CHAPTER-V

PEPSU AND THE AKALI DEMAND FOR PUNJABI SUBA AS REFLECTED IN THE PRESS

After the freedom of India in 1947, Yadvindra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala was a member of the Negotiation Committee of the Princes instituted under the Cabinet Mission plan to formulate the terms on which the States were to accede to the Indian Union, Patiala being the first to do so on 13 March 1947. Over 500 States were finally regrouped and integrated into eight Unions, one of them being Patiala and East Punjab States Union comprising Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Malerkotla, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Nalagarh and Kalsia.1

The emergence of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (Pepsu) was the result of the integration of the erstwhile Princely States of East Punjab into one administrative unit in 1948. On 10 February 1948, Mountbatten said that it would be in the interest of all the Punjab States if a Union of all the States including Patiala was formed.2 The Government of India rejected outright the suggestion of the treating all the States as viable units.3 On the question of associating Patiala with the East Punjab States Union, the Government of India was of the opinion that there should be a Union of all the East Punjab States and as Patiala State was capable of standing by itself, it should be left alone. The Government gave an option to Patiala on a voluntary basis to join any arrangements for a Union of the East Punjab States.4

On 11 February 1948, Giani Kartar Singh, the then President of the Akali Dal suggested the formation of the Union of Sikh States.5 In
1948, a political conference which was held in Nabha, Master Tara Singh said that he had been very anxious that all the East Punjab States should form one Union.

In the course of his talk with the Central Government, the Maharaja of Patiala, Yadvindra Singh at number of times had said about the desirability of canalising Sikh politics, in response to which he was assured of the establishment of a separate Union of the Punjab States so as to satisfy the aspiration of the Sikh community. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, in one of his letters to the Maharaja of Patiala, characterised the Union as a 'Homeland of the Sikhs'.

The decision was interpreted as a concession to the Sikhs, particularly the Akalis. Another factor which appeared to have influenced the government's decision to form the Union of these eight East Punjab States was the need of having a stable province of reasonable area with contented Sikh population on the borders of the country. According to the 1951 Census, it had 17.21 lac Sikhs as against 17.04 lac Hindus and 55,913 Muslims.

The Maharaja of Patiala, Yadvindra Singh was appointed Rajpramukh of the Union for life, whereas the Maharaja of Kapurthala was made Uprajpramukh. It was decided that the Union would be called the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) till such time as the Constituent Assembly of the Union should adopt a suitable title. On 5 May 1948, the covenant was signed by the rulers of all the eight States. The Union was inaugurated by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the historical Darbar Hall in the Qila Mubarak, Patiala on 15

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July 1948, but it came into political existence on 20 August 1948, when the Rajpramukh took over the administration of the covenanting State. Gian Singh Rarewala was the Chief Minister of the Union. The Pepsu with a total area of about 10,011 square miles, had 64 towns and 6,305 villages. It was divided into eight districts, four subdivisions of Nabha, Malerkotla, Faridkot and Nalagarh. As regards its geographical location, Pepsu which covered an area of 10,119 square miles was situated between 27.75 and 31.75 degrees North and 74.5 and 77.25 degree East.

Master Tara Singh welcomed the formation of Pepsu but again advocated the merger of the Sikh majority areas of Punjab into Pepsu and formation of a Punjabi-speaking State. Formation of a government in the Pepsu gave a little headache to the political parties. Before the formation of the Pepsu, the Congress had been supporting the Praja Mandal from outside. Consequent on the merger of All India States People Conference with the Indian National Congress in May 1948, the Praja Mandal in the East Punjab States merged itself with the Congress. The new party came to be known as a Pepsu Pradesh Congress. The tendency among the Sikhs for the last few years had been to regard the Praja Mandal as a Hindu organization. In February 1948 Col. Raghbir Singh, ex-Home Minister, Patiala Government, formed a new political party named Lok Sewak Sabha. The party was liberally financed by the Maharaja of Patiala and actively supported by Sikh Congressite such as Udham Singh Nagoke and Isher Singh Majhail. The party opposed Patiala State Praja Mandal. Lok Sewak Sabha merged itself with the Pepsu Congress on 6 March 1949. The Akali Dal cherished a strong sentiment that as Pepsu...
was the only Sikh majority unit, it should have a Sikh Premier. The Central Government decided to form a ministry, consisting of representatives of the Congress, the Lok Sawak Sabha and the Akali Dal. A neutral Sikh was to be nominated by Patel as Premier. The government offered them two seats, so the Akali Dal rejected to join the government.

The Central Government, after overcoming some initial troubles, installed a care-taker government comprising Gian Singh Rarewala as Premier (Prime Minister), Jai Lal as Advisor, Inderjit Singh as Finance Secretary, B.R. Patel as Chief Secretary on 20 July 1948. Master Tara Singh opposed the Government of India for appointing a care taker government. The Congress Party in Pepsu considered this care taker government as a shadow of Rajpramukh. The role of the care-taker government came under a bitter attack in the Jaipur Session of the All India Congress Committee in December 1948. Meanwhile efforts continued for the formation of a representative ministry but the resistance offered by the Akalis and the erstwhile Praja Mandalists to Rarewala or Raghbir Singh’s leadership was too strong to overcome. Ultimately a ministry of Lok Sewak Sabha and four rebel Praja Mandal representatives, Giani Zail Singh, Ram Nath, Nihal Singh Takshak and Harcharan Singh under Gian Singh Rarewala was sworn in on 13 January 1949. Among the other ministers were Col. Raghbir Singh and L.D. Kaushal of the Lok Sewak Sabha and Ajit Singh, a close relative of Rarewala. This ministry was setup by the Rajpramukh after informal consultations with Patel. The Praja Mandal representatives, Giani Zail Singh and Nihal Singh Takshak had set up a parallel Pepsu Pradesh Congress Committee which came to be known as Patiala
Union Congress. The Congress faction led by Brish Bhan was also highly critical of the performance of the government. The ruling Congress faction headed by Giani Zail Singh launched a counter-attack against the Congress faction led by Brish Bhan.

After a few months Patel invited Giani Zail Singh’s group to form an interim government. The interim ministry was opposed by the Akalis and the pro-Congressites Brish Bhan. Ministers were greeted with black flags wherever they went. Section 144 had to be imposed to protect ministers from the Akali demonstrators. Forty Congress workers were prosecuted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The Pepsu State Congress President Brish Bhan met Patel and the Rajpramukh and assured them that if they agreed to reconstitute the government, all propaganda against the interim government would be stopped.

Brish Bhan also conveyed to Patel that he would prefer to work with Akalis rather than with Giani Zail Singh’s group or Col. Raghbir Singh’s representatives. On 18 November 1949, the interim ministry was dissolved. The Government of India installed the second care-taker government on 20 November 1949 which consisted of Gian Singh Rarwala and M.R. Bhide, an I.C.S. Officer. This care taker government lasted nearly one and a half year.

The government announced the Sachar Formula on 2 October 1949 which provided for a notional division of the province into two Zones, a Punjabi Zone and Hindi Zone. The Punjabi Zone of the carving of Sachar formula consisted of the district of Amritsar, Jullundur, Gurdaspur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur, all the
portions of Hissar district to the east of Ferozepur, Patiala side of the Ghaggar river.\textsuperscript{35} The importance of the Sachar formula lay in the fact that the government accepted the Akali claim that the Punjab could be demarcated into Hindi speaking and Punjabi speaking regions. It provided that Punjabi in Gurmukhi script and Hindi in Devnagri script should be the regional languages of the Punjabi speaking and Hindi speaking areas. It also provided that Punjab would be the medium of instruction in the Punjabi speaking areas up to the high school stage, with Hindi as a compulsory subject from the forth grade. The reverse arrangement were to apply in the Hindi speaking areas.\textsuperscript{36}

After a great struggle the Sikh were able to get the same concession for the Sikh Scheduled Castes which were given to Hindus. But even while conceding this demand, a trick was palyed upon the Sikhs. The concession was extended to Sikhs not with regard to all the Scheduled Castes but only regarding Kabir Panthis, Mazahbis, Ramdasis. Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala, Chief Minister of Pepsu government, vide letter dated 2 May 1950 addressed to Vallabhai Patel protested against this discrimination.\textsuperscript{37} Even this genuine demand of the Sikhs was rejected and Vallabhbhai Patel vide his letter dated 4 May 1950, informed Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala that ‘there can be no question now of widening this concession.’\textsuperscript{38}

In 1951 Census were held in India, it showed that in the Amritsar district, there were 70.7 percent Sikhs against 27.7 percent Hindus, in Ferozepur 59.6 Sikh against 38.7 percent Hindus and in Ludhiana 61.7 percent Sikhs and 37.4 percent Hindus. In Pepsu as a whole there were 49.3 percent Sikhs and 48.8 Hindus. There was therefore an areas in India with considerable Sikh majority\textsuperscript{39} on 23
May 1951, the Government of India set up a new representative ministry in Pepsu consisted of, Gian Singh Rarewala and M.P. Bhide. Col. Raghbir Singh joined the Congress after dissolving his Lok Sewak Sabha and formed his Congress Ministry on 23 May 1951 which included Brish Bhan as Deputy Chief Minister along with three of his nominees as ministers and also two of his Harijan supporters as Deputy Ministers.

The Akali Dal chose to fight the election in 1952 on the basis of the Punjabi Suba. The election was contested by three parties; the Akalis, the Communists and the Pepsu Congress under Col. Raghbir Singh. The Akali Dal was badly mowed by the Congress in this election both in the Punjab and Pepsu. The Akali Dal won only 33 out of 186 legislative. The Congress had only a limited appeal. The Akali Dal failed to muster the support it had expected and could not substantiate its claim to be safe representatives of the Sikhs. The Communists won 6 seats. The Congress even got more votes than the Akali in two Sikh majority districts, Amritsar and Patiala. However in Pepsu, Akalis succeeded informing a United Front Ministry comprising anti-Congress elements such as Col. Raghbir’s party and independents led by Gian Singh Rarewala. On 21 April 1952, the non-Congress ministry with Rarewala as its head was formed with the help of the legislators from the Hindi speaking Zone. In 1952, the United Front Ministry appointed another Committee of seven members of the Assembly headed by Sardar Dara Singh; M.L.A. and other members were Pritam Singh Sidhu, Bachan Singh, Gurdial Singh, Sunder Singh, Sampuran Singh.
In December 1952, Master Tara Singh demanded the creation of a Punjabi speaking State by taking certain portions of Punjab and Pepsu in forming them into one administration unit. While asking for the amalgamation of Pepsu and Punjabi-speaking region to constitute a Punjabi Suba, they could at this stage feel sure that it was bound to be a Sikh majority State. The Akali Dal Working Committee in a resolution in July 1953 said, "that independence of the country has brought no relief to the Sikhs. They have been particularly chosen to be discriminated against in all walks of life. They have sought solution of the difficulties by all the peaceful and constitutional methods, but have not been given even a hearing."\(^46\)

The Rarewala ministry remained in office for about a year, but throughout its existence, it ever remained under threat of defection by over-ambitious legislators particularly from the Hindi-speaking region of the Union. The conditional support of the Communist M.L.As and faction fights among the Akalis did not allow the Rarewala Ministry to function smoothly.\(^47\) The resignation of Rarewala’s ministry 1 March 1953 climaxed a phase of bewildering political developments. The Pepsu Akali Dal was divided into two groups of Pritam Singh Gojran and Sampuran Singh Raman. Pritam Singh Gojran was elected President of the Riasti Akali Dal on 25 March 1953.\(^48\)

The Lok Sabha approved the establishment of President rule in Pepsu on 12 March 1953. The Rajya Sabha approved it on 26 March 1953. In the following some significant changes were witnessed in the behaviour pattern and character of the political parties.\(^49\)
The Pepsu Congressmen wanted Pepsu to be merged into Punjab but the Punjab Congressmen opposed this proposal as they apprehended that it would involve the surrender of their Hindi-speaking areas where they had the maximum mass appeal. The Akali Dal in Pepsu was prepared to surrender the Hindi speaking areas of Narnaul and Kandaghat. If the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan could be transferred to Pepsu. This, the Akali Dal in Pepsu pleaded would ensure a Sikh majority State, continuance of a Sikh Rajpramukh and it would provide a homeland for the Khalsa. The political crises in Pepsu and imposition of President rule spurred the Akali Dal for greater tempo in demanding Punjabi Suba.

The Parliament appointed the States Reorganisation Commission on 29th December 1953 with the following members:

(i) Saiyed Fazl Ali, Governor of Orissa as Chairman;
(ii) Hariday Nath Kunzru, Member of Council of States,
(iii) Kavalam Madhava Pannikar, Ambassadar of Indian in Egypt.

The Commission was required to ‘investigate the conditions of the problem the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon’. The Commission invited written memoranda from the member of the public as well as associations on 23 February 1954. Accordingly it received 155250 documents but out of these, they were only 2000 well considered memoranda selected by the Commission for their consideration. The Commission toured all parts of the country and interviewed 9000
persons, including members of political parties, public associations, social workers, journalists, municipal and district board representatives etc.

The Akali Dal contested the 1954 Pepsu election primarily on the Punjabi Suba issue. The Congress assumed in Pepsu with Col. Raghbir Singh as Premier and Brish Bhan as his deputy.  

The right-wing Pepsu Akali Dal favoured the retention of Pepsu and was opposed to its merger with the Punjab. They felt that the merger of Pepsu with Punjab would be against the interests of the Sikhs. The Sikh majority in Pepsu and only marginal, as they constituted only little more than 49 percent and exceeded the Hindus by only 20,000. Pritam Singh Gojran expressed his opinion infavourable on expanded Pepsu. The leftist wing of the Riasti Akali Dal (Ramangroup) stood for the merger of the Punjabi speaking areas of Pepsu with the Punjab. The leftist wing of Riasti Akali Dal rejected the demand for Greater Punjab.  

The Pepsu Government considered the sponsors of the Maha Punjab move as 'communalists'. Their plea for a bigger unit on the border from the view-point of strategic considerations were countered by the argument that the smaller units were more convenient for defence purposes. In November 1954, Chief Minister Col. Raghbir Singh strongly pleaded for retention of Pepsu as a separate State. The picture was radically changed after the death of Raghbir Singh. Soon after Brish Bhan's taking over as Chief Minister of Pepsu a piquant situation arose because he was known to have pro-merger view which ran counter to the stand taken by the Pepsu Government.
in the memorandum submitted to the State Reorganisation Commission.60

The Pepsu Government appointed a Committee of eighteen members under the Chairmanship of Ram Saran Mittal, Pepsu Assembly Speaker, to advise it on the problem of reorganization of the State.61 The Congress members of the Committee were: Raja of Nalagarh, Hansraj Sharma (Phagwara), Major Amir Singh (these members represented three enclaves of Kandaghat, Kapurthala and Mahendergarh) and Jagan Nath Kaushal, Gian Singh Rarewala, Gojran and Ranjit Singh represented the United Front and Akali Dal. Albel Singh was Secretary of Sanjha Morcha of Sampuran Singh Raman group. Gurdial Singh Dhillion, Lachman Das and Seth Joti Parsad, the three publicmen were all Congressmen from Patiala.62

Gian Singh Rarewala as could be understood subscribed to the above school of thought, supporting the demand of a Punjabi speaking State in the firm of a modified Pepsu. He recommended that the historical background and tradition of this region would help to retain the Pepsu in its modified form. He expressed the opinion that even after Kapurthala, Mahendergarh, Kandaghat areas were taken away from Pepsu, the State would remain a viable unit. But to make it stronger and self sufficient, he suggested that the contiguous Punjabi speaking areas of Punjab be incorporated into Pepsu.63

The Advisory Committee considered the demand of Punjabi-speaking State to be a communal demand, reciprocally, the demand for a Maha Punjab was considered to have been actuated by a desire to
create a very big State so that the Sikhs may be reduced to a negligible minority.64

Pritam Singh Gojran, Pepsu Akali Chief and a member of the Advisory Committee was in the favour of Greater Pepsu. He wanted that Hindi speaking areas should be cut off from Pepsu while the Punjabi speaking areas of Punjab and Ganganagar in Rajasthan should be integrated with it.65

The Advisory Committee recommended the formation of Maha Punjab by the merger of Pepsu, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The demand as such was made on historical, cultural and defence grounds.66

The Punjab States Committee, which had been formed at the Leftist Parties Convention for the formation of the Punjabi speaking State in October 1953. The Committee demanded the disintegration of Pepsu and Punjab States so that the Punjabi speaking contiguous Zones of the two Stats could be merged with a view to unifying all the Punjabi speaking areas into one State.67

Almost all the political parties and other organisations met the States Reorganisation Commission on 18 April 1955. The Akali Dal in Pepsu pleaded for the retention of Pepsu, preferably in an expanded or modified form. Three groups – the Arya Smaj of Pepsu, the Krishak Samiti and the Central Purusharthi Sabha demanded the merger of the Pepsu with the Himachal and the Punjab.68 Representatives of traders and Arya Samajists demanded the formation of Maha Punjab. The Pepsu branch of the Bhartiya Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh reiterated their demand for
Maha Punjab. The Praja Socialist Party made a case for the redistribution of the northern Indian region into States on a linguistic and cultural basis.\textsuperscript{69}

In the second half of 1954 the Punjab was full of excitement generated by almost a public debate on the respective merits of the Punjabi Suba and the Maha Punjab. While the Reorganisation Commission was touring the rest of the country, the Akalis in the Punjab were relying support for Punjabi Suba and the Punjab Congress holding public meetings against this demand and mobilising support for the Maha Punjab. The climax was reached on the eve of elections for the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee to be held in January 1955.\textsuperscript{70} The Akali Dal extended this election contest on the issue of Punjabi Suba in alliance with the Desh Bhagat Board of the Communist. The Akali Dal won an overwhelming majority of the seats. The Congress sponsored Khalsa Dal, had contested 132 seats and won only 3 seats.\textsuperscript{71}

The Sikh public opinion was being mobilised in favour of Punjabi Suba in order to curb the rising demand, the Sachar Ministry imposed a ban of the Punjabi suba slogan, on the plea that it was endangering communal harmony in the State. During an interview Bhim Sen Sachar (the Chief Minister of Punjab) on 21 January 1955 said, 'Master Tara Singh stated that he did not believe in a linguistic Punjabi State. What he had in mind, was a Sikh State where the Sikhs would be in a numerical majority.'\textsuperscript{72} Master Tara Singh decided to start morcha and it was launched on 10 May 1955. Realising the gravity of the situation the government withdraw the prohibitory order on 12 July 1955. The Akalis suspended their sixty four days old morcha, but
that was not the end with the publication of the report of the State Reorganisation Commission, the Akali agitation entered a new phase.\textsuperscript{73} The States Reorganisation Commission after considering various proposals and requests gave its recommendations on 30 September 1955. In its report, the Commission maintained that both physically and geographical Pepsu was very much a part of the Punjab. From the point of view of population Pepsu was the smallest of the part B States. The demand of its merger as a whole or by parts in the adjoining areas had been voiced by the political parties right from the time of its formation till the appointment of States Reorganisation Commission. The Commission argued that Pepsu was an artificial unit and could not continue under any scheme of reorganisation.\textsuperscript{74} The Commission said: We feel that even with its present territory, the State cannot be regarded as a sizeable unit and with the merger of outlying pockets in the adjoining areas which should follow as a natural corollary of territorial readjustment in this area, it will become very difficult for this State to maintain its separate existence.\textsuperscript{75}

The States Reorganisation Commission report was discussed at length in Parliament, State legislature and in all political quarters. It had a mixed reception. The Hindus were generally satisfied but it evoked violent reactions in the Sikh quarters. The Akalis felt perturbed over the report. They had hoped that the middle way could be found between the two extreme demands of Maha Punjab and Punjabi Suba. Master Tara Singh denounced the report as a decree of Sikh annihilation.\textsuperscript{76} The Akali Party in Punjab showed complete indifference to the Pepsu’s retention. Master Tara Singh said that he would continue his struggle for Punjabi Suba even if Pepsu was retained. The
Akalis from Pepsu tried to persuade Master Tara Singh to accept retention of Pepsu as a temporary alternative to the Punjabi Suba demand.77

The States Reorganisation Commission had made out a well-reasoned case that Pepsu was not a viable unit. The Congress Party viewed the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission favourably and managed a unanimous resolution. It hailed the liquidation of Pepsu, pleaded for the recognition of Patiala and expressed satisfaction over the abolition of the institution of Rajpramukh. Consequently the institution of the Rajpramukh was abolished.78 In the Pepsu it was felt that Patiala should be made the capital of the new Punjab State.79 The demand of making Patiala the capital of the new State was voiced by the majority of the members in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha.80

The Akali Dal ended its agitation, negotiations were held between the Central government leaders and several Akali leaders. Master Tara Singh met Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru on 24 October 1955 in the presence of Abdul Kamal Kalam Azad and G.B. Panth.81 Meanwhile the States Reorganisation Commission recommended the merger of Punjab, absolutely unacceptable to the Akali Dal.

Eventually, a compromise solution – later known as the Regional Formula was reached. Master Tara Singh was accompanied by Giani Kartar Singh, Hukam Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala and Bhai Jodh Singh. Their talks were inconclusive. Another deputation met the Prime Minister to suggest that the Pepsu formula could be extended to
the Punjab for solving the language problem and Punjabi language could be promoted in the whole State. 82

Hukam Singh had formulated a scheme which essentially met some of the Akali demands without actually creating a Punjabi-speaking State. This became the basis of discussion in January 1956.83 On 11 March 1956, the general body meeting of the Akali Dal was held, Gian Singh Rarewala presented the Regional Formula and Giani Kartar Singh supported it. In this time Master Tara Singh said, 'our object is not to create trouble. The proposal offered by the government does not constitute the Punjabi Suba but under the present circumstances, I do not want to fight.'84

The Regional Formula divided the State into two regions namely Punjabi speaking and Hindi speaking regions. Under the regional formula the State of Pepsu was merged in the Punjab in 1956. The formula provided that the provisions of the Sachar Formula concerning the medium of instruction would continue to apply in the areas of the Punjab before the merger and that in the areas of the former Pepsu State the arrangement already existing therein regarding language instruction would continue.85 The Akali Party was in a situation of political drift and Gian Singh Rarewala even said in statement that under the changed circumstances, the Akali Dal should leave the political field continue itself only to the social, cultural, religious and educational activities of the Sikhs and allow its members and supporters to join the national and progressive forces.86 The demand of making Patiala the capital of the new State (Chandigarh) was opposed by the Raman group. The administrator of the Chandigarh Captial Project dismissed the suggestion of Patiala. The ultimate
decision did not go in favour of Patiala city but in accordance with the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission it was decided to retain some important government offices in Patiala.

Gian Singh Rarewala even, started discussions with the Congress leaders in order to facilitate the entry of his group into the Congress. Master Tara Singh immediately branded Rarewala's move as a treachery and made it clear that the Akali Dal would maintain its independence existence because of his belief in the independent political entity of the Sikhs. Hukam Singh characterised Rarewala's advise to join the Congress Party as 'virtually an act of sabotage' and a betrayed of trust. The Working Committee even expelled Rarewala and his five colleagues for their advocacy, However the Akali Dal in view of increasing tilt towards Congress among rural Sikhs started negotiating with Congress leaders about political cooperation. The States Reorganisation Commission recommended the integration of Punjab, Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh into the administrative unit. On 1 November 1956, Pepsu became part of the larger State of the Punjab.

The Congress High Command was blamed for giving encouragement to Sardar Partap Singh Kairon to subdue the Akalis. In the same month, in a big Akali conference held at Batala on 13 July 1958, Master Tara Singh repeated all these charges and emphasised that the Sikhs were in a danger from the Hindu majority and the Congress government. Master Tara Singh severally attacked Giani Kartar Singh and clubbed him as 'a traitor of the Sikh community'. Sardar Hukam Singh, the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha supported Giani Kartar Singh. Giani Kartar Singh charged Master Tara Singh
that his leadership was in danger and not the Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh supported Prem Singh Lalpura against Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh was defeated by three votes because of Giani Kartar Singh got the support of all the 24 Communist members and three Congress member in the election of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Master Tara Singh revived the agitation and was arrested. While Master Tara Singh was in jail, Sant Fateh Singh started a fast unto death on 18 December, 1960. Master Tara Singh who in the meanwhile had been released by the government had persuaded Sant Fateh Singh to believe that the Prime Minister had changed his attitude and was ready to negotiate. Sant Fateh Singh met the Prime Minister several times thereafter. Nothing came of these meetings. The newspaper 'The Tribune' writes under the captain, 'No Direct Struggle', "After the failure of Nehru Fateh Singh talks, Master Tara Singh declared that the struggle of the creation of Punjabi Suba would continue what form that struggle would take, he said it would be decided by the Working Committees of the Akali Dal."

Master Tara Singh started his fast unto death on 15 August 1961 which lasted 48 days. It was broken on the assurance that a high level Commission would be appointed by the government of India to look into the charges discrimination against the Sikhs when this Commission was appointed on 31 October 1961. The Commission gave it report on January 1962 and found there was no basis for any charge of discrimination against the Sikhs and come to the conclusion that the Punjabi Suba has a camouflage for the demand of a Sikh State.
Sant Fateh Singh set up a rival Akali Dal against that of Master Tara Singh in 1962. Jawaharlal Nehru died on 27 May 1964, in the same year Partap Singh Kairon had to resign from his post on 14 June 1964 by the Das Commission. After his defeat in Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee election of January 1965, Master Tara Singh provoked Sant Fateh Singh to reopen the question of the formation of the Punjab Suba. In his statement on 2 August, 1965, Master Tara Singh called for ‘a self determined status for the Sikhs within the Union the India’. The Sant group responded by reiterating its demand for the Punjabi speaking States on a purely linguistic basis, in its resolution of 5 August 1965. On 17 August 1965 Sant Fateh Singh gave an ultimatum that unless the Punjabi – Speaking State formed within 25 days, he would launch a fast into death (i.e. on 10 September) and if he survived it for fifteen days, he would adopt the path of self immolation by burning himself on the 16 day. The Sikh leaders divided themselves on the issue of Punjabi Suba. Some fifteen Congress MLAs met to urge the government to accept the Punjabi Suba demand while other Sikh MLAs dissociated themselves from this stand, meanwhile in 1965 India went to war with Pakistan. The Union Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda also announced that, the whole question could be examined a fresh. Sant Fateh Singh finally withdraw his threat of self-immolation. The Home Minister announced in Parliament that a Parliamentary Committee and a Cabinet Committee consisting of Y.B. Chavan, Defence Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Mahavir Tyagi, Minister of Dehabilitation were being formed to resolve the problem of reorganisation of Punjab. The Cabinet Committee became distinct when Lal Bahadur Shastri died at
Tashkent where had gone to sign a peace treaty with Pakistan under passion auspices on 11 January 1966 and Mrs. Gandhi became the next Prime Minister. She expressed here inclination for the formation of Punjabi Suba. Undeterred by these allegations and without waiting for the report by the Cabinet and Consultative Commitees, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi got the resolution passed in a meeting of the Congress Working Committees in the favour of Punjabi speaking State. The State was reorganised on linguistic basis on 1 November 1966.
FOOTNOTES

1. *All India States People Conference Papers*, File No. 134; (available at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi).


4. Ibid.


41. Ibid., 15 July 1951.


43. Ibid., 21 March 1952.

44. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 April 1952.


53. Ibid., 30 December 1953.

55. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1954.


68. *Akali Patrika* 19 April 1954.


87. The Hindustan Times, 2 April 1956.


89. The Tribune, 12 June 1956.

90. Ajit, 18 June 1956.

91. The Hindustan Times, 16 June 1956.


95. Lal, Mohan Disintegration of Punjab, Sameer Parkashan, Chandigarh, 1984, p. 89.


98. For detail see, Synopsis of the Nehru – Fateh Singh Talks on the issue of the formation of Punjabi – speaking State, Secretary, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, 1961, also see Ajit 2 January 1961.


100. The Hindustan Times, 1 November, 1961.