

# Pen-profiles of the Renowned Ghadarites of Canada-America

-Sohan Singh Pooni

The first Punjabi person to come to reside in America was perhaps Bakhshish Singh Dhillon from village Sursingh in district Lahore, now Amritsar. He disembarked at San Francisco port along with his three companions in 1899. Indians started coming to Canada in 1903-04. By 1908, about 5200 Indians had migrated to Canada<sup>1</sup>. About half of them very soon left Canada and went to America. That way, by 1912, 2500-3000 Indians were residing in Canada<sup>2</sup> and, in America, the number of Indians had gone up to 7-8 thousand.

These migrants living in Canada-America formed the Ghadar Party in 1913. Its purpose was to free India under force of arms. On the beginning of First World War in 1914, the Ghadarites living in Canada-America and other countries tried for the revolution on reaching India but they could not succeed. The British government in India hanged to death dozens of Ghadarites and imprisoned hundreds with life-term or a little less period. Who were these Ghadarites? What was their background? What for had they come to Canada-America? How did they become Ghadarites? What did they do for freedom of the country? Why could they not succeed? What is their contribution towards freedom of the country? To discuss over all these questions, this paper aims at describing the lives of four Ghadarites who carried out important role in the Ghadar Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Private Memorandum by F. C Blair, Immigration Branch, Department of the Interior, 26 January, 1912, VCA

<sup>2</sup> ਸੰਸਾਰ, ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ, ਜੁਲਾਈ, 1913

In addition to undertaking struggle for freedom of the country, the Ghadarites of Canada did strive for their rights in Canada also. So this role of the Ghadarites for their rights in Canada has also been discussed in this Paper.

Though the Ghadar Party was established in the city Astoria of America in middle of 1913 and its headquarter was in San Francisco, but its beginning had already come up a few years before in Canada. Giving verdict of the Lahore Conspiracy Case against Ghadarites in September 1915, the Tribunal Commissioner wrote: “The beginning of this conspiracy has begun from the western coast of America. Its two big centres are Vancouver and San Francisco. The centre, at first, was Vancouver and this continued till San Francisco took its place.”<sup>3</sup>

The spirit and soul of the Ghadar Movement in Canada was Bhai Balwant Singh Khurdpur, the Granthi of Vancouver gurdwara. He was born in 1882 in village Khurdpur near Adampur in Jalandhar district. After passing Middle, he joined the army service. He resigned after serving in army for some time and then reached the city Vancouver in Canada in 1906. Majority of the Indian migrants here were 90% Punjabi Sikhs. Many of them had already served in British Indian Army. Like other Indians in Canada, Bhai Balwant Singh also thought that Canada also was a colony of the British Empire. Being subject of British Empire, Bahi Balwant Singh considered it their right to enter Canada and live and work there. Queen Victoria also had declared this after the mutiny of 1857 that she shall hold all subjects of British Empire equally wherein Indians are also included. But on coming in Canada, Bhai Balwant Singh had to face severe hardships. He along with others became victims of

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<sup>3</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case Judgement, September 13, 1915, Part 3, The History of the conspiracy and war, p. 1

racial discrimination. The government of Canada also discriminated the Indians in an organizational way. On 27 March 1907, the voting right was also withdrawn from Indians. In September 1907, in the city Bellingham near Vancouver in America, the racial Whites threw out from city the Indian workers after thrashing them bitterly. A few days after this, the racial Whites attacked Asians in Vancouver. All these events bruised bitterly the heart of Bhai Balwant Singh.

In July 1906, the Sikhs of Vancouver had formed one organization named 'Khalsa Diwan Society Vancouver'. With cooperation of this organization, Bhai Balwant Singh carried out an important role in building the first Gurdwara of North America in Vancouver. Inaugurated on 19 January 1908, Bhai Balwant Singh was designated the first Granthi of this Gurdwara. This Gurdwara was not a religious centre of Sikhs only, but was a centre of social and political activities of all the Indians. On the weekends, meetings concerning immigration, racialism and political issues were held there and Muslims and Hindus also joined in it.

Living in the free environment of Canada, the Indian migrants felt enlightened and, no doubt, realized their slavish status. It was dangerous for the British government in India. So, in order to restrict entry of Indians in Canada, the Canada government held consultation with British and India governments and, in 1908, formed rules of immigration on racial basis for 'direct voyage with two hundred dollars in pocket'. During that time, no ship company had any ship for direct voyage from India to Canada. It was clear that the only basic purpose of this law was to ban the entry of Indians in Canada. With formation of these laws, the entry of Indians in Canada was almost stopped.

Every effort was being made to restrict entry of Indians in White colonies of British Empire. With passing of 'Immigration Restriction Act' and 'Labour Recruitment Act' of 1901 by government of Australia had already stopped entry of Indians in Australia. Similar discriminatory rules were already formed in New Zealand and now the entry of Indians in Canada was banned. Bhai Balwant Singh much disturbed under this step-motherly treatment with Indians in British Empire.

In October-November of 1908, the Canada government built up a conspiracy to send all the Indians in Canada to Honduras, the British Colony in North America. The Canada government put utmost pressure on Indian migrants to leave Canada and go to Honduras. But Bhai Balwant Singh in support with Sant Teja Singh and Bhai Bhag Singh refused to submit before this proposal of the Canada government. In this way, Bhai Balwant Singh, in support with his companions, saved the Indian community from ruination.

While living in Vancouver, Bhai Balwant Singh came in close with a Bengali revolutionary Babu Tarknath Dass. Living in free environment of Canada and getting in contact with revolutionaries like Babu Tarknath Dass, Bhai Balwant Singh became politically awake. He started realizing that the real reason of all miseries of the Indians is their slavery and they cannot live an honourable life till India is freed. He realized this also that freedom cannot be achieved on basis of 'truth' only. It rather requires an armed struggle. He realized this also that a sword's sharp edge only can cut the shackles of slavery. He came to know this also that the English people understand the language of striking sword only, nothing else. Living in North America, Bhai Balwant Singh knew this also that America had snatched freedom from England with force of weapons only.

Gurbani also sermonized this only: "**bal hoa bandhan chhutai** – *with might all shackles get shattered.* With support of his companions, Bhai Balwant Singh started giving political-awakening to the Sikh emigrants in Canada. He started preparing them to shun proship of the English and take to the path of armed struggle for freedom of the country.

Among the Indians living in Canada, there was good number of former Sikh army men who had done service in British Indian Army. They were much proud of their army favours and valiant roles played in Imperial battles. They were in possession of army uniforms, medals and honourablr discharge certificates from English Officers. They moved out on Vancouver roads fully decked in army uniforms, medals on their chests and recommendatory letters from English Officers in their pockets to tell the Whites that they were the most favourable and faithful men of British Empire. Bhai Balwant Singh in company with his companions tried to clarify the fact to them that their role in the British Indian Army was not that of the Sikhs in the army of Guru Gobind Singh who not only caught hold of the reins of the horses of Pathan tyrants trampling honour of Indian women under hoofs of their horses, they rather turned back their faces from east to west and pushed them beyond the Khyber Pass. By dint of such preaching by Bhai Balwant Singh, these ex-army men felt ashamed that their role in British Indian Army was nothing short of hired fighters who not only helped the English in keeping India in slavery, they rather carried that slavery to other countries also. With this newly imparted awareness, they started feeling ashamed of their uniforms, medals and the certificates. Under these effects, a very important happening took place in the gurdwara of Vancouver.

Bhai Natha Singh Bilga, a wonderful Sikh and friend of Bhai Balwant Singh, stood before the congregation. He delivered a lecture describing the miserable condition of Indians in India as well in other parts of the world and specially in British Columbia. He held forth the plea: "The medals they are wearing show that they are hired army men who fought for the English against their own countrymen and the free men of other lands. Medals won by fighting for the English are not signs of bravery; these can be called medals of slavery."<sup>4</sup> After this, he put a resolution: "No member of the gurdwara executive committee shall wear such medal, button, uniform or insignia that may show that the wearer is nothing more than a slave."<sup>5</sup> The resolution got full acclamation with resonant *Jaikaras*. In the evening, the Sikh army men put on ablaze, in the gurdwara yard, all their medals, uniforms and the certificates of their honourable discharge<sup>6</sup>.

Burning of the uniforms, medals and certificates in the yard of gurdwara Vancouver was not an ordinary incident. On behalf of Sikhs, it was a beginning of doing away the pro-English approach and plunging into the struggle for freedom of the country. This happening did not take place of its own. Such a change in thinking of the Sikhs in Vancouver did not come just like that. This change was the result of political preaching carried out by Bhai Balwant Singh and his companions. For Bhai Balwant Singh and his companions, it was easy to enlighten politically the Sikhs in Canada, in contrast with those in Punjab, and mobilize them for struggle against the British Empire because there was no pro-English Sikh leadership there to frighten, terrorize, instigate or mislead them.

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<sup>4</sup> Free Hindustan, September-October, 1909

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

Bhai Balwant Singh was a very wonderful and truthful Sikh of the Gurus. He was a proponent from Bhai Lalo's camp. He was an ideal Sikh following the tenets of Sikh religion as: 'Welfare of All; Doing labor and Sharing with others; Equality and Cooperation.' Socialist Ideology also talks about 'equality and cooperation' and condemns the loot of man by man. Thus, Bhai Balwant Singh saw no difference in Sikh Ideology and the Socialist philosophy. Therefore, he became member of 'Socialist Party of Canada.' In reality, Bhai Balwant Singh and other executives of Khalsa Diwan Society joined with Hussain Rahim to constitute a special branch of 'Socialist Party of Canada' in Vancouver<sup>7</sup>.

Bhai Balwant Singh gave lead in fighting for the right of Indians in Canada for bringing their families in Canada. Because of the law of 'direct voyage' enacted by Canada government in 1908, the Indian migrants in Canada could not bring their families in Canada. The Canadian government had the fear that if Indians brought their families, they would settle there by establishing a 'permanent Hindu Colony' there. It was a well thought plan of Canada government to check permanent settlement of Indian migrants by not allowing their wives and children come to Canada. Canada government had the idea that in case of refusal for entry of their families, the Indian migrants in Canada would go back permanently after working and earning money. But Bhai Balwant Singh and his Ghadri companions wanted sharpen the wrath of Indians by unmasking the real faces of Canadian government and British Empire and then put them on the path of armed aggression for freedom of the country. To unmask the face of British Empire and challenge the Racial Immigration Law of

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<sup>7</sup> Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*(Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.11.

Canada, Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Bhag Singh, President of Khalsa Diwan Society in Vancouver, decided to go to India and bring their families.

Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Bhag Singh went to India to bring their families. After a distress of about one year, when they reached the Vancouver port, Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Bhag Singh were allowed to disembark but their wives and children were put under detention. Both the families were got released on bail. Only last year in 1911, 11932 Chinese and 2986 Japanese immigrants came to Canada and there were 1037 women with them<sup>8</sup>. Indian migrants felt rage over it that the Chinese and Japanese, who were not subject of British Empire, were being allowed to come to Canada but the Indians, who were residents of British Empire, their two families were not being allowed to enter Canada. Indian migrants were going away from the weak minded groups and were joining the militants with revolutionary minds. The revolutionary group was getting stronger. With a view to mollify the wrath of Indians and thus weaken revolutionary movement, Hopkinson advised the Canada government to allow both the families to live in Canada on mercy ground<sup>9</sup>. Even before the decision of the court, the Immigration Authorities permitted both the families on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1912 to live in Canada on mercy ground. Since the decision was from the Court, so the decision did not open the way for other families to come to Canada.

Not getting any justice from Canada government in case of families, the Indians of Canada sent one deputation to India in March 1913

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<sup>8</sup> Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 11

<sup>9</sup> ਸੰਸਾਰ, ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ, ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 1912, ਪੰਨਾ 4

9 W. C. Hopkinson to W. W. Cory, May16, 1912

under leadership of Bhai Balwant Singh. This deputation pleaded with the Indian government to stress upon the Canada government to give rights to the Indian migrants to bring their families in Canada. Second motive of the deputation was to acquaint the Indian people with the racial discrimination meted out to them, awaken them politically and prepare them for struggle for freedom of the country.

On reaching Punjab and before making any appeal to the government, Bhai Balwant Singh tried to awaken the people by going from village to village. During his lectures in these meetings, Bhai Balwant Singh held responsible the British and India governments for miseries of Indians in Canada. In one of his lectures in Lahore, Bhai Balwant Singh, while addressing the people, said: "The British Empire has encircled you like a snake. To get rid of it, it is necessary to rub its hood on thorns."<sup>10</sup>

Michael O'Dwyer, Lt Governor of Punjab, feared that with lectures of Bhai Balwant Singh, the Sikhs of Punjab shall become politically aware. It was dangerous for British Empire because this awareness among Sikhs could influence the Sikh armies. Sikhs of Punjab were considered the backbone of English army. Punjab was the most important state for recruitment in army. Sensing these dangers, O'Dwyer gave strict warning to Bhai Balwant Singh. O'Dwyer writes about this in his book: ". . . He held meetings in all states. In these meetings, many people were such whose loyalty was doubtful. After some time, the tone of these meetings changed. Rather than criticizing the Laws of Immigration, they started giving inciting

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<sup>10</sup> Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case, Judgement, January 4, 1917, Individual Case of Balwant Singh, accused no. 3.

lectures full of threats. At this, I warned the delegates that if all that remained continued, I shall be compelled to take strict action.”<sup>11</sup>

O’Dwyer desired that Bhai Balwant Singh should keep himself confined to criticizing only the Immigration Laws of Canada and say nothing about the British and India governments. But Bhai Balwant Singh was not ready to accept this because the real motive of bringing their deputation to India was to denude the India and British governments and make the people in India politically aware, incite their wrath and then put them on the path of armed struggle. O’Dwyer wrote about this later: “. . .After a year when the storm of revolution rose in the state, then we realized that these three persons have been most ferociously but secretly spreading rebellion in Punjab”.<sup>12</sup> O’Dwyer wrote further: “. . . Though we did not know at that time, but they were in reality the advance agents of Ghadar Party.”<sup>13</sup>

Bhai Balwant Singh and his companions reached Shimla on 18 September 1913 and held a public meeting there. There they met Michael O’Dwyer, the Lt Governor of Punjab.”<sup>14</sup> With absolute firmness and fearlessness, Bhai Balwant Singh put before O’Dwyer the case of Indian migrants and asked him to do something. During this meeting with O’Dwyer, Bhai Balwant Singh talked with him while holding his head high and keeping eye to eye contact. Michael perhaps was seeing such a person first time. Bhai Balwant Singh had no inferiority complex and he had nothing to feel small before O’Dwyer. He rather felt fearful before Bhai Balwant Singh. O’Dwyer writes about Bhai Balwant Singh in his book: “. . . the way and style of

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<sup>11</sup> Sir Michael O’Dwyer, *India As I know It 1885-1925*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Constable and Company Ltd. 1926) p. 191

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Isemonger and Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy 1913-15*, p. 7

this third man appeared like that of an inimitable revolutionary. They wanted to meet the Viceroy. Sending them to the Viceroy, I asked the Viceroy to be specially cautious of the third man.”<sup>15</sup> In Shimla, Bhai Balwant Singh met Viceroy Lord Hardinge also. But for showing his sympathy, he expressed helplessness in taking some concrete step.

Gone to India under leadership of Bhai Balwant Singh, this deputation got no help from the India and British governments in taking their families to Canada. But they got profuse response from media and the people. They could see closely and understand the social, religious and political conditions. But Bhai Balwant Singh felt disappointed also of some leaders and organizations. Lala Lajpat Rai, the prominent leader of Congress in Punjab, refused to help by saying these words: “. . . This issue is purely of Sikhs only.”<sup>16</sup>

Bhai Balwant Singh felt sorely dismayed of ‘Chief Khalsa Diwan’ the pro-English impotent organization of Sikhs. He aspired to see such an organization of Sikhs in Punjab that could shed away pro-English stance and excite the people for an armed struggle against the British Empire to achieve freedom for the country. On getting back in Canada, Bhai Balwant Singh wrote a letter to Harchand Singh Lyallpuri asking him for a daring dissent against the English government and to shatter away the branch of Chief Khalsa Diwan. In this letter, Bhai Balwant Singh had suggested Harchand Singh Lyalluri that the Sikhs living in India and abroad should form a joint body the headquarters of which shall be at Lahore. This body should

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<sup>15</sup> Sir Michael O’Dwyer, India As I Know It, p. 191

<sup>16</sup> ਕਿਰਤੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1926, ਪੰਨਾ 15

bring out a newspaper that may put the Sikhs on an armed war-path for freedom of the country<sup>17</sup>.

The Kamagatamaru ship reached Vancouver on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1914 with 376 Indian passengers. Bhai Balwant Singh, along with his Indian companions living in Canada, formed a 15-member 'shore committee'. This committee helped the passengers a lot and struggled for their disembarking. It was obligatory to pay next installment of the ship by 11 June. If the same was not paid in time, the owners of the ship would take back the ship along with passengers. With cooperation of his companions, Bhai Balwant Singh collected money from the community and paid installment of the ship.

Bhai Balwant Singh and his companions strove hard for disembarking of the passengers. But the Canada government, throwing its own laws to the wind, gave its decision to send back the Kamagatamaru ship. The Ghadri leaders wanted that in case of going back of the passengers, they should go to India and take part in the rebellion to liberate their country. For this purpose, Bhai Balwant Singh in company with Bhai Bhag Singh and Babu Harnam Singh Sahri, members of 'shore committee', went to Sumas town of America to purchase weapons. The American police arrested them there on 17 January. At the time of return of the Kamagatamaru ship from Canada with the help of warrior ship 'Rainbow' on 23 July 1914, the three most militant Ghadri members out of four of 'shore committee' were in prison in America. Only Hussain Rahim was there in Vancouver. Under pressure of the Canada government, he agreed for the return of Kamagatamaru ship. Had there been present

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<sup>17</sup> Isomonger and Slattery, An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy 1913-15, p. 7-8

Bhai Balwant Singh along with Bhai Bhag Singh and Babu Harnam Singh Sahree, the history of Kamagatamaru and the British regime in India would have been 'something different'.

Because the purchase and keeping of weapons in America is not a crime, so Bhai Balwant Singh and the companions were released on 30 July 1914, a week after the sailing away of Kamagatamaru from Vancouver, and they returned to Vancouver. The First World War started on 4 August 1914. The Ghadar Party gave a call to the Ghadarites to go to the country and declare mutiny. Bhai Balwant Singh was as yet preparing to leave when, on 5 September 1914, Bela Singh Jian opened fire in the Vancouver gurdwara and killed Bhai Bhag Singh and Bhai Badan Singh. Since Bhai Balwant Singh had to appear as witness, so he had to stay back for some time. In the meantime on 21 October 1914, Bhai Mewa Singh murdered Hopkinson. The police accused Balwant Singh of inciting Mewa Singh to commit murder of Hopkinson and thus implicated him in the case. But for want of proofs and confession of Bhai Mewa Singh as solely responsible for the murder, Bhai Balwant Singh was freed of the case on 4 December 1914.

A few weeks after this relief, Bhai Balwant Singh set out for India. With him was his family and two Ghadri companions - Bhai Batan Singh Kahri and Kartar Singh Nawanchand. They stayed for some days in Yugantar Ashram in San Francisco. Boarding the ship from there, they reached Shanghai on 23 January 1915. From Shanghai, Bhai Balwant Singh sent his family to India with Batan Singh Kahri and he himself stayed in Shanghai. His mind was to work on the eastern front of Ghadar Party. For five months, he 'worked' among Indians of China. On 26 June 1915, Bhai Balwant Singh took ship to reach Savato on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and then Bangkok on 13 July. Purpose of his

coming to Siam was to work in company of those Ghadarites who had come from America and Canada and wanted to cause mutiny in Burma.

Very soon after reaching Bangkok, Bhai Balwant Singh fell ill. He was admitted in the hospital. There the doctor, out of ignorance, did a painful operation without serving chloroform because of which Bhai Sahib had to undergo severe suffering for some days. He had not recovered fully and the doctors discharged him from the hospital. Such a haste was done because the police waited for him outside.<sup>18</sup> On first August 1915, the Siam police arrested Bhai Sahib outside the hospital of Bangkok. Not caring about the international law, the Siam government handed him over to the English.

The English had established one interrogation centre at Singapore for interrogating the Ghadarites arrested from far-off eastern countries. In this interrogation centre, the senior officers were all English but, for the purpose of torturing and physical thrashing, all the lower ones were the butchers of Punjab Police. Here a severe torture was perpetrated upon Bhai Balwant Singh. He was given brutal tortures of different kinds. In this butcher-house, Bhai Balwant Singh was interrogated for six months but no one could shatter the revolutionary determination of this committed valiant. After terrorizing him for six months in Singapore, Bhai Balwant Singh was taken to India and was put in Alipur jail of Calcutta. After six months in jail, he was brought to Punjab in July 1916 where he was dragged into the 'Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case'.

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<sup>18</sup> ਕਿਰਤੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1926, ਪੰਨਾ 45

This case stated in Lahore Central Jail on 8 November 1916. Its hearing was going on before three commissioners of a special tribunal. The case of Bhai Balwant Singh was being pursued by the lawyers Lala Devraj and Dhanraj Shah. In this suit, total 18 Ghadarites were entrapped and 9 out of them were from Canada. From Vancouver, there were Bhai Batan Singh Kahri, Kartar Singh Nawanchand, Munsha Singh Dukhi and Hari Singh Chotian who joined Bhai Balwant Singh here. Bhai Balwant Singh was accused of being one of the Ghadar Party and he had sent many Ghadarites to India to topple over the throne of British Empire.

The Tribunal gave verdict of the case on 5 January 1917. Commissioners of the Tribunal had said in the verdict: "We have no doubt that the culprit is man of Ghadar Party and he incites the people most forcefully to actuate mutiny after reaching India. As a result, good many people have come to India cause mutiny in India." It was further written the verdict that "the accused is one of the ring-leader of Ghadar Party. Taking benefit of his position, he has used others to commit crimes and murders. He is one of the prominent leaders inciting others and he deserves the punishment in full justice that his allies undergo under his orders."<sup>19</sup> Commissioners of the Tribunal indicted Bhai Balwant Singh under IPC Codes 121 and 121 A. The Commissioners pronounced Capital punishment for him and ordered for confiscation of all his properties that were worthy of that.

These were the War days and the government was very much fearful. Therefore, the officials while submitting to government orders remained on the lookout to award death penalty to political

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<sup>19</sup> Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case, Judgement, January 4, 1917, Individual Case of Balwant Singh, accused no. 3.

prisoners as and when they found that proper and did not give the dead bodies to their heirs. Even the date of hanging Bhai Balwant Singh was not told to his family. On 18 Chaitra when Bibi Kartar Kaur wife of Bhai Balwant Singh went to meet him, the jail officials placed before her the mini-form of Guru Granth Sahib and his other belongings and told her that her husband was hanged the other day on 17 Chaitra i.e. 29 March 1917. <sup>20</sup>

**Babu Harnam Singh Sahri** was another prominent revolutionary in Canada to carry out an important role in Ghadar Movement. He was born in 1884 in village Sahri of Hoshiarpur district. He had passed Middle. After serving for some time in army, he went to Hongkong in 1904 and further reached Canada in 1907. He lived in Victoria near Vancouver for 9 months and then went to Seattle in America in May 1908. During 1908-09 in Seattle, he studied first in Lincoln High School and then in University College of Seattle. After spending one and half years in Seattle, he came back to Vancouver in November 1909. Here he joined with G. D. Kumar and formed an organization named 'Hindustani Association'. Its motive was to secure status for the Indian community equal to that of other nations in the world. In December 1909, Babu Harnam Dass formed 'Swadesh Sewak Home' in Vancouver on the line of 'India House' of Shiamji Krishan Verma in London. Here the Indian emigrants were given political education. Again in association with G. D. Kumar in January 1910, Babu Harnam Dass brought out a monthly Punjabi newspaper 'Sudesh Sewak' from Vancouver. Anywhere in the world away from India, it was the first newspaper published in Punjabi. In this Paper, articles were published about the racial discriminatory laws constituted by Canada government with the purpose of keeping

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<sup>20</sup> ਕਿਰਤੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1926, ਪੰਨਾ 45-46

away the Indians from Canada; withdrawing of the voting right from Indians and many other issues and problems faced by them.<sup>21</sup> Through these writings, the Indian emigrants were told that the reason of their suffering was slavery of India. This Paper was sent to India in large number. Senior English Officers in CID, later on, quipped about 'Sudesh Sewak' thus: "By and by, its tone went on becoming objectionable. Since this Paper was addressed to the Sikh Sepoys of British Indian Army in their own language and was sent to India in large number, so its entry in India was banned in 1911".<sup>22</sup>

Canadian Officials felt much irritated on reading the write-ups of Babu Harnam Singh in 'Sudesh Sewak' and likewise from other political activities. They wanted to get rid of them. Very soon, an opportunity came in their hands. In the summer of 1910, Babu Harnam Singh crossed the border to America to meet the Indians living there and collect donations from them for 'Sudesh Sewak'. On 4 July 1910 when he was returning from Seattle to Vancouver, the Canada Immigration Official disallowed his entry in Canada. Babu Harnam Singh stuck in Seattle. During 1910-12, he studied in University of Washington in Seattle. In May 1911, his friend G. D. Kumar also came from Vancouver to live in Seattle. During 1911-12, Babu Harnam Singh and G. D. Kumar kept working in the saw mills set on the bank of river Columbia on the border of Washington and Oregon states and also kept preaching political awareness among workers working there.

In the beginning of 1913, Babu Harnam Singh succeeded in coming to America from Canada. In mid of 1913, Ghadar Party was established in America and he started working actively for it. He

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<sup>21</sup> ਸੁਦੇਸ਼ ਸੇਵਕ, ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ, ਮਈ 1910.

<sup>22</sup> J.C. Kerr, Political Trouble in India, 1907-17, pp 230-31.

brought together many Indians living in Canada with the Party. On the advent of Kamagatamaru ship at Vancouver in 1914, he was member of the 15-member 'shore committee' to help the passengers. On sending back of the ship in July 1914, the Ghadar Party deputed Babu Harnam Singh the duty of supplying weapons to passengers in the ship. He tried to purchase weapons from the areas of Vancouver, Victoria and the city Port Angels on America side but he did not succeed in that. Then Babu Harnam Singh in company with Bhai Balwant Singh, Bhai Bhag Singh and Bhai Mewa Singh tried to purchase weapons on 17 July 1914 from the town Sumas near border of America. In Sumas, the American officials arrested them all. The Canada Immigration officials did take back Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Bhag Singh but the Immigration officials said about Babu Harnam Singh that he was not the citizen of Canada and they could deport him.<sup>23</sup>

In second week of September, when Babu Harnam Singh was in jail of America, the police raided his house in Victoria. Police recovered from there the letters which were written to him by Babu Tarknath Dass and Surinder Mohan Bose and an important information was found that Babu Harnam Singh was an expert among the Indians in Canada in bomb-making and he was collecting necessary material for the purpose. On searching the store of Babu Harnam Singh, the police found huge quantity of such material that was to be used in bomb making.<sup>24</sup>

Babu Harnam Singh was in jail yet when the First World War started on 4 August 1914. On 26 September 1914, the American government deported Babu Harnam Singh. When his ship reached

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<sup>23</sup> Melcolm R. J. Reid to W. D. Scott, July 25, 1914. VCA, Add. Ass, No. 69, Vol. 1.

<sup>24</sup> J. C. Kerr, Political Trouble in India, 1907-17, pp 249-50

the port Yokohama in Japan, he gave away a slip from there. He made contact with Ghadar activists there. Here in company with Sohan Lal Pathak and Santokh Singh Dhardeo, he took over the command of Siam-Burma plan of Ghadar Party. Under this plan, the Indians living in Siam and other eastern countries and having sympathy with Ghadar Party were to be gathered in Siam. German officers were to train them for fighting and they were to be equipped with weapons supplied from German. After getting training in Siam, these Ghadarites were to attack Burma.

Burma was state of India at that time. The White forces had gone from there to Europe to take part in War. In Burma, there was strong police force of 15 thousand Punjabi Sikhs and Muslims. In order to maintain their forceful effect, this police was converted to military police after giving them army weapons. The Ghadar leaders were to preach the Indian Military Police of Burma and then knot it with them. It was to be made sure that it would help the revolutionary forces from Siam to attack Burma. In this way, the Ghadar forces in Siam with help of the Military Police in Burma were to capture over Burma. Making Burma their foothold, they were to attack further at India.

Going from Siam to Burma, Babu Harnam Singh worked among the Indian soldiers. After activating and strengthening the Ghadar Party branch in Rangoon, Babu Harnam Singh set for North Burma. There he went in cantonments and distributed revolutionary literature. Among the Muslim soldiers, he distributed the decree issued by the *khalifa* of Turkey in which Muslims all over the world were directed to fight against British Empire. By the time, reports of failure of Ghadar in Punjab came over. In April 1915, the government came to know of the Siam-Burma Plan. Arrests of revolutionaries began in

Burma. Trying to get out of Burma to reach Siam, Babu Harnam Singh was arrested at border on Burma side. Brought from there, he was imprisoned in Molmeen jail of Burma.

Babu Harnam Singh and some of his companions ran away from jail on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1915 after cutting the bars of jail. But they were caught again on 9 September 1915. Babu Harnam Singh and his other revolutionary leaders were entangled in 'First Burma Conspiracy Case' in Mandalay jail of Burma. Allegation upon them was that they had planned conspiracy to topple down the British government in India. Seventeen revolutionaries were entangled in this case. Giving decision on this case on 27 July 1916, Babu Harnam Singh was awarded capital punishment and, on 14 November 1916, this grand revolutionary was hanged till death in Mandalay Jail.

**Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna** was President of Ghadar Party in America. He was born in January 1870 in his maternal village 'Khutrai Khurd' near Guru ka Bagh in Amritsar district. His ancestral village was Bhakna. His father, S. Karm Singh Shergill, was a 65-acre owner rich farmer. He studied up to primary level but knew Urdu and Punjabi very well. In early days, he used to be a *shrabi-kbabi* but at the age of 27 in 1897, he joined with Namdhari Movement. Tired of economic problems, he reached America in April 1909. Here he spent his first night in the house of Babu Harnam Singh Sahri who, after coming from Vancouver, was living in Seattle. With Babu Harnam Singh, he talked about the '*Pagri Sambhal Jatta*' movement of 1907.<sup>25</sup> Here he worked in a saw-mill near Portland city in Oregon State. While living in America, he also had to face racial discrimination like other Indian emigrants. In his own words: "Going

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<sup>25</sup> "ਭਾਬਾ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਕਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ", ਪ੍ਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਜਾਜ, ਦੋ ਪੈੜਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ (ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ: ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਕਾਡਮੀ, 2004), ਪੰਨਾ 50.

on the way, even children used to mock at us calling 'hello Hindu slave'. We were taunted as – 'you thirty crore are men or sheep who can't get rid of two lakh Englishmen. We were pricked 'you Hindus are not humans. You rats to spread plague".<sup>26</sup>

Indian emigrants in Canada were already getting mobilized against this racialism. They had taught the Indian emigrants and Sohan Singh Bhakna living in America that "... an organizational struggle is essential to safeguard mutual rights." Bhakna and his people were much influenced of Americans for fighting against the British for their independence. So they knew that taking to arms is very essential for independence. In his own words of Sohan Singh Bhakna: "After a long thought and discussion, we have reached the conclusion that till we become independent, we don't have value of two *kauris* even. And nobody gives independence, it is snatched. Without armed revolution, neither independence can be achieved, nor can democracy be and nor can the national pride be saved."<sup>27</sup>

In order to enlighten politically and mobilize the Indian labours living in Oregon and Washington States, the revolutionaries like Sohan Singh Bhakna and G. D. Kumar joined together to form "Hindustan Association of Pacific Coast" in Portland city in 1912. Sohan Singh Bhakna was made its President and G. D. Kumar its Secretary. It was decided to bring out a newspaper named "Hindustan". But hardly four or five meetings were held and G. D. Kumar fell ill. Bringing out of newspaper got delayed and, by and by, work of the organization fizzled out.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> ਭਾਬਾ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਕਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ", ਪ੍ਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਜਾਜ, ਦੇ ਪੈੜਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ (ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ: ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਕਾਡਮੀ, 2004), ਪੰਨਾ 52

<sup>27</sup> auhl, pMnw 53

<sup>28</sup> ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋਸ਼, ਇਕ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ: ਇਕ ਜੀਵਨੀ (ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ: ਪੰਜਾਬ ਬੁਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ, 1969), ਪੰਨੇ 26-27

In these days, Thakur Das Dhuri suggested Sohan Singh Bhakna to call Lala Hardyal from California and entrust him this work of the organization. Bhakna wrote letter to Lala Hardyal. On 25 March 1913, Lala Hardyal reached Oregon. Lala Hardyal and Sohan Singh Bhakna moved around Portland and held three-four meetings with the Indian labours working in saw mills. Then a large meeting was called in Astoria at the end of third week of April. Here all those decisions taken in St. John's meeting were re-approved and the organization named "Hindi Association of Pacific Coast" was established. Sohan Singh Bhakna was made its President, Lala Hardyal its Secretary and Pandit Kanshi Ram the Treasurer.<sup>29</sup> A three-member commission was formed for secret works. Sohan Singh Bhakna, Lala Hardyal and Pandit Kanshi Ram became members of this secret commission. Main motive of the organization was to achieve freedom for India through armed revolution and then establish 'Secular Democratic Republic' as in America. Headquarter of the Organization was to be at San Francisco wherefrom the newspaper named 'Ghadar' was to be brought out. Later, it was on name 'Ghadar' of the newspaper that this organization became famous as 'Ghadar Party'.

Headquarter of the Party, named 'Yugantar Ashram', was established in a rented house in San Francisco. From 1<sup>st</sup> November 1913, the newspaper 'Ghadar' Weekly started publishing from here. Through this Paper, the Indians living in Canada, America and other countries started joining Ghadar Party. Observing the increasing influence of Ghadar Party, the British government felt baffled. They pressurized the American government. Under this pressure, the American government arrested Lala Hardyal on 25 March 1914 but he was got

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<sup>29</sup> ਸ਼ੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਧਰੀ, ਇਕ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ: ਇਕ ਜੀਵਨੀ (ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ: ਪੰਜਾਬ ਬੁਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ, 1969), ਪੰਨੇ 26-27

released on a surety of one thousand dollar. Later on, under fear of lest the American government hand over Lala Hardyal to British government, Lala Hardyal left America and went to Europe, as advised by the Party. In place of Lala Hardyal, Bhai Santokh Singh Dhardeo was designated General Secretary of the Party.

After Lala Hardyal left America, the responsibility of Sohan Singh Bhakna, being President of the Ghadar Party, increased much more. He left his job in the saw mill and started living in Ghadar Ashram in San Francisco. He became whole-time worker of the Party. He himself supervised all the activities in the Ashram. To make the Party strong and united, he worked day and night. Going out at the staying sites of Indian workers, he told them the programmes of Ghadar Party; recruited new members; opened new branches of the Party and collected funds for the Party.

Keeping the Kamagatamaru ship held up at Vancouver harbor for two months, the Canada government sent it back on 23 July 1914. In the Kamagatamaru struggle, the Ghadarites of America helped the Ghadarites of Canada in every way. Because of the inhuman treatment meted out to them and after reading the literature sent by Ghadar Party, the passengers of the ship started hating the British rule and became sympathetic towards the Ghadar Party and its programmes. In consonance with the duty assigned by the Party, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna boarded the ship from San Francisco on 21 July 1914 with boxes of pistols and ammunition. On reaching the Yokohama port in Japan, Baba Bhakna reloaded these boxes on Kamagatamaru ship.

At this time, the First World War had already begun. On 14 October 1913, Baba Bhakna reached Calcutta by the ship named Namsang.

Police arrested Baba Bhajna from the Ship itself. He was taken to Punjab and then imprisoned in Multan jail. To know secrets from him, the Police offered him many temptations and, no doubt, threats also. But the Police could not succeed in drawing any secret from him. Despite the fact that he was arrested from the ship at Calcutta, even then he was indicted in Lahore Conspiracy Case and then was announced capital punishment which, later on, was changed out of the fear of defamation into life imprisonment by the Viceroy Lord Harding.

On 10 December 1915, Baba Bhakna was taken out of Punjab to Andaman and was put in the Cellular Jail. In Cellular Jail, numerous inhuman atrocities were thrust upon the jail inmates. They were made to do severe labour of extracting 30 lbs oil daily in expellers. In case of non-completion of the hard labour, the prisoners were given very stringent punishments. In company with his Ghadar companions, Baba Bhakna undertook struggle against this oppression. They took to hunger strikes many a time. In this turmoil, Bhakna's seven companions died in Cellular Jail. In August 1921, Baba Bhakna was brought to India from Andaman and he was kept in various jails. There also, Baba Bhakna took to hunger strikes against bad conditions of jails. In Yadwada jail of Bombay, Baba Bhakna was made to remove his kachhehra, the underwear, and turban and he was made to wear knickers and cap. Baba Bhakna went on hunger strike for his religious rights. Parmanand Jhansi and Hirderam, though with Hindu background, joined Baba Bhakna in his hunger strike. In those days, Mahatma Gandhi also was in Yadwada Jail. Gandhi Ji showed no sympathy with Baba Bhakna and

others in this case. Rather on asking, he said: "It is their religious matter".<sup>30</sup>

After spending sixteen years in different jails, Baba Bhakna got released in 1930. Even after coming out, Baba Bhakna kept struggling for freedom of the country and in favour of the rights of working peasants. The English government sent him to jail many times. After going away of the English, the India government also sent Baba Bhakna many times in jail. Baba Bhakna got his hunchback in the jail of free India.

In alliance with progressive partners, Baba Bhakna kept striving to establish rule of the dreams of Ghadarites. His health had become very weak. On 16 November 1968, he reached Sarabha to celebrate martyrdom day of Kartar Singh Sarabha. On coming back, he was struck by pneumonia. Suffering under this illness, this veteran valiant of Ghadar Movement passed away on 20 December 1968.

**Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha** was another great Ghadarite who went to the gallows at a very young age. Kartar Singh Sarabha was born in 1896 in village Sarabha of Ludhiana district. After passing matriculation at young age of 16, Kartar Singh came to study in America in 1912. Here he studied in Berkley University near San Francisco. Under influence of free American atmosphere and in observance of bad treatment meted out towards Indians, the slavery of India started tormenting Kartar Singh. In April 1913, Ghadar party was established and Kartar Singh Sarabha became its member. The 'Ghadar Party' started bringing out the 'Ghadar' newspaper in Urdu from First November 1913. Then Kartar Singh went to San Francisco and started living in Ghadar Ashram. He

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<sup>30</sup> ਪ੍ਰੋਫ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਜਾਜ, ਦੋ ਪੈੜਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ, ਪੰਨਾ 69

used to help in printing press. In December 1913, the Party started publishing the Newspaper in Punjabi. Kartar Singh used to translate and publish in Punjabi the articles of Lala Hardyal and other writers published in Urdu in 'Ghadar'.

On beginning of the First World War on 4 August 1914, the Ghadar Party gave a call to reach India and declare mutiny there. But Kartar Singh Sarabha left for India even before this call by 'Nipon Maru' ship. Going via Colombo, he succeeded in reaching India by third week of September. But other prominent leaders like Sohan Singh Bhakna, who were to reach later, were arrested from the ship itself and, as such, the already formed organization was broken. Out of the Ghadarites outside, Kartar Singh Sarabha was the only competent leader to lead the Ghadar Party. With cooperation of his companions, Kartar Singh reconstituted the Party afresh.

Ghadarites going to India were assured that they would be provided arms on reaching India. But the arms did not reach. Money was required to purchase arms. To meet the shortage of money, Kartar Singh, under compulsion, suggested the Party to go for political robberies. Under lead of Sarabha, Party committed robberies at many places. But these robberies brought bad name to the Ghadarites.

Members of the Ghadar Party were very much short of experience. To make up this deficiency, Kartar Singh Sarabha made contacts with Bengali revolutionaries. Sachinder Nath Sanyal, the Bengali revolutionary, came to Punjab at the end of November 1914 and took cognizance of the situation. The Ghadar Party had no headquarter of its own so far. As suggested by Sanyal, headquarter of the Party was set up at Lahore. Ras Bihari Bose, the popular Bangali

revolutionary, reached Punjab in the last of January 1915 and took command of the Ghadar Party. Kartar Singh Sarabha took company of Vishnu Ganesh Pingley (having come from America) visited the cantonments at Meerut, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahbad and Benaras and brought them round to join the mutiny.<sup>31</sup>

With reports received from different places, Sarabha and his companions decided to declare mutiny on 21 February 1915. As per Sarabha's plan, attack was to be made at cantonments of Lahore and Ferozpur and the Whites standing guard at the magazines were to be overpowered and then, with help of 'mixed' Indian soldiers, a national ghadari force was to come up. After this, it would have become easy for the other Indian forces 'mixed' with Ghadarites to raise mutiny and join the Ghadarites. Then with force of this revolutionary army and the revolutionaries, all the Whites could be thrown out of India. Because of the leakage of information by the informer Kirpal Singh, the Ghadarites changed date of the mutiny from 21 February to 19 February. The government came to know this date also. On 19 February, Kartar Singh Sarabha reached Ferozpur cantonment with his companions to declare mutiny. But the pro-Ghadar soldiers were either sent home or they were put under strict surveillance and the White soldiers were standing at guard of the magazines. In the cantonment at Lahore also, the Indian soldiers were disarmed.

Because of leakage of secrecy, the mutiny could not be successful. Arrests of Ghadarites started. Kartar Singh Sarabha succeeded in escaping safely out of Lahore but, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1915, he was arrested along with his companions Harnam Singh Tundilat and

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<sup>31</sup>Lahore Conspiracy Case, Judgement, September 13, 1915, Individual Case of Kartar Singh, accused no. 39.

Jagat Singh Sursingh from a house in Chak no. 5 near Sargodha. At that time, Kartar Singh Sarabha was reading out poems from 'Ghadar ki Goonj' to the people gathered there. According to the police Sub-Inspector Sadardin, Sarabha, at the time of arrest, started giving lecture to the people that they should take to arms against the English.<sup>32</sup>

It being War time, the government could not afford to displease the Sikhs in Punjab, the nursery of recruitment in army. So while demolishing the Ghadar Movement and maintaining the trust of Sikhs for the English, Lt Governor Michael O'Dwyer called a meeting of Sikh Sardars in 'Govt House Lahore' on 27 February 1915. In this meeting, O'Dwyer asked for help of Sikh Sardars to suppress the Ghadar Movement forcefully. Sikh Sardars, one above the other, assured O'Dwyer that they considered themselves fortunate while serving the British government. They assured O'Dwyer of their full cooperation and would use their good influence in getting the Ghadarites arrested. Sikh Sardars were rather more strict in dealing with the Ghadarites. Out of the 3200 persons come from abroad, 200 had been already put in jails and 700 were confined to village limits. But the Sikh Sardars suggested O'Dwyer that all the 3200 persons come from abroad should be thrown in the jails.<sup>33</sup>

Sardar Bahadur Gajjan Singh, who was Member of Provincial Legislative Council and was himself a lawyer, proposed to O'Dwyer that any form of leniency in dealing with the Ghadarites shall affect the people badly. Therefore rather than filing suits against

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<sup>32</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case, Judgement, September 13, 1915, Part 3, The History of the Conspiracy and War, p. 107.

<sup>33</sup> Sir Michael O'Dwyer, India As I knew It, 1885-1925, p. 204.

Ghadarites in general courts, they should be put under 'Summary Trials'.<sup>34</sup> Other Sikh Sardars confirmed the proposal of Gajjan Singh.

Getting assured of the loyalty of Sikhs through Sikh Sardars, O'Dwyer adopted still more stringent policy. Acting upon the proposal of Gajjan Singh, O'Dwyer got passed the 'Defence of India Act' from Viceroy Lord Harding. O'Dwyer had dictatorial powers to crush the Ghadarites. Kartar Singh Sarabha and all other Ghadarites caught so far were put together in Lahore Central Jail. 82 Ghadarites were sued vide 'Defence of India Act', This most infamous 'Lahore Conspiracy Case' went on from 26 April 1915 to 13 September 1915 in Lahore Central Jail.

Special arrangements were made for this suit. Special police guards were standing at the Jail's gate, inside on the Jail's yard and on the roofs also. CID men were roaming about on all sides. No one could go inside to witness proceedings of the Case; not even the relatives of the ones whose Case was going on. Press people could not write report of the Case. Whatever reports appeared in newspapers, all those were government reports.

Hearing of the case was going on under Special Tribunal of three Judges nominated by the government. Under 'Defense of India Act', this Special Tribunal had been given unbridled powers. Decision of the Tribunal was the last and final decision. No appeal in any court could be entered against this decision. No 'authority' had any legal right to reopen the inquiry of decision given in this case; neither about its legal aspect, nor about the facts and neither about the proper or improper award of punishment. The Viceroy Lord Harding

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<sup>34</sup> Isemonger and Slattery, An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy 1913-15, pp 75-76.

only had the right to interfere or listen to appeal in matter of decision of the Tribunal.

Accusation upon Kartar Singh Sarabha and his comrades was that they had made up a conspiracy to topple over the throne of British government in India and, to make this plot successful, they had instigated the Indian soldiers of the army and incited them for mutiny. They were accused of this crime also that they, in order to make this conspiracy successful, had committed robberies to collect money to purchase armaments. Also they had printed and distributed literature for mutiny. And they committed murders of the officials and police officers who tried to restrict their path. They had tried to blow off railway lines and the bridges.

While giving verdict of the Case, the Commissioners wrote about Sarabha: “. . .Despite his young age, he is the most dreadful culprit out of these 61 accused ones and his file of crimes is the largest one. In actual, whether in America or on the ship on way to his country or in India, there is no part of the conspiracy where this culprit would not have taken part. . . . He has admitted that he was there in the robbery committed at Sahnewal. He has accepted that he had relations with Lala Hardyal in America and he used to work in the Ghadar Press in San Francisco”. The Commissioners wrote further that “He is young man of tender age but he is one the most dreadful conspirators and no pity can be shown to him”.<sup>35</sup>

Commissioners of the Tribunal pronounced Capital Punishment to Kartar Singh Sarabha and his 23 cohorts. 27 were given life imprisonment and 6 were punished for less than six years. Later on, Lord Harding converted capital punishment of 17 Ghadarites into

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<sup>35</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case Judgement, September 13, 1915, Individual Case of Kartar Singh, accused no. 39.

life imprisonment. But the capital punishment of Kartar Singh Sarabha was kept *status quo*. On 16 November 1915, Kartar Singh Sarabha was executed in Lahore Central jail along with his six fellows. Among those who were hanged, along with were Vishnu Ganesh Pingley gone from America and Jagat Singh Sursingh, the famous revolutionary of Vancouver.

Many of the historians, especially the western ones, have given more than due importance to Lala Hardy. In their view, Lala Hardy only was the soul-self of Ghadar Party. But I do not agree with these views. Ghadar Party was not the creation of some single person. The Indian labours working in saw mills around Portland were already wakeful by virtue of the preaching of Ghadarites like G. D. Kumar, Babu Harnam Singh Sahree and Babu Tarknath of Vancouver. These workers only had called Lala Hardy from San Francisco to form the Ghadar Party. Lala Hardy reached the area of Portland in the last of March 1913. After holding meetings for about three months with the workers working in saw mills around the river Columbia, Lala Hardy constituted the Ghadar Party in Austria on 21 April 1913. This could become possible only because the workers were already awake politically. Otherwise, what other wild-horn did Lala Hardy have to form the Ghadar Party in three weeks? (No doubt, much credit goes to Lala Hardy by starting the 'Ghadar' newspaper and then in projecting the Ghadar Movement to such acme heights among other revolutionary parties in other countries as to make the movement worthy of international fame). The British government had the thinking that, with going away of Lala Hardy from America, Ghadar Party would come to its close, but it did not happen so. In the words of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna: "Hardy worked with us for five months only. Had he been spirit and soul of the Party, this Movement

would definitely have died after his going; but it did not happen so. Rather, the Movement grew stronger. Preparation for the mutiny was done after his going.”<sup>36</sup> So I would like to say that for the formation and for the running of Ghadar Party, it was not single-self Hardyal only. It was the result of collective efforts many of Ghadarites.

As such, we realize that in reality the true spirit and soul of Ghadar Movement were the Sikhs having come from central districts of Punjab. They were not much awake politically while living in India and they did not consider bad the British rule there. They had come to Canada-America in search of better work and living means. Racialism, free atmosphere of Canada-America, association with revolutionaries from different countries of the world and the non-existence of pro-English Sikh leadership were prominent reasons of their becoming politically awake and then the establishing of Ghadar Party. If they had not come to Canada-America or other foreign countries, they would perhaps have lived through lives as most faithful servants of the English government. Being the best Sikhs, they adopted a secular approach and, in togetherness with Hindus, Muslims and non-believers in religion, struggled for freedom of the country. Insufficient experience in revolutionary undertakings and non-cooperation from the native people were prominent reasons of non-success of the Ghadar Movement. No doubt, they had direct involvement in Akali Lehar, Babbar Akali Lehar, Kirti Lehar and Communist Kehar - all for freedom of the country. Bhagat Singh and his likes of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association were much under influence of the Ghadarites. As such, these revolutionary giants of Canada-America had made a momentous contribution for freedom of the country.

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<sup>36</sup> ਪ੍ਰੋਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਜਾਜ, *ਦੋ ਪੈੜਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ*, ਪੰਨਾ 57.

Along with their struggle for freedom of the country, these Ghadarites of Canada had fought battles for their rights in Canada also. Ghadarites of Canada made that conspiracy of Canada Government unsuccessful in November 1908 by means of which all the Indians in Canada were to be thrown out to live in British Honduras. These Ghadarites had also won the right of bringing their families in Canada. After a long strife of forty years, they had also won the voting right in Canada on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1947.

Whatever the honourable living the Indian community is enjoying in Canada these days, absolute credit for all this goes as a tribute to the sacrifices made by those Ghadarites.

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