 of chapter 4 should have pp. 224–25 not p. 227). Op. cit. is used for two footnotes on page 90 where ibid is indicated. Number 87 has been omitted from the list of Adi Granth pads on pages 46–47; and the following titles (which are mentioned in footnotes) are missing from the bibliography; Cole 1978; Cole 1981; McLeod 1984; and Vaudeville 1992.

Second, the numbering system is rather difficult for many

eaders to work through, and it too contains errors. What are ıe numbers given immediately below the initials indicating ıanuscripts in the chart on pages 44–46? Why are they repeated wo-thirds of the way down page 46? The answer is surely obvious, ıut personally I was defeated. I did work out that the numbers ıttached to the Adi Granth pads in the AG column of the table ın pages 44–46 signify their place in the actual Adi Granth n terms of page numbers. Eventually I deduced that the Adi Granth number in inverted commas against 21 in the chart on ıage 44 (number '28') must be 105 in the translated collection, ıut the reference in footnote 22 (page 68) to '63.1 in AG' floored me. There are only 40 Adi Granth pads attributed to Ravidas (Raidās) and number 63 of this work does not involve the Adi Granth. AG 32 which is listed against number 13 of the translated collection is indeed translated as number 13, but in the transcribed versions it appears as 12. The 'most famous of all the *pads* in the *vāṇī* of Raidās' is given on page 57 as pad 24. After puzzling for some time about this one I realised that it should of course be pad 34. As I say, there are doubtless explanations for most of these points. Attention is drawn to them, however, because the present system is too obscure for most readers.

Third, we come specifically to our Adi Granth interest. The section 'The Sikh tradition and the AG' (pp. 41–43) contains some mistakes, one of which is that the tradition concerning Guru Nanak having passed on a *pothī* (volume) to Guru Angad is not as described. The *purātan* janam-sakhīs (of which there are several, not just one) do not mention a person called Bhai Manamukha (sic. Mansukh) having written a pothī at Kartarpur under Nanak's supervision. Mansukh was a name added by Vir Singh in this century; and it was Vir Singh also who amended the text to have this unnamed person write (instead of learn) several pothīān, not just one. There are more than two Goindval pothīs (probably four). And the name of Guru Arjan is surely intended as the compiler of the Adi Granth (not Amar Das).

The most substantial question is, however, whether sufficient use has been made of the Adi Granth collection in seeking to arrive at a critical edition. Admittedly a Punjabi oral tradition places the Adi Granth collection some distance away from the putative author, but then so too does the Rajasthani tradition

of the *Pañc-vāṇī*. And the Punjabi tradition is admittedly old. One feels that greater importance should certainly have been attached to it.

This list of shortcomings, however, should not conceal the very real value of the collection. The work may leave issues which, I believe, warrant further consideration, but this particular edition has carried us a substantial distance towards understanding the life and works of Raidās.

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Asia Watch, *Punjab in Crisis: Human Rights in India* (University Press of America, October 1991), 224pp, £19.95 (pb).

Few publications merit a review over two years after release. Asia Watch's report is one such exception. The continuation of barbarities in Punjab in the name of the Indian state guarantees the subject matter a high profile. An investigation and report of the quality produced by Asia Watch, a highly regarded US based human rights organisation, deserves wide circulation. Apart from the reports produced by Amnesty International there has been little else which has been as comprehensive on this topic.

The report, which is the result of a fact-finding mission carried out in late 1990, provides a basic historical introduction which, though incomplete in many respects, nevertheless succeeds in explaining the essential background to a western audience. The style is a free and easy one, making the report eminently readable. The glossary and heavy annotations are particularly useful in assisting those with a limited understanding of the subject to appreciate the context in which the human rights violations are occurring. They also provide useful avenues of further inquiry for those wishing to learn further.

The bulk of the main section of the report covers violations by government forces. This includes many distressing case histories as well as succinct summaries of the draconian Indian legislation. There is no substitute in this field for the well-researched case histories which appear in this publicaton and which are obtained

through first-hand evidence or as close to such evidence as one can reasonably get. Some of the report's main conclusions involve the highest criticism of the Indian authorities. In the context of extrajudicial kilings the report concludes:

> The frequency with which these killings were reported to take place and the consistency of the eyewitness testimony indicate that they are not aberrations but rather the product of a deliberate policy known to high-ranking security personnel and members of the civil administrations in Punjab and New Delhi. Security legislation has increased the likelihood of such abuses by authorising the security forces to shoot to kill and by protecting them from prosecution for human rights violations.

This dispels the notion which is so often put forward by India that the violations are the result of the uncontrollable actions of a few junior officials. It also brings sharply into focus the problem of 'impunity', i.e., the impunity with which perpetrators of human rights abuses commit such acts. This is an issue which dominates current international debate on human rights. It has gained recent prominence and now tends to be the centre point of the strategy of many groups campaigning for human rights. This approach seeks to devise ways of ensuring that pressure is put on nations to take effective action against those who violate human rights. The Indian government has been long on rhetoric in blaming the atrocities on a handful of errant officials, but it has done little to take any action to prosecute such individuals. To quote the report, '...no member of the security forces in Punjab has been convicted of any human rights violations committed in the state.'

However, human rights belong to all of us and, appropriately, the Asia Watch report includes a section on the violence by militant groups. The clear verdict, however, which comes through is that the violations by the state of internationally recognised human rights standards far outweigh those by the militants. Regrettably, state repression has not lessened in Punjab since the investigation carried out by the report's authors. So much so, a further report is planned by Asia Watch following from a more recent investigation. In the meantime the present report, albeit

two years old, is essential reading for all those concerned about human rights in Punjab.

The effectiveness, in particular, of Asia Watch's reports and press releases, is indicated by the indignant responses that they often provoke from the Indian authorities. India is notoriously sensitive about its human rights image and its responses to criticism about its activity in Punjab and other areas such as Kashmir are often heavy-handed and clumsy. It has managed to limit criticism of its record by barring human rights organisations from the Punjab and by hindering the activities of human rights activists in Punjab. Reports such as that prepared by Asia Watch are the result of undeclared fact-finding missions to Punjab. Amnesty International, which eschews clandestine missions, has achieved a visit as far as New Delhi but has not been allowed to proceed to Punjab. In this climate, where human rights activity in Punjab is so seriously restricted, reports of the quality prepared by Asia Watch are a rarity.

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John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1992), v+262 pp, £8.00(hb), £5.00 (pb).

The author of this important book writes from long experience of life and work in India where he lived from 1960 until 1981. He was Director of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies at Baring College, Batala from 1971–1976.

The word 'Dalit' is now common currency in India for those who are at the very bottom of or actually outside the hierarchical caste structure of Brahminical Hinduism. Well over 80 per cent of India's Christians, who make up some 3 per cent of the country's total population, come from this background. The author deliberately sets 'the history of the Dalit Christians in the context of the history of the wider Dalit movement, of which it is an integral part, and only secondarily of the history of the Christian Church in India.'

This affects the structure of the book which begins with a

chapter on the origins of caste and untouchability which go back at least 4,000 years into India's past. The author then gives case studies of four large Dalit endogamous groups or *jātis*, including the Chuhras of the Punjab, and looks at the common characteristics which they shared before any of them became Christians. These included social stigma, poverty and the fact that most of them were involved in agricultural labour 'for others under a variety of arrangements from slavery to sharecropping.'

Webster divides the history of the Dalit Christians into three distinct periods: the first period was characterised by mass conversion, especially to Christianity. Hundreds of thousands of Dalits became Christians. He concludes that 'the mass movements were Dalit movements initiated by Dalits and sustained by Dalit heroism in the face of persecution.' The movement to Christianity spread through family and jāti networks. Indian Christians from higher caste background were often at best cool towards the new movements, whereas the missionaries were warmer and gave them 'what other religious movements often lacked, namely an organisation which provided continuity and direction beyond the death of the leaders.'

The second period was initiated by the Government of India Act of 1909 'which defined India not as a single nation but as a multitude of diverse "interests" who had to be consulted for purposes of government.' This gave the Dalits and other groups the opportunity to play the 'politics of numbers'. Conversion became a political issue because the greater the numbers of a community, the more its potential political influence. The principle behind the 1909 act was opposed by the Indian National Congress which maintained that India was a single nation. This set the stage for political conflict throughout the twenties and thirties. During this period Dalits as a whole improved their position somewhat in terms of national visibility and political power. However, the Christians produced no leader of national stature, and the politics of numbers divided them from other Dalits. Also 'the State provided strong disincentives to convert and punished those who did by depriving them of the scheduled caste benefits to which they were otherwise entitled.' This second period came to an end in 1939 when the Congress provincial ministries resigned, but it left the Christian Dalits with a divided identity. By becoming

Christians they had moved outside the Hindu social order but they still suffered from discrimination within the churches.

Webster's third period begins with Indian independence in 1947, and he calls it the period of 'compensatory discrimination'. This was a government policy of 'preferential treatment' of historically disadvantaged sections of the population. Webster argues that this was pursued less than whole-heartedly, for the government concentrated on occupational mobility rather than on the more crucial issues of the redistribution of land or development resources. Dalit Christians were, and still are, denied the privileges accorded to members of other scheduled castes. This suggests that the common accusation that Christians have only converted because of gifts and inducements is the reverse of the truth.

The final chapter of the book looks at the form of the Christian message to which Dalit Christians responded during the three periods—the third of which of course is still continuing.

This book has been thoroughly researched and is well written, with each chapter having a conclusion which summarises the argument. The sections on the Chuhras will be of particular interest to readers of this journal, but the whole book—apart from the last chapter which is likely to be of interest mainly to Christians—will be of value to all who are concerned with the major social changes which India is currently experiencing. It should become the standard reference book on the subject.

Roger Hooker
Smethwick

J.S. Mann and Kharak Singh (eds.), *Recent Researches in Sikhism*, (Patiala: Punjab University Press, 1992), 382 pp, Rs. 150 (hb).

J.S. Mann, Kharak Singh and G.S. Mansukhani (eds.), *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*, (Chandigarh: Institute of Sikh Studies, 1992), 255 pp, Rs. 100 (hb).

These recently published volumes were the outcome of a series of conferences held in London and North America over a period

of two months during the winter of 1990. Papers from the London conference were collected into the volume entitled '*Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*', while the American conference papers were published as '*Recent Researches in Sikhism*'. The contributions to this series of meetings, which the organisers claimed to be the 'biggest ever academic event in the field of Sikh studies,' were for the purposes of publication divided into the following four sections: ideology, history, methodology and general. As this scheme of division is followed in both books, I shall restrict my remarks mainly to *Recent Researches* as it is the larger and more comprehensive of the two volumes.

Although the editors' claim of bringing to light 'certain realities about western scholarship on Sikhism' is justified by the selection of topics, the reader should be under no illusion that a significant portion of this book is in fact part of a continuing polemic against recent Western interpretations of Sikhism. Many of the papers are intended to be rebuttals of the more contentious issues raised by the work of leading Sikh social historians, W.H. McLeod and H.S. Oberoi.

Of the four main topics that are treated, only the sections on ideology and history provide anything like a comprehensive treatment of their respective fields. The common thread that unites virtually the entire section on ideology is laid by Daljeet Singh's two papers. The theme is quite simple: Sikhism is based on the spiritual experience of the Gurus; religions before Guru Nanak were dichotomous or life negating, resulting in a clear division between the spiritual and empirical life; Sikhism is a revealed religion with its own world-view; the misconceptions of outsiders are due to their inability to understand the full implications of the *miri–piri* doctrine. The tone of these papers has a distinct leaning towards pre-established doctrine and tradition (note for example the added emphasis on key terms such as 'world-view', 'experience', 'ideological identity' and 'revelatory religion').

Similarly, the section on history, though wide-ranging in its scope, is largely an elaboration and application of the main ideological themes to the interpretation of selected periods of Sikh history. A substantial part (113 pages) is devoted to a reappraisal of Sikh history in the late nineteenth century, the aim being to rebut Western interpretations on the same subject.

Many of the themes of one book recur rather unnecessarily in papers with different titles in the other book. One wonders whether the two volumes could not have been combined into a single book, thereby saving the editors time and money. In addition one gets the impression that several of the papers were incorporated merely to fill up space rather than to tackle any specific issues.

It is tempting, particularly from a critical point of view, to label these volumes as overtly partisan and therefore suitable only for an indigenous audience, rather than for a secular multi-cultural readership. However, simply to dismiss such work outright would betray a fundamental failure to acknowledge important issues that currently dog Sikh studies, issues that are raised not so much by the work itself, but by the nature and tone of its protest. Indeed, perhaps its main merit lies in the very act of its registering its protest by avoiding publication in the established international journals. Perhaps this also says something about the representative nature of Western journals!

Although the book's main protest is rather poorly articulated, it does manage to raise a very important question concerning Western methodology as applied to Eastern religions. Several of the book's authors point, albeit indirectly, towards the unexamined assumptions of the intellectual tradition upon whose authority Western scholars base their judgement of cultures other than their own, claiming for example that religion is not privileged or beyond the reach of scientific methodology currently employed in the human sciences.

Ironically, however, while this complaint against the western episteme is perfectly legitimate in view of its ruthless domination of the arts and humanities, it is also an inadvertent admission of the books' main weakness: namely its signal failure to perform such a self-analysis on the origin of its own methodology and discourse. The authors should have realised that their own procedural methods (assuming of course that they even wish to have their work classified as a particular method) are based upon the same episteme as their opponents: namely the very episteme that draws its terms of reference and the structure of its discourse from post-Enlightenment (modernist) philosophy. Terms such as 'world-view', 'world religion', 'revealed religion' etc., bear all the hallmarks of terms that were adopted by declining theologies in the late

nineteenth century faced by the onslaught of logical–positivist thinking. Whilst the threat of positivism receded several decades ago, the discourse of Sikh religious interpretation as presented to an English-speaking world, continues to be couched in post-Kantian theology and aesthetic.

This may not be a problem in itself, but it is important to note that by placing the conceptual language of its interpretation closer to Western–rationalist (and by implication Judeo–Christian) theology, not to mention nineteenth century Grand Narrative (witness the usage of capital letters on key terms), it becomes immediately open to an analysis along the lines of modern anthropology, sociology and other scientifically oriented methodologies. Hence, for the traditionalist, the problem degenerates into a question of the analyst's subjective status: 'insider' versus 'outsider', 'believer' versus 'atheist'. It is only fair to say that the Sikh schools have not as yet managed to develop a rigorous hermeneutic that properly confronts reductionistic methodology: one that would require any would-be inquirer to enter into a *dialogue* with their tradition, as opposed to enframing it with an alien conceptual apparatus developed along scientific–rationalist principles.

It goes without saying that any possible future hermeneutic must accept the new paradigm of plural rationalities in contradistinction to the dogmatism of a universal rationality modelled on science, which effectively marginalises the rationality of traditions and cultures other or alien to itself. Until such hermeneutical principles are put into play, the most reasonable option should require the reader to hold *neither* the purely traditional *nor* the Western critical readings as sacrosanct, but to read each against the other. In effect both discourses are anti-thetical developments of modernism—two sides of the same coin. Despite these observations, students of religion, anthropology and history are recommended to read these volumes in order to provide themselves with a more balanced picture of the current state of Sikh studies.

Arvind-pal Singh
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J.S. Hawley and G.S. Mann (eds.), *Studying the Sikhs: Issues for North America* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, SUNY Series in Religious Studies (ed.), Harold Coward, 1993), 217 pp $ 16.95, (hb).

This is as timely and significant a publication as anyone interested in the scholarly study of the Sikh community and its religion could wish for. Regardless of where you stand on the complex and often contested issues discussed in this book, a close and careful reading of the introduction and seven chapters which follow will reward the reader with a clear outline of the status of Sikh Studies in North America and the historic, methodological and ideological issues which have formed the nexus for all current debates. Even a casual observer can see that the events since 1984 have been of such a scope and impact upon the Sikh community that they transcend 'local' or 'regional' analysis. What were once parochial issues have become, like Sikhism itself, transnationalised, with attendant global implications. For both Sikh and non-Sikh scholars of Sikh studies, the past decade has been a time of unprecedented activity: first, in the form of an escalation of political violence in north India associated with separatist movements within Punjab (supported by sympathetic Sikh groups outside India); and second, in the quantity and quality of studies focused on Sikh religion and culture, both in South Asia and among overseas Sikhs. These circumstances have led to two interrelated fields of discourse: first, they intensified internal debates within the Sikh community over authority, authenticity and activism, and externally over the motives and methods of outside researchers. One striking consequence, which the authors note in the introduction, is the 'remarkable changes that have taken place in the way the world views the Sikhs and the Sikhs view the world.'

Into this arena comes a thoughtful book which clearly and sympathetically outlines some of the major issues of scholarship as they relate both to academic research and the classroom presentation of Sikh Studies. It attempts to be a balanced and thorough assessment, succeeding in achieving a utility which goes far beyond geographic North America and even its focus, the Sikhs. Indeed, it should be required reading not only for

anyone concerned with Sikhism, but also for anyone interested in the much broader and increasingly salient issues involved in cross-discipline, cross-cultural socio-religious research where the priorities and perspectives of people external to the tradition under study are likely to diverge and conflict with that faith's practitioners.

The initial four chapters take a disciplinary approach, focusing on areas of difficulty and/or controversy within the authors' field. Mark Juergensmeyer's 'Sikhism and Religious Studies' examines a broad range of approaches for Western scholars studying Sikhism, taking care to place such activity into the wider framework of comparative religion and encouraging accommodation and collaboration. His own work on Sikhism, Radhasoami, Ghadar and modern religious and social movements in North India both informs and illustrates his approach.

Gerald Barrier, a historian with longstanding research interests in Punjab and Sikh institutions, discusses 'Sikh Studies and the Study of History' in which he surveys problem areas inherent in Sikh historiography, describing contrasting approaches developed in Asia and the West. He concludes with a useful summary of 'themes and issues' central to an understanding of Sikh history.

W.H. McLeod, the focus of some very acrimonius attacks for his work in this area, discusses textual issues in 'The Study of Sikh Literature', examining the Sikh canon, including scriptures and commentaries and the traditions surrounding them. Brief and cogent, this article is a masterful statement by a leading Western scholar of Sikhism, clearly outlining the conflicting paradigms which form the backdrop to the current debates. While unlikely to change the minds of the ideologically committed, at least the major philosophic and theoretical points of contention are made explicit. This kind of tension between 'textual analysis' of the scholar and 'textual exposition' of the believer is probably as old as writing, and has coexisted in all traditions, particularly Christianity. That it is now occurring within the Sikh tradition is more of a tribute to its increasing visibility as a world religious tradition and an interest in its sacred texts than 'conspiracy theorists' would willingly acknowledge.

Arthur H. Helweg's 'The Sikh Diaspora and Sikh Studies' reviews the migration and establishment of Sikh enclaves worldwide from an anthropological perspective, concentrating on issues of

adaptation, identity maintenance and social change, noting that events affecting Sikhs anywhere may have global repercussions. His own work among overseas Sikhs in England and the United States forms an ethnological backdrop to his discussion. These all represent 'outsiders'' views.

A pair of articles by co-editor Gurinder Singh Mann, both an 'insider' and an academic, examines the development of indigenous Sikh institutions (Chapter 5, 'The Sikh Educational Experience') and his own course at Columbia university (Chapter 7, 'Teaching the Sikh Tradition'). In the first, he reviews how Sikhs responded to a century of Western intellectual and social challenges in India by creating organisations and foundations which have, like the Sikhs themselves, become recently transplanted outside South Asia. His call to celebrate this rich tradition abroad by expanding Sikh studies and research at the leading North American universities is exemplified by a discussion of his own course syllabus and curricular approach at Columbia.

Joseph T. O'Connell's 'Sikh Studies in North America: A Field Guide' is a very detailed overview of the status of programmes in Sikh studies in American and Canadian higher education. Although he makes clear that Sikh studies is coming of age and achieving new levels of interest, acceptance and support within colleges and universities, it is also clear that North American Sikh community support at this time is neither unanimous nor whole-hearted, reflecting the internal issues discussed generally throughout this collection which continue to divide the community. What is important is that the process of establishing and incorporating Sikh studies within Western academia has begun. This book would make both an excellent manual for discussions on Sikh studies and a fine text in such a course.

This is a remarkable book which serves many purposes: as a review of the basic historical and theoretical background to contemporary issues; an assessment of the current state of Sikh studies and the debates arising from their pursuit; and as a guide to potentially fruitful future research directions. Given its reasonable price and excellent content, a wide range of Sikh and non-Sikh readers should find it both affordable and worth contemplating.

Bruce La Brack
University of the Pacific

Ramindar Singh, *Immigrants to Citizens: The Sikh Community in Bradford*, (Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992), 84 pp., £5.00

Ramindar Singh's study of Bradford's Sikhs was one of the first of its kind when it appeared in 1978. Those who are not fortunate enough to possess a copy of the original publication will be pleased to have something which introduces them to the Bradford Sikh community and places it within the wider context of Sikhs in Britain. Those of us who can turn to the first edition may be a little disappointed. Some of the research detail provided in 1978, for example of the distribution of Sikhs, has only been updated by referring to Singh's study of 1984 and much of what was given in 1978 has been condensed. It seems that we are not actually looking at the evidence and conclusions of fresh research. For example, Bhachu, Danjal and Boneham are cited in the brief chapter on Sikh women. Local information is confined to mentioning that no women are represented on gurdwara committees and that there are no organisations specifically for women in the city. It would be interesting to know the reasons for this situation. To be provided only with factual information is also frustrating. A series of maps showing where the gurdwaras are and where most Sikhs live would also have been helpful, as they would have been in 1978.

I know Bradford to have an interesting and diverse Sikh community, to be the home of the first gurdwara built as such. It is my own home town, as much as I have one! The Wakefield Road gurdwara is where I received a scripture prize about 50 years ago. The city produced the first multifaith Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education in the country in 1974, two years ahead of Birmingham, and a Sikh was a member of the conference which produced it, presumably, therefore the first Sikh in Britain to hold such a position. About this time there was a sudden influx of about 25 Sikhs into Pudsey, to the consternation of a head teacher friend of mine. Why to Pudsey, assuming they did not know Len Hutton or Ray Illingworth? The answers were not supplied in 1978 or 1992.

Bradford's Sikh population of 8,000 Sikhs is now over 30 years old (the Garnet Street gurdwara was opened in 1964). It is time for Ramindar Singh to address himself in detail to the

foundation and establishment and later development of the community. He possesses all the necessary research qualities and skills to an extent that probably no one else in the city does and has access to a story which needs to be told urgently in at least as much depth as Kalsi's recent study of nearby Leeds which touches upon selected aspects of Bradford Sikhism but leaves much still to be said and explained.

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Kanchan Chopra, *Agricultural Development in Punjab: Issues in Resource Use and Sustainability*, (Delhi: Vikas, 1990), 154pp , Rs 150 (hb).

This book attempts to explore some of the environmental implications of the development process pursued in Indian Punjab after the central government in India introduced the famous/ infamous strategy of Green Revolution in Punjab in the 1960s. This sought to fulfil the politico-economic objective of the then central government of attaining food self-sufficiency in India. The main thrust of Chopra's argument is that the 'success' of agricultural development in Punjab has not been accompanied by a similar kind of success in resource use and management. She contends that if the development process in the Punjab is to be a sustainable one in the long term, the issue of resource use management requires much greater attention from the policy makers.

Chopra's is a moderate, middle-of-the-road voice. On the one hand, she does not share the alarmist vision of some ecologists. For example, she points out that the land degradation has been, by and large, limited in extent and on the other, she is emphatic in expressing 'concern' about some other resources (for example, increasing nitrate pollution, waterlogging and salinity in some parts of Punjab), especially from the perspective of sustaining present rates of agricultural development in Punjab. She is not a committed ecologist with concern for the environment per se. Her attitude towards the environment may be characterised as

instrumentalist: environment matters because it has implications for sustainable development.

Chopra has particularly focused on water resources, and her treatment of the subject is impressive in terms of the survey of literature on the subject, the quality of her data sources and the rigour of her quantitative and logical analysis. Her conclusion is that if the present pattern of water use continues in Punjab, 'it may, in the near future, become a constraint to further growth' (p. 126). On the basis of some recent estimates, she points out that in the states of Punjab and Haryana, water availability was never plentiful. Against a requirement of 95 million acre feet (m.a.f.), the total availability is of the order of 35 m.a.f. from all sources, leading to a deficit of 60 m.a.f. for the two states taken together. The conclusion arrived at is that 'there is a shortage of water in the region as evidenced by the observation that the water resources even under the most optimistic condition would suffice to provide irrigation to each unit of land for one crop season only' (p. 43). The Bhakra Canal system, Chopra points out, was designed with capacity factors to provide water to some 30 per cent of the culturable command area in each crop season. This estimate assumed a cropping pattern that did not include paddy, a crop with a high requirement of water, which became very important in the region later. This led to an increased demand which was met in a number of ways. It was catered to partly by the phenomenal increase in tubewells in the region. Chopra highlights that this conjunctive use of surface and ground water is an outstanding feature of the water use regime in the region. She further points out that as Rajasthan was not yet claiming its part of the Ravi–Beas waters, they accrued to Punjab. She, therefore, underlines the point that though this additional availability and the efficient recycling of ground water have saved the situation somewhat, conservation of water shall have to be kept in mind in evaluating and recommending future cropping patterns.

On the basis of Chopra's work, one can identify at least four possible solutions to the emerging water crisis in Punjab: (*a*) a possible change in the cropping pattern; (*b*) adoption of drip and sprinkler irrigation systems, which being capital-intensive options constitute a substitution of capital for water; (*c*) bio-technological solutions like the possibilities of substituting organic fertilizers, such as blue-green algae, for water in crops which

use water very intensively; and (*d*) a combination of market-oriented, community-controlled and state-regulated strategies for an appropriate distribution policy for water use among conflicting groups of water users. Much more detailed further work is needed to explore each of these options separately or in conjunction with each other. A recent contribution (B.D. Dhawan, 'Ground Water Depletion in Punjab', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30 October 1993, 2397–2401) which takes into account some excellent research work done by some scholars at Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana and Punjabi University, Patiala, has sharpened the debate on the subject by asserting a contestable claim that 'while the cultivation of paddy in Punjab (and Haryana) does need some curbing, the extreme forebodings of either total ground water exhaustion in Punjab or of the state turning into a desert if paddy growing is not curbed forthwith are unwarranted'.

What particularly appeared to me to be a significant weakness of this otherwise excellent work, is a rather total neglect of the discussion of the political economy of developmental strategies pursued in Punjab by the British colonial state and the independent Indian national state and their consequences for water resource use in Punjab. An examination of these strategies would have provided a historical perspective to the linkage between these strategies (namely, the Canal Colony strategy during British colonial rule and the Green Revolution strategy during independent Indian nationalist rule) and the current water crisis in Punjab. (For a comparative view of these strategies see Pritam Singh's 'Political Economy of the British Colonial State and the Independent Indian Nationalist State and the Agrarian-oriented Development Pattern of Punjab', *Indo-British Review* [forthcoming].) Since Chopra's study is aimed at studying resource management strategies, this lacuna is all the more glaring. In spite of this weakness, Chopra's is a piece of high quality research on a very topical subject. It will be very useful to those interested in Punjab studies, development studies, irrigation systems and water management, alternative resource use strategies, environment and sustainable development.

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Harkishan Singh Surjeet, *Deepening Punjab Crisis: A Democratic Solution,* (Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1992), 440pp , Rs 400.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet (born 1916) is the best known octogenarian communist leader Punjab has produced in the post-independence period in India. Having joined the Communist Party of India in 1934 and the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936, he has remained at the core of Communist Party decision making affecting both national and international issues. Surjeet has often been described as an insider on the developments in Punjab because of his close involvement in numerous high-ranking committees and inner cabinets which have been convened to find a solution to the Punjab problem. He was also a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1977 to 1982 where he was successful in keeping the Punjab issue fresh in the minds of Indian parliamentarians. For the latter reason alone any student embarking on a close scrutiny of reasons for the failure to find a solution to the Punjab problem will find this interesting source material.

This 440 page book brings together a collection of articles, statements, letters and speeches which Surjeet has produced over the last 12 years. Thus, except for the eight page introduction and the conclusion, all of the remaining material has been in the public domain throughout this period. The collection begins with a lengthy historical background (written in September 1984) to the Punjab problem, and the rest of the contents are then arranged in chronological order so that the reader can follow the situation as it unfolds over the decade. The book ends with a conclusion which lists the author's own recommendations for finding a solution and with three short appendices which give details of the author's personal letters to party leaders of different political persuasions.

Surjeet provides his own perspective on some of the major political developments during the period: the rise of Bhindranwale, White Paper on Punjab, Rajiv–Longowal Accord, President's Rule and the ever-increasing terrorist violence. His own understanding of the problem is very clearly formulated, and is consistent throughout his writings over the period. This is hardly surprising,

given that the author has to strictly adhere to the official Communist Party line and the fact that dozens of communists have become victims of militants' bullets over the decade.

In this theoretical formulation the Punjab problem is essentially a Sikh problem, arising out of the desire of a certain section of Sikhs to drive a wedge between Sikhs and Hindus and then to secede from the Indian Union. These misguided Sikhs are often aided and abetted by the Shiromani Akali Dal which is directly to blame for the communalising of Punjab politics. Thus, there is an urgent need to confront Sikh communalism, extremism and terrorism in order to defend the 'national unity and integrity' of India and also to prevent 'destabilisation' by US imperialist forces. The struggle against Sikh extremism, as article after article reminds us, is part of a wider nationalist, anti-imperialist struggle designed to uphold the virtues of secularism and democracy. Ironically, this political rhetoric becomes indistinguishable from the rhetoric of the Congress (I) or the BJP, the supposed representatives of the ruling classes and enemies of the working classes whose interest the communist parties are apparently protecting. This congruence of views is reflected clearly in Surjeet's glowing references to the bravery of the police and the para-military forces.

One major weakness of the book, itself reflecting the limitations of the communist theoretical formulation, is the absence of any critical writings on different forms of state repression, the harassment, detention, torture and killing of innocent Sikh youth in 'fake' encounters. There is, for instance, a conspicuous absence of any article on human rights violations during Operation Bluestar, Operation Woodrose, the Delhi riots and on the general curtailment of democratic rights through the imposition of numerous draconian laws such as TADA and NSA. The omission of any serious discussion on such important issues does leave the reader with a very biased and distorted perception of the Punjab problem.

Recent years have seen the publication of numerous books and articles, each attempting to throw different insights into the nature of the Punjab problem. The present volume, despite its claim of providing a serious and critical examination of the multi-dimensional character of the Punjab problem, unfortunately fails to convince the reader beyond the view that the issue is merely

a law and order one which requires immediate repression because of its threat to national unity.

Shinder Thandi
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Iftikhar Haider Malik, *Sikander Hayat Khan: A Political Biography* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1985), viii+211pp , $10.00 (hb).

This is an unusual work in that Pakistani historians normally write about the Muslim League, rather than its political rivals during the pre-partition decade. Sikander was of course the leader of the cross-communal Unionist Party which shut the League out of power in the key Punjab region, not only during his Premiership from 1937–1943, but until the eve of the British departure. Significantly, little has been written in Pakistan on the careers of the three Muslim Unionist leaders, Mian Fazl-i-Husain who founded the party in 1922, Sikander or his successor Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana. The book under review represents the only major biography of Sikander. Although it was published in the mid-1980s, it is still not widely available outside Pakistan.

The subject matter of the Unionist Party and its leaders is a delicate one for Pakistani writers because of the dominant two-nation theory ideology. Iftikhar Malik is to be praised for grasping the nettle and producing a mature study of Sikander, who in many respects presents the greatest challenge of the trio of Muslim leaders of the Unionist Party.

Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, the last Premier of united Punjab, can be ignored or reviled by Pakistani scholars as a traitor to Islam because of his public split with Jinnah in 1944 and subsequent opposition to the freedom movement. He still awaits his Pakistani biographer, despite his crucial role in the endgame of empire. Mian Fazl-i-Husain on the other hand, can be praised for his work on behalf of Indian Muslims at the centre during the 1930s through the All-India Muslim Conference. Whilst within the Punjab he can be depicted as utilising the Unionist Party to forward specifically Muslim interests, his Punjabi approach carried within

it the seeds of future conflict with Jinnah. But his death in 1936 left it to his successors to publicly cross swords with the Quaid-i-Azam. He has thus, by and large, received favourable comment within Pakistan, from such writers as S.M. Ikram and Syed Nur Ahmad.

Sikander succeeded Mian Fazl-i-Husain and carried forward the Unionist Party tradition until his death, late in December 1942. The ambivalence of the Unionist Party's relationship with the Muslim League during those years has been reflected in Pakistani historiography. Thus, Dr S.M. Ikram in his classic text, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 3rd revised edition, 1977) paints only a brief portrait of Sikander. Most of his canvas is filled with the Unionist Premier's support for Jinnah at the 1937 Lucknow League Session. Sikander's personal piety and links with Aligarh are also stressed. Ikram is much more reticent, however, about Sikander's differences with Jinnah over India's future constitutional development and unconditional Punjabi support for the War effort. Although, to his credit, Ikram attempts to provide a balanced account, he seeks refuge in the claim that the Hindu press and British officials intentionally accentuated these disagreements (p. 268).

Iftikhar Malik thankfully avoids such nonsense. His scholarship and academic integrity enable the study to look beyond the narrow confines of Pakistani nationalist historiography. Sikander is examined in his own terms, despite the occasional doffing of the cap to the prevailing orthodoxy (p. 104). The author deploys an impressive range of sources to 'fix' the Unionist party in the setting of the colonial State. He also provides some interesting insights into Sikander's family background and the importance of the Khattar faction within the Unionist party. The Unionist Premier's adroit use of patronage to cement his power after the 1937 elections is also handled effectively. Equally impressive are the sections on the disputes which surrounded the Sikander–Jinnah Pact of October 1937 and the controversy between Sikander and the Quaid over membership of the Viceroy's National Defence Council. Praise should also be given for the pioneering work which Iftikhar Malik presents on the Unionist's struggle with the urban-based Khaksar and Ahrar movements.

The work's main lacunae are the absence of detailed discussion of the so-called 'Golden Acts' of agrarian reform and of the attempts by the Unionist Party to form a grassroots Zamindara League organisation. The failures in this endeavour were to severely weaken the party when it came into open conflict with the Muslim League. Chhotu Ram rather than Sikander was, of course, the architect of the party's rural programme and organisation. But his relationship with Sikander and the party's Muslim wing, requires more extensive comment than is given here.

There has been much written on the Unionist Party and Punjab politics since this biography was published. Nevertheless, Iftikhar Malik's work has stood up well to the test of time. It is thus to be hoped that a revised edition could be presented which would reflect on the findings of David Gilmartin, Imran Ali, Clive Dewey, Prem Choudhry and myself. The addition of a map would also be an indispensable aid to a study which deserves a wider audience than it has yet received.

Ian Talbot
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Bhisham Sahni, *Tamas* (Delhi; Penguin Books India, 1990), xxi+236pp, £3.99 (pb).

The novel *Tamas* takes the partition of India as its theme. This also provided the setting for Bhisham Sahni's classic short story *Pali*. Like many other novelists he has been inspired by the compelling events of 1947 to produce highly acclaimed fiction. Such well-received novels as Khushwant Singh's, *Train To Pakistan*, Chaman Nahal's, *Azadi*, and Bapsi Sidhwa's, *Ice-Candy Man*, have all, of course, adopted this as their subject. To these we might add the Urdu works, *Udas Naslen* by Abdullah Husain, *Ag ka Darya* by Qurrat ul-Ain Haidar and *Sangam* by Muhammad Ahsan Faruqi. It is, however, in the genre of the short story that partition literature truly blossomed. Indeed, some of the greatest short stories produced in South Asia have been set amidst the massacres and migrations of 1947, see for example, 'Peshawar Express', 'Toba Tek Singh', 'Thanda gosht' and 'Lajwanti' to name but a few.

Tamas is not quite in this elevated company, but is nevertheless a mature reflection on the events which the author experienced in the Punjab in 1947. The novel has been revised and translated into English on a number of occasions since its original publication in Hindi in 1974. The edition under review here has been expertly translated by Jai Ratan and published in the wake of the successful, albeit controversial dramatisation for Indian television by Govind Nihalani.

The novel follows the tradition of the Urdu 'progressive writers' in that it is informed by a humanism which seeks to portray all communities as both victims and aggressors in the turmoil of 1947. Sahni, however, avoids the didacticism which mars some of Kishan Chander's writings, in that his characterisation is strong. The principal figures are believable, and are never simply the vehicles for his views. Even the mass suicide of Sikh women in the besieged village of Sayyedpur is realistically depicted and devoid of melodrama. Indeed, it is only with the characterisation of the British Deputy Commissioner Richard and his alcoholic wife that Sahni momentarily loses his sureness of touch.

Tamas commences with the frenzied struggle between Nathu, the tanner and the black pig which he has lured into his dilapidated dwelling. The opening pages perfectly set the atmosphere of brooding evil which pervades the novel. Nathu's patron, Murad Ali has, in fact, duped him into secretly slaughtering the pig whose carcass is then deposited outside the town's main mosque. The plan succeeds, and the town and its surrounding villages are soon engulfed in a wave of communal violence.

Murad Ali is, however, not alone in his self serving manipulation of communalism. Master Devbrat is equally sinister. He turns Ranvir, an innocent 15-year old boy into a hate-filled youth leader who incites the death of an innocent Muslim perfume seller. Sahni powerfully contrasts the reality of the boy's action with the romanticised view of violence which Master Devbrat had inculcated in his acolytes.

The novel concludes with the establishment of a peace committee. But Sahni allows only the communist Devdutt and the idealistic Congress leader Bakshiji to sincerely involve themselves in its activities. Its other members appear far more preoccupied with

the opportunities for economic and political profit left by the riots. Murad Ali ironically leads the slogans for communal harmony as the Peace Bus tours the smouldering *mohallas*. The novel ends with the same sense of foreboding with which it began.

Tamas is not only artistically pleasing, but provided it is handled circumspectly, represents a useful source for the historian of partition. Like other literary works it can furnish not only profound psychological insights into the violence of 1947, but add a much needed human dimension to the standard historical discourse. For in the great human event of partition, human voices have been strangely silent.

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P.S. Arshi, *The Golden Temple: History, Art and Architecture*, (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1989).

Writing on the supreme emblem of the Sikh faith has been a subject of absorbing interest and envy for many Sikh scholars. Studies by distinguished scholars who have written on the Golden Temple include Dr Madanjit Kaur's exhaustive coverage of the shrine's management; prolific narration of the topic by Sardar Patwant Singh; and the book under review by the late Dr P.S. Arshi who has successfully combined many facets of the Golden Temple — particularly commendable is the author's use of architectural details to demonstrate the shrine's construction. These studies have certainly broadened the understanding about the Harimandar (Golden Temple).

Dr Arshi narrates the history and the myths and legends associated with the ancient sacred place where Harimandar is situated at Amritsar — a pool surrounded by exquisite natural beauty, peace and tranquility, that became the bone of contention between gods and demons. It is a place where Lord Rama spent a few years of his exile, a spot whose natural surroundings impressed Buddha, and a site that led Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, to predict that it would acquire tremendous fame and holiness. This is a spot that caught the fancy of Guru Ram Das, where

he constructed the pool of immortality. Finally, it was Guru Arjan who decided to build the holy shrine in the middle of the pool, a place that was meant to be sacred from the very inception. He envisioned that the temple would become a repository of the Sikh religion and a place of pilgrimage for the followers of the faith.

The author surveys in considerable detail the history and management of the Golden Temple, the growth of Amritsar city and the vicissitudes that the sacred pool and the shrine underwent. Arshi vividly tells the story of the revered shrine that was frequently destroyed by Afghan invaders. For this reason the temple was constructed and reconstructed several times, yet Guru Arjan's concept survived. He describes the evolution of the Golden Temple leading to its present form, emphasising the characteristics and architectural features of the building. Arshi discusses different views about whether Maharaja Ranjit Singh did retain the original design concept of Guru Arjan or built a totally new design. He discards the view that the Golden Temple design was based on Sufi Mian Mir's tomb, and with sound reasoning he lays at rest the controversy, maintaining that the Sikhs would never have accepted elements of a tomb on the supreme emblem of their faith. Similarly, he dispels the controversy surrounding the Darshani Deorhi (entrance gateway) doors, maintaining that the doors were made only for the Darshani Deorhi and were not from the Somnath Temple.

Arshi outlines the development of the Golden Temple complex which encompasses a 500 feet square pool of nectar. On all four sides the pool is surrounded by a pavement for circum-ambulation which takes devotees around the sacred waters. The square plan of the shrine with its cuboid structure surmounted by a central dome is located in the middle of the pool. The shrine is approached by a causeway which links the Darshani Deorhi. He illustrates the construction of the holy pool, and describes the system for feeding the holy pool with water which is taken from the river Ravi. He captures the rich details of ornamentation, and throws considerable light on the techniques used in fresco painting and other surface embellishment such as *jaratkari* (inlay work), *gach* (plaster-of-paris), and *tukri* work (pieces of coloured glass inlaid into *gach*).

Arshi's unique contribution lies in the use of architectural details to demonstrate the shrine's construction, as well as the use of graphics and photography to illustrate architectural elements. He lays at rest the controversial issues of the design of the Golden Temple and doors of Darshani Deorhi. He identifies design elements of the Golden Temple which has created an independent Sikh school of architecture. He demonstrates Mughal and Rajput architectural styles which embrace the shrine.

The weakness of the book appears to be its inadequate graphic illustrations. The drawings are neither archaeological nor analytical, and hence fall short of the desired quality. For the medium of graphics the author should have taken pains to visualise which audience he had in mind — professionals or lay-persons. None of these observations are to detract from the valuable contribution Arshi has made towards the overall understanding of the Golden Temple. A great deal more needs to be learnt about the Golden Temple. Let young Sikh scholars come forward to conduct additional studies on the subject.

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Darshan Singh Tatla, *Sikhs in North America: An Annotated Bibliography* (Bibliographies and Indexes in Sociology, Number 19) (New York: Greenwood, 1991) xxi+180pp., $49.95 (hb).

Darshan Singh Tatla performs another major service for those interested in the Sikh diaspora. Following up on the bibliography of Sikhs in the United Kingdom that he and Eleanor Nesbitt produced for the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick, *Sikhs in Britain: An Annotated Bibliography* (1987), he has taken on here the even more daunting task of tracking down and bringing some conceptual order to nearly a century of writing by and about Sikhs in Canada and the United States.

This work builds upon earlier bibliographies of Sikhs/South

Asians in North America — for example, those produced by Dr Ganda Singh ('The Sikhs in Canada and California', *Punjab Past and Present*, 4 [1970]; 380–400), by Norman L. Buchignani ('A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East Indians in Canada', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 9 [1977], 86–108), and by the University of California project (Jane Singh et al. [eds.], *South Asians in North America: An Annotated and Selected Bibliography* [Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1988]). While limiting his focus to the Sikhs only, Tatla has nevertheless expanded upon, updated, and supplemented these earlier bibliographies by perusing the relevant public and private archives during a research visit in 1988 and by soliciting references from Sikhs and Sikh scholars in the United States and Canada. (As Tatla acknowledges, his bibliography does not supersede the University of California bibliography as a source for material on Ghadar.)

Tatla organises his bibliography alphabetically by author within general subject areas — migration and settlement, employment, education, family and social life, language, literature and media, politics and religion — rather than by period or locality. His inventory of items incorporates not only published materials but also such unpublished material as conference papers, gurdwara society reports, Ghadar circulars, academic exercises, and audio-visual productions. His annotation includes, where appropriate, mention of the context in which the piece was produced or presented, as well as a brief summary of its contents. And his sources include works published in Indian vernaculars as well as in English.

A particular strength of this bibliography is its attention to literature produced by Punjabi writers and attention to the Punjabi ethnic press. The former includes a 'select list of Punjabi writers and their writings' (pp. 88–95), which provides a brief characterisation of the works of some 80 Punjabi poets, short story writers, novelists, playwrights, and essayists writing from North America. The latter includes, as an 'appendix' (pp. 162–71), a handlist of over 100 periodicals published in North America (often for limited runs) over the course of the last 80 plus years. Finally, the inclusion of an index to the volume is crucial in cross-referencing the works of individual authors whose various publications, by the nature of Tatla's organisational scheme, may be spread across several sections of the book.

As with any attempt to give order and coherence to such a vast and heterogeneous array of materials, one may on occasion wish to take issue with the author's principles of selection, methods of organisation or forms of annotation. For instance, further specification of the content of materials to be found in government and university archives (pp. 13–16) would have been useful. To make room for this additional material, redundant separate listings of scholarly pieces in their ultimate published form and in their earlier unpublished incarnations as conference papers or academic exercises might have been eliminated. Moreover, further comment on the potential utility of sources and on their quality might have been useful for novices. On the whole, however, readers will find this a user-friendly bibliography.

In light of the short shrift given diasporan material in recently published Sikh bibliographies — e.g., Priya Muhar Rai's *Sikhism and the Sikhs: An Annotated Bibliography* (Greenwood, 1989), Rajwant Singh's *The Sikhs* (Indian Bibliographies Bureau, 1989), and S.P. Gulati and Rajinder Singh's *Bibliography [of] Sikh Studies* (National Book Shop, 1989) — researchers on the Punjabi diaspora will feel a special debt of gratitude to Darshan Singh Tatla for giving us this book. So too should intellectually curious second and third generation Sikhs in North America to whom the book has been dedicated. Given the explosion of writing on and by the Sikhs of North America, we will all look forward to frequent updating of this bibliography or to the establishment of an interactive, on-line data base that would allow interested parties to access the revised and evolving bibliography from a personal computer.

Verne A. Dusenbery
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Kernial Singh Sandhu (1929–1992): An Appreciation

On 2 December 1992 Kernial Singh Sandhu, Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore (ISEAS), died of a sudden heart attack. Professor Sandhu's death is a loss to many people and to many areas of scholarship. In his 20 years as its Director, Professor Sandhu built ISEAS into the premier research institute in the ASEAN region. Singaporeans and Southeast Asianists thus have been deprived of an intellectual and institutional godfather. But readers of the *International Journal of Punjab Studies* also have reason to mourn his passing, in light both of his own scholarship on Punjabi immigrants to Southeast Asia and to North America and of the intellectual encouragement he gave to other diasporan Punjabis and to other scholars of the Punjabi diaspora.

Kernial Singh Sandhu was born in Malaysia in 1929. He was educated at the University of Malaya in Singapore (BA [First Class Honours] in Geography), the University of British Columbia (MA in Geography), and the University of London (PhD in Historical Geography). His dissertation research was on Indian immigration to the Malayan peninsula during the colonial era. He is the author of *Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of Their Immigration and Settlement (1786–1957)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), still the definitive historical resource on the topic. Other products of this research project include his article 'Sikh Immigration into Malaya During the Period of British Rule' (in J. Ch'en and N. Tarling [eds.], *Studies in the Social History of China and South-East Asia* [Cambridge, 1970], 335–54). At the time of his death he was co-editing the forthcoming volume, *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, in press).

Professor Sandhu taught at the Universities of Malaya, Singapore, and British Columbia. During his tenure (1967–72) in the

Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia, he collected voluminous archival and primary data on Indian (mainly Sikh) immigration and settlement in Canada and, secondarily, the United States. Unfortunately his plans for as many as three separate monographs based on this collected material had to be set aside when he accepted the Directorship of ISEAS. His writings based on his Canadian research include: 'Sikh Immigration and Racial Prejudice in British Columbia: Some Preliminary Observations' (in J.V. Mingh [ed.], *Peoples of the Living Land: Geography of Cultural Diversity in British Columbia* [Vancouver: Tantalus, 1972], 29–39); an apparently never-published contribution on 'East Indians' commissioned by the Government of Canada (Department of the Secretary of State); and a submission on 'The Khalsa Diwan Society' in British Columbia for the long-forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* edited by Harbans Singh.

In recent years Professor Sandhu had taken an active interest in nurturing the academic aspirations of Sikh youth and in supporting those working to revitalise Sikh institutions in Singapore and Malaysia. He was patron to the Sikh Cultural and Literary Society at the National University of Singapore and a speaker at several Sikh functions in Singapore and Malaysia. He gave the keynote address at the 1985 Conference of the Malaysian Sikh Union; he was a featured speaker at the 1989 Seminar on 'Sikh Youth and Nation Building' organised by the Sikh Advisory Board of Singapore; and he delivered the opening address at the 1991 Seminar of the Sikh Cultural and Literary Society on 'Sikhs at the Tertiary Level'. His primary concern, running through all these public addresses, was how Sikhs might adapt the institutions and social practices of village Punjab to the new 'social ecology' of cosmopolitan, urban settings where most diasporan Sikhs now live.

Professor Sandhu's widow, Surinder Kaur, has donated his personal papers to the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies which is currently cataloguing them. When cataloguing has been completed and these papers are made available to the research community, they should prove to be a major resource for scholars of the Punjabi diaspora. Donations in the memory of K.S. Sandhu can be made to the Kernial Singh Sandhu Memorial Fund at the

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Pasir Panjang, Singapore 0511, Republic of Singapore.

Verne A. Dusenbery
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Conference Organiser

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