V

THE AKALI MILITANCY AND FORMATION OF THE CHAKARVARTI JATHAS

The harrowing tragedy at Mankana Sahib\(^1\) gave a new turn to the Akali Movement. This uncalled-for barbarity aroused the anger of the Sikhs and the militants, among them, began to think of taking revenge. The Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee were following the non-violent policy under the influence of Gandhiji. On 6th March, the S.G.P.C. passed a resolution, brought by Master Nota Singh, which advocated non-cooperation with the government in martyr’s case. Since then, the Gurdwara Reform movement became political in its perspective. The Panjab Government began to intimidate the eminent Sikh leaders on one pretext or the other. Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar, S. Teja Singh of Buchar, S. Lakha Singh Kural and many others were arrested on March 11 and 12, 1921.\(^2\) The Congress leaders like Gandhiji exhorted the Sikhs, even, to pardon those responsible for

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1. The Panch, Lahore, February 23, 1923, gives the number of the martyrs at Mankana Sahib as 200. Also vide, Amar Singh, Sikh Panth Kithon Ton Kithe, Amritsar, 1970, p.287. Gurbakhash Singh Shamesher, Shaheed Ki Gian, op. cit., p.573, gives the number of the Sikhs killed as 86, whereas the Panjab Government in its communique of February 27, 1921, conceded the figure to be 130 (Quoted in The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, October 23, 1921). The number given in Kartar Singh Jhabbar’s Saka Mankana Te Dusre Gurdwarian De Kabze Lain De Hallat (Wss.), p. 112, is 150 only.

Hankana outrage on March 3, 1921 in a speech at Hankana Sahib and reiterated the views, in a message on 5th March, 1921. This was not relished by the Akali leaders from the Bist Jullundur Doab. There was a spate of meetings and divans where fiery and inciting speeches were delivered. Master Mota Singh, Bhai Kishan Singh Gargai and many others were in the vanguard. The revolutionary songs were recited in the meetings. The people welcomed this commotion and in order to invite all for participation, enthusiastic young men gathered into groups and visited as many villages as possible. This filled the Doaba villages with ardour and the masses began to expect big events. The Doaba burst into revolutionary fervour. A big divan was held at Kot Fatahi from 9th to 11th March, 1921, and was addressed by many leaders of note.

On March 18, 1921, a political conference was held at Rurka Kalan (Jullundur). Master Mota Singh addressed the gathering, in which he thanked Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Shaukat Ali for their sympathy with the Sikhs over the Hankana outrage, but he also squarely expressed dissent and disagreement with the Gandhian viewpoint of granting pardon to the butchers of the Sikhs at Hankana. In his speech he made mention of ten Mahants of the shrines of the Sikhs who had become tool of the British bureaucracy in tormenting

3. Comrade, Ram Chandra, Road to Freedom, New Delhi, 1980, p.34.
4. The Panch, Lahore, March 9, 1921.
5. The Panth Sewak, Amritsar, March 30, 1921.
and hunting down Kona Gate Maru passengers of 1914–15.6

Germination of the Conspiracy: Under these circumstances, the militant Akalis met in a conclave at the time of the XIII Sikh Education Conference held at Hoshiarpur from March 25 to 27, 1921.7 It was here that a nebulous terrorist group was formed with a resolve to assassinate the persons responsible for the Nankana holocaust.8 The group included Master Motu Singh,9

9. Master Motu Singh was born at Patara in 1881. He was one of the founder members of the Shriman Gurdvara Farbandak Committee. He was a forceful speaker who carried away the masses with him. He had little faith in Gandhian non-violence. His arrest warrants were issued for his involvement in the First Akali conspiracy. He became Chakravarti. He succeeded for a considerable time in evading the police but was ultimately arrested on 16th June, 1922. He remained in Jail during the Babbar Akali movement. He was released on June 23, 1929 (vide the Kauai Babbar Sher, Amritsar, 28 June 1929). Even in jail, he kept contact outside, especially with the leaders of the Babbar Akali movement. When he came out of the jail, the movement had been crushed. He joined the Communist Party of India and became an important member of Kishan Sabha. Later, on he joined the Indian National Congress and was also elected an M.L.A. on its ticket. He breathed his last on 9 January, 1960.
Kishan Singh Gargaj, Jagat Singh alias Bijla Singh of Gharuan, Amar Singh of Delhi, Amar Singh of Kot Barre Khan, Tota Singh Peshawari, Ganda Singh, Bala Singh of Ghola Khurd, Sham Singh

10. Kishan Singh Gargaj was born in Birring in 1891 and was the only son of Fateh Singh. He was Havaldar Major in 2/35 Sikhs. During martial law days, he was detained for 28 days for anti-British remarks. He was discharged and a pension of 4. 22/- was forfeited due to his alleged disloyalty. On April 6, 1921, he became Secretary of the Akali Dal. After XIII Sikh Education Conference held at Noshiarpur, he hatched a conspiracy to murder J.W. Bowering and others. The failure of the conspiracy led to his arrest warrants. He became Chakarvarti and launched a "Chakarvarti Jatha" to create an awareness among the people of the Doaba against the British rulers.

11. Bijla Singh of Village Gharuan belonged to Patiala State. It falls in Ropar District, now. He was a close companion of Kishan Singh. He was with him at Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind.


Dr. Karish Mohan is not correct when she says that Amar Singh replaced Kishan Singh when the latter absconded in April 1921 (Militant Nationalism in the Punjab, 1919-35a. Ph.D. Thesis (Unpublished), G.N.D.U., Amritsar, p.74). Kishan Singh absconded in June, 1921. Amar Singh was acquitted as he turned an approver. Then he began to reside at Kot Patuha and worked as Granthi in the Gurudwara there. He began to work actively for the Babbar Akali Jatha but once again he turned approver and his statement led to many arrests.

13. Tota Singh Peshawari was the first Secretary of the Akali Dal. He handed over his charge to Kishan Singh on April 6, 1921 (vide the Babbar Sher, Amritsar, February 26, 1926). He has been mentioned a former Assistant Secretary of the Akali Dal, vide Home Political file No.268/1922, p.6. He was an active Akali who helped Master Mata Singh in escaping to Trans-Indus region in June, 1921. He was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment due to his complicity in the First Akali conspiracy case. He was released on February 18, 1926.


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and Batten Singh of Kahiri,\textsuperscript{15} Bachittar Singh and Sadhu Singh of Dhuri, Bishan Singh of Sheerpur, Gurbachan Singh of Ambala,\textsuperscript{16} Chattar Singh of Sheikhpura, Shankar Singh of Pindori Bibi, Chanchal Singh of Jandiala, Narain Singh of Chattivind and many others. Kishan Singh was a devout Sikh who had been baptising the Sikhs since 1915 in the Doaba.\textsuperscript{17} At the time of the Ghadr Movement, he was drawn to Bhai Randhir Singh and exchanged news about Ghadr activities through Sant Singh who was staying with Bhai Randhir Singh.\textsuperscript{18}

But the Movement failed. Kishan Singh was very sore at its failure and seriously pondered over the programme of murdering informers and traitors who had stood witness against the returned emigrants from Canada and to realise his objective he planned to procure weapons.\textsuperscript{19} S. Kishan Singh, Amar Singh, Narain Singh, Canda Singh and Bela Singh were serving 2/35 Sikhs at Ambala in November, 1920. After the Manjara tragedy, some left service or were discharged while others absconded after stealing weapons from the armoury of Air Force at Ambala.

\textsuperscript{14} contd:

also threw light on Bela Singh's involvement in the conspiracy to the writer in an interview on 11.4.1933, shortly before his death.

\textsuperscript{15} Batten Singh of Kahiri: He was an ex-Ghadrto who became one of the important members of the Akali Dal.

\textsuperscript{16} It is a village in Keshipur District not to be confused with Ambala, a district headquarter in the State of Haryana.

\textsuperscript{17} Phul, Gurdial Singh, \textit{Choe Aje Kahin Sukha}, Amritsar, 1982, p.114.

\textsuperscript{18} Mahar Singh, \textit{Anadi Dian Lehyan}, op.cit., p.299.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy case}, p.40.
The meeting at Hoshiarpur was the first sod towards the formation of the militant bate. The militants among the Akalis discussed their strategy, for the first time, there. It was decided to collect weapons and use military personnel sympathetic to the Sikh cause. In pursuance of this decision, steps were taken. Tota Sing Peshawari was assigned the duty of collecting weapons. Chettar Singh was detailed to arrange money for the purpose. Jagat Singh and Gurbachan Singh were sent to Peshawar to get into communication, through Tota Singh, with General Nadir Khan at Jalalabad in order to ascertain whether Master Mota Singh and his companions would be handed over to the British Government in India if they crossed the Frontier. Communication was established and an assurance was received that no such action would be taken. From April 4 to 6, 1921, the Sikhs assembled at Mankana Sahib to celebrate 'Martyr's Day'. At that time an Interim Committee of 28 members was constituted, which included Master Mota Singh, to deal with the situation which prevailed at that time. Kishan Singh Gargaj also made his debut with a speech full of religious fervour and was instantaneously elected Secretary of the Akali Dal. He took

21. He was son of a military Captain and had become Jathedar of Tarantaran after Mankana tragedy, Vide The Akali, June 18, 1922.
22. Home-Political Department, File No.263/1922, p.6.
24. The Akali, Lahore, April 9, 1921.
25. The Gurgaj Akali, Amritsar, July 31, 1922. Milkha Singh 's account, Babbar Akali Lehar Da Muda, vide The Panjabi Tribune, contd...
charge on 6th April, 1921 with his headquarters at Guru Ka Bagh, Amritsar. On April 9, 1921, the Militants assembled at Amritsar in the office of the Akali Dal and decided to kill the atrocious Mahants and others. The weapons purchased were to be kept with Kishan Singh Gargaj in the office of the Akali Dal. Again, a meeting is said to have taken place on May 1, and then on May 21, 1921. The last meeting was attended by Master Nota Singh, Kishan Singh, Tota Singh, Harain Singh, Ganda Singh, Bela Singh, Bishan Singh of Sherpur, Bijla Singh, Gurbachan Singh, Amar Singh of Delhi, Amar Singh of Kot Barre Khan and some others.

Accordingly it was decided that Mr. C.M. King Commissioner, Lahore Division, who, it was alleged, encouraged the Mahants to put up resistance against the reformers J.W. Bowring, a C.I.D. official who had been supposed to be hostile to the aspirations of the Sikh community, Mahant Dava Dass of Mankana, Mahant Basant Dass of Manak, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Baba Kartar Singh Bedi be assassinated.

Chandigarh, dated 13 June, 1922 is erroneous wherein he states that Gurdit Singh of Kamagata Nama fame was present at that time at Mankana Sahib. Baba Gurdit Singh had decided to offer himself for arrest at Mankana Sahib on 15th November, 1921 on the advice of Mahata Gandhi and not in April, 1921 (vide Sadhu Singh, Jivani Master Nota Singh ji, op.cit.p.126).

29. A Brief Account of the Sikh People, Amritsar, p.94.
30. Sahni, Fuichi Ram, Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines, op.cit.p.66.
Tota Singh was deputed to procure weapons from the Frontier and he was able to get revolvers, bombs and cartridges with the assistance of Sant Singh alias Chatter Singh, Sham Singh of Kahiri and Gurbachan Singh. They succeeded in depositing the weapons on 30th April, 1921, in the office of the Akali Dal, at Amritsar. Seven revolvers had already been stolen from the armoury of the Air Force of Ambala Cantonment in December, 1920. Ganda Singh, Bela Singh and Bur Singh planned to commit a theft of the weapons but they did not succeed. After some days, Bela Singh, single-handedly, broke open the rear window and stole 7 revolvers and three rifles. Later on, Bela Singh and Ganda Singh absconded with four revolvers leaving three with Haran Singh Maik of 2/35.

Bela Singh of Gholla Khurad and Amar Singh of Kot Barre Khan were deputed to account for the Sahib of Manak, but the attempt failed as there was a police guard posted at the Gurdwara. Amar Singh of Delhi and Ganda Singh were deputed to throw bomb at Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, but they returned unsuccessfully owing to Majithia's absence from the house. Finally, Ganda

32. The Akali, Lahore, June 18, 1922.
33. Loc. cit.
34. Loc. cit.
37. Ibid., p. 40.
Singh and Bala Singh were deputed to assassinate Mr. J.W. Bowring. They were sent to the office of the 'Akali', Lahore, on the direction of Bijla Singh with an introductory letter to one Sadhu Singh. They met Sadhu Singh and Chattar Singh of Jethuwal on May 21, 1921, Sadhu Singh took them to a granthi named, Prem Singh of Gurdwara Chumala Sahib on 22nd May, 1921. He remained busy in making certain arrangements and on 23rd he took Bala Singh and Ganda Singh to Bowring's bungalow. They failed to find him there. Then Sadhu Singh advised them to murder him at Amritsar where he was scheduled to go that evening as told by Bowring's cook, Nisam-ud-din. Consequently, they left for Lahore railway station to board the train leaving for Amritsar. It seems that Sadhu Singh being an informer, instead of helping the Akalis, reported the matter to the police. Bela Singh and Ganda Singh were arrested at Lahore railway station by Mr. Issenonger S.P., Lahore. They made a clean breast of the whole conspiracy and


39. The Akali, Lahore, June 18, 1922.

40. Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali op. cit., p.4. Also vide Home-Political File No. 268/1922, S.12, letter of V.Connelly, Esq. Secretary to Government Punjab to the Secretary of Government of India, Home Department, Simla, dated 3.5.1921. It reads:

"About the 20th May, an informer, who has been furnishing the C.I.D. with reports regarding the Gurdwara Committee in Amritsar, told the C.I.D. officer with whom he has been working, that a member of the committee had given word that Battan Singh Kahri was sending four men to Lahore to murder Messrs King, Bowring, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, and Sardar Sukha Singh, late D.S.P. of Police. On the 21st, the informer repeated that two Sikhs had visited him in Lahore and he had promised them to show them the houses where the officers mentioned lived .... there they were arrested in the train by Mr. Issenonger, C.P.Lahore. Each was in possession of

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disclosed the names of Kishan Singh and others.\footnote{1}

The disclosure of the conspiracy led to the First Akali conspiracy case. About 25 persons were implicated in the case. Six of them turned approvers, five absconded, one died, 6 were arrested and others were let off after preliminary investigations. This case was tried by Mr. P.J. Rust, Special Magistrate and it resulted in the conviction of the three on 19th May, 1922. The case took leisurely speed. The 'Panch' on 2nd November 1921, protested that four months ago some Sikhs were arrested on a charge of the conspiracy to murder certain government officers but they had not as yet been placed on trial.\footnote{3} Perhaps, the police were anxious to enmesh as many Akalis as possible in its net.

\footnote{40 contd:}

Mark VI Webley revolver and spare cartridges, --- 58 rounds altogether, while one of them also carried an Afridi Knife. The informer was Sadhu Singh and the police officer with whom he worked was F.C. Isamonger, S.P.(C.I.D.) Lahore.

\footnote{41. } Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, p.41. Also vide Home Political, File No.268/1922, p.7(V.Connally, Secretary to Panjab Government in his letter to Secretary Government of India dated 30th May, 1922, disclosed this.}

\footnote{42. } Home Political, File No.268/1922, p.7.

\footnote{43. } The Panjab Press Abstract, Vol.XXIV, Lahore, 19th November, 1921, N.A.T.
Ganda Singh and Bela Singh’s arrest smashed the whole plot. Ganda Singh became approver and disclosed all the activities, right from the theft of pistols committed on December 4, 1922 from Ambala Armoury of the Air Force.  

Subsequently, Chatter Singh Jethuwal and Prem Singh Granthi were arrested, the former from the “Akali” office, Lahore and the latter from Gurdwara Chumsala Sahib. Amar Singh of Kot Barra Khan, Tota Singh Peshawari and Tara Singh of Thathar were arrested from Amritsar. Amar Singh’s confessions led to the arrest of Chatter Singh of Sheikhupura, who became approver and caused the arrest of Chandhal Singh of Jandiala, Thakar Singh and Varain Singh. Others who were arrested included Bishan Singh of Sherpur, Sham Singh of Kahiri, Bur Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Sarwukh Singh, Sadhu Singh of Dhuri, Bachittar Singh and Shankar Singh of Pindori Bibi.

The approvers included Ganda Singh ‘Sarai’ (Amritsar), Sunder Singh alias Sham Singh of Kahiri (Boshiarpur), Bur Singh Lussar of Karam Singh Wala (Sialkot), Gurbaksh Singh Peshawari, Chatter Singh alias Sant Singh and Sarwukh Singh.

44. The Akali, Lahore, June 18, 1922.

45. Paper Book Babbar Akali case, p. 853. He was son of Sarwar Bahadur Lehma Singh of Village Tung, District Gujranwala.

The absconders were Master Mota Singh, S. Kishan Singh Gargaj, Bijla Singh alias Jagat Singh of Gharuan, Batten Singh of Kahiri, Amar Singh of Delhi and Gurbachan Singh of Ambala. Out of them, Batten Singh died in July, 1921. On August 7, 1921, Chhattar Singh of Sheikhupura, Gurbakhsh Singh, Bur Singh and Ganda Singh were granted pardon. Bishan Singh, Sadhu Singh, Thakar Singh and Chhattar Singh of Jethuwal were also let off. Prem Singh was discharged in January 1922. Amar Singh and Haran Singh were acquitted on 18th May, 1922. Tota Singh, Tara Singh and Bala Singh were sentenced to 5 years each.

Of those who absconded, Master Mota Singh left for Kabul in the second week of June, 1921. Tota Singh had already finished the arrangements of his escape by the end of May, 1921. S. Kishan Singh Gargaj who was Secretary of the

47. Lec. cit.
48. Home-Political. File No.266/1922, p.6. Also, vide Register Karmi Akali Dal (Mss.), p.9. He was paid rich tribute by the Akali Dal in a condolence meeting, held on August 15, 1921. He was called 'Panth Rattan'.
52. Vide interview of the writer with Bute Singh on 20th November, 1922.
Akali Dal, absconded on June 4, 1921 on the persuasion of the Akali leaders like Master Sunder Singh Lyalpuri and others. According to Buta Singh of Pindori Nijjaran, he was thinking of offering himself for arrest but Teja Singh of Bhuchar and Ram Singh of Dharoval advised him against it. Ram Singh even offered to give financial support to his family and this he continued till the end. The course suggested by the leaders was strange. Perhaps, they were not sure of the direction, the Gurdwara Reform movement might take. They thought that the Akalis might be compelled to take up arms and then the militants would stand the movement in good stead. Bijla Singh, Gurbachan Singh and Amar Singh of Delhi, also, absconded. S. Kishan Singh realised that their attempt had failed due to the faulty planning and execution. Once again he planned to re-organise the militants and to achieve this end, he followed a programme of vigorous campaigning. After Master Mota Singh's sudden arrival at Mankana Sahib in 1921, from the Frontier, Kishan Singh sought his advice and formed a 'Chakarvarti Jatha.' Jathedar Kishan Singh confined his activities to the Doab and it was tentatively decided that similar activities would be started in the Majha by Teja Singh of Bhuchar and his like-minded companions. With Master Mota Singh's arrest on 16th June, 1922 and Bijla Singh's reclamation later on, by the

55. Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangarh, (Mss.), p.36.
56. Vide interview of the writer with Buta Singh on Nov. 20, 1982.
Prime Minister of Patiala, Sir Daya Kishan Kaul, it was left to Kishan Singh to pilot the militant movement. The sympathisers like Teja Singh of Bhuchar and Ram Singh of Dharowal seemed to have retraced their steps, later on, and were alleged to have been acting as the agents of Patiala and thus showed weakness unworthy of the militants.

Towards the Formation of the Chakarvarti Jatha: After the failure of the First Akali conspiracy, Master Mota Singh left for the Frontier and S. Kishan Singh took refuge with Sant Kartar Singh at Pragpur (Jullundur). With his assistance, he left for Mastuana in June, 1922. From Pragpur they went to Ambala on June 8, 1921 as Kishan Singh wanted to meet Harain Singh Malik of his ex-regiment. On reaching there, it was learnt that he had been arrested on June 6, 1921 as two revolvers had been found in his possession. They proceeded to Dhuri and met

59. Ibid., p. 183.
60. Labh Singh Jassoval, Sankhoo Tavarikh Babbar Akali, op.cit., p. 35.
61. The Nawan Sahib, October, 1932. Also The Panj Ab Darpan, Amritsar, June 15, 1933.
62. Sant Kartar Singh alias Shaarafdin S/O Fateh Din belonged to Desu Malkana. He was a convert and was baptised by Sant Attar Singh of Mastuana. Then he became a Sadhu and came across Sant Mit Singh of Kishan Pura (Jullundur) and Sant Gurbakhsh Singh of Churial. Sant Mit Singh was well known to Bela Singh of Pragpur. As Kartar Singh lived with Sant Mit Singh, he made good use of his acquaintance with Bela Singh who put up a Chhappar (reed hut) for Sant Kartar Singh near his well. Pragpur was only a mile away from the Indian Infantry lines at Jullundur Cantonment as well as from Birring, the native village of S. Kishan Singh. This Kartar Singh proved traitor to the Babbar Akali movement later on.
63. Mastuana is near Sangrur. It was the abode of Sant Attar Singh who rendered a great service to the Sikh cause.
64. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p. 50.
Harjas Singh Tunda and Jathedar Sunder Singh. On the occasion of Nimani fair at Mastuana, Kishan Singh announced a plan of action on the lines of Guru Gobind Singh at a diwan which was largely attended. It included persons like Bijla Singh, Sadhu Singh of Dhuri, Amar Singh of Delhi, Tehal Singh and other members of the Dhuri Jatha. The diwan was arranged by Teja Singh, an emigrant from Canada. Kishan Singh got permission to deliver a lecture. He began his lecture with the couplet:

"Sura So Pahchanie Jo Lare Din Ke Het,
Purse Purse Kat Mare Kabhun Nan Chhade Khet."

(Brave is the person who fights for the faith, come what may, Is chopped limb by limb and deserts not the battle array.) He condemned the government for its atrocities and bemoaned that the rulers were fleecing the subjects. When he began to explain its meaning, Teja Singh stopped him on the ground that he was inciting the assembly by putting revolutionary ideas in their minds. At this he called off the diwan.

The atrocities of the bureaucratic machinery and

66. The English translation is by the writer.

67. Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, p.49. Dr. Mohinder Singh, The Akali Movement, op.cit., p.117 is wrong when he states that at the Mastuana diwan Karam Singh Babbar recited the poem 'Khanda Pakre Shero Akhe Babbar Wanger'. He did not visit Mastuana at all at that time.
complicity of the British officers to obstruct the progress of the Gurudwara Reform movement had considerably enraged the masses. Even the native states, especially Kapurthala, had earned notoriety for their anti-Akali stance. It was true that the native rulers were out-Heroding-Herod. Even the wearing of the Kirpans was not allowed. Sardar Sumer Singh Lyallpuri contributed an article to the 'Banda Matram' of 9th July, 1921, taking exception to the policy of the Panjab Government in regard to the Kirpan. He observed when the government had not fixed the length of the Kirpan, the arrest of the Sikhs for wearing long Kirpans was absurd. 68

Jathedar Kishan Singh Gargaj took stock of the situation and contemplated to start a programme of diwan and conferences, where speeches were to be delivered and the poems were to be recited to create an awakening among the masses.

After the stay of about 3 months at Dhuri, Kishan Singh came back to the Doab. He was accompanied by Bijla Singh and Tehal Singh. They came to Hardas Pur (Kapurthala State) and stayed with Prem Kaur, sister of Jeginder Singh of Khuradpur who was related to Kishan Singh and was one of the participants in the first Akali Conspiracy case. 69

Sant Kartar Singh was also

69. Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Samvad (Mss), p.49. This information was given to him by S. Balwant Singh, nephew of S. Jeginder Singh of Khuradpur.
sent for from Pragpur. In the Doab, Kishan Singh delivered his first speech at Hardaspur after his return from the Malwa. Next day they went to Plahi and stayed in the house of Master Ram Singh. Chanda Singh also came to see Kishan Singh. In the beginning of October, 1921 a divan was held there which was attended by 250 persons. Among the audience were Bala Singh of Pragpur, Arjan Singh, Tehal Singh, Sant Kartar Singh and Babu Santa Singh of 54th Sikh regiment. Kishan Singh advised the audience to wear black turbans, become Akalis and follow the policy of non-cooperation with the government.

70. Makhsuspur, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehag, op. cit., p.52.
71. He was a teacher in the Khalsa Middle School, Plahi. He belonged to Makali. He later on became an approver in the Babbar Akali Conspiracy Case.
72. He belonged to Chhoti Berian, District Ludhiana. He was a clerk in 54th regiment. He came into contact with Sant Kartar Singh and after wards came very close to Kishan Singh. The latter cast a spell on him and he left his service to become an active member of the Chakarvarti Jatha. He was an activist and took part in all the major actions of the Babbar Jatha. When Babbar Jatha was floated, he was elected its treasurer. Later on, he became its Secretary when Karam Singh of Daulatpur became its President after Kishan Singh's arrest. Sant Kartar Singh duped him in the end and he was got arrested at Taps railway station on June 20, 1923.
73. Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy, case p.50.
During this period _divans_ were also held at Phagwara, Chaheru and Khajurala.

Then Kishan Singh along with Bijla Singh, Prem Kaur, Tehal Singh, Bela Singh, Arjan Singh, Babu Santa Singh and Sant Kartar Singh left for Patara. Here Kishan Singh discussed his programme with Master Mota Singh in a sugar-cane field, where the latter had hidden himself. Master Mota Singh appreciated his plan and promised to deliver speeches in the _divans_ arranged by the "Chakarvarti Jatha" and also suggested to unify the militants in the Doaba. From Patara, Kishan Singh returned to Haripur where he delivered a lecture in a _divan_ on December 6, 1921. He was accompanied by Karam Singh of Jhingar and Atma Singh of Bika. They left for Gurdwara Kishanpura, and from there, they went to Ghural and stayed with Sant Gurbakhsh Singh. Next, they proceeded to Bhabiana, Tehsil Phagwara in Kapurthala State, where they put up with Jathedar Divan Singh. Here Kishan Singh delivered a lecture in the _divan_ arranged there. He asked the people not to be afraid of the police and advised them to arm themselves at the earliest. The speeches delivered by him were full of references to the sacrifices made by the Sikh Gurus, and the numerous heroes of Sikh history. He, also marshalled the events of Sikh history.

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74. Master Mota Singh belonged to Patara. The Akalis and the Babbar Akalis held him in high esteem and due to their regard for him, his village was a place of pilgrimage for them. They called it "the Mecca".

75. Sunder Singh Makhsuspuri, Karam Singh of Jhingar, Assa Singh of Phakruddi and Karam Singh of Daulatpur were doing very useful work for the cause of the Akali movement.

and martial deeds in such a way as if to make them live again.

When Jathedar Kishan Singh was thus busy in creating an awareness in the Doab, there were also others who were carrying intensive propaganda against the British in their own way. Sunder Singh Makhsaspuri had reached Mankana after the tragedy on the call of the Panth with a Jatha of 15 Sikhs. He was well-acquainted with Jathedar Kishan Singh, since 1920. He learnt about the seditious speeches of the Jathedar. Karam Singh of Jhingar and Assa Singh of Phakrudi were returned emigrants. They were, then, very active members of the Congress Party. In October, 1920 they had participated in the meetings of District Congress Committees of Jullundur and Nasibiarpur respectively. Karam Singh of Daulatpur, another returned emigrant, took 'Khanda Ka Pahul' at Mankana along with Assa Singh. He tried to hold a political conference in his village but due to the prohibition of conferences u/s 144 of I.P.C., the venue had to be shifted to Mehatpur (Nasibiarpur). In March, 1921 Karam Singh of Jhingar, Assa Singh of Phakrudi and Karam Singh of Daulatpur delivered speeches in the divan at Mahalpur. In a divan at Nukar Majara in October, 1921, Sunder Singh also made a speech. Kishan Singh thought of welding all these elements.

Formation of the Chakravarti Jatha: In November 1921 a big conference was held in Kurka Kalan (Jullundur). E. Kishan Singh

77. Sunder Singh, Babur Akali Lehar, op.cit.p.54.
78. Ibid., p.57.
sent for Sunder Singh and Karam Singh of Jhinger for mutual discussion and consultation. In this meeting, Karam Singh Jhinger delivered a forceful speech and Sunder Singh recited a 'Shabad'. Master Mot Singh and Kishan Singh did not attend the conference but stayed at Jandiala in the house of Mehar Singh. When the conference was over, the formation of the Chakarvarti Jatha was announced with the objective of carrying on anti-Government propaganda. Then the members of the Jatha penetrated into the heart of the Doab to carry on propaganda against the British. One group consisting of Bhai Kishan Singh, Karam Singh of Jhinger and Sunder Singh Makhsuspuri started a ceaseless campaign in Jullundur District with frequent insurrections into Kapurthala State as well as in some parts of Ambala District. This group arranged a series of divans at Shabiana, Kurka, Bolina, Pindori Nijjaran, Dingrian, Haripur, Bahani, Bhojowal and Sangowal. The daily routine was to hold two meetings or divans. The first meeting was held by 1 P.M. The people of the area were informed and after the meeting was over, the Jatha used to move to another village. At 9 p.m. the second divan was held. Then the Jatha would leave for the next village where the divan was to be organised the following day. Thus from mid-night to the noon, the group slept, took rest and carried on preparations for the next divan. The police shadowed them but was never able to apprehend them.

79. Milchha Singh, Babbar Akali Sanggarb (MS6), Ch.1.
Jathedar Kishan Singh Gargaj stirred the audience with his fiery speeches, whereas his companions like Karam Singh of Jhingar and Sunder Singh recited poems. It is notable that those Akalis had become Chakarvartis after warrants were issued to arrest them. Kishan Singh was already an absconder of the First Akali conspiracy case and a reward of Rs. 200 was announced to arrest him. In December 1921, a big divan was arranged in Jhingar where Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Assa Singh of Phakrudi and Karam Singh of Jhingar delivered speeches. This was followed by the divans at Harian and Jagatpur. Their arrest warrants were issued due to their speeches delivered in these divans. Since then, they too became Chakarvartis. This was the second Jatha which carried on an intensive propaganda against the government for its atrocities on the Akalis who were waging a life and death struggle against the Mahants.

Gurbachan Singh of Sadhara claims that these Jathas were metamorphosis of Nirvair Gawai Shahid Jatha, Lebuh. Its President at that time was Dalip Singh of Sadhara. The passage of the Rowlatt Bill had aroused the wrath of the people and there were hectic political activities in the Lebuh. Consequently,

81. Ibid., p.47.
82. Ibid., p.59.
83. Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali, op.cit., p.3 and 18.
Karam Singh of Daulatpur and Dalip Singh of Sadhara arranged conferences in their own villages. Karam Singh of Jhingar arranged in Jhingar, Khuradpur, Baddan, and Rurka Kalan; Lakha Singh in Kot Fatuhi and Kham Singh in Sirhala Khurad, Mehatpur, Bachauri, Garhi Kanungoan and Bilga. With the start of the Gurdwara Reform Movement and more particularly after the Nankana tragedy these Akalis began a virulent propaganda. The leaders of the two prominent Jathas, Kishan Singh of Birring and Karam Singh of Daulatpur acted, more or less, independently of each other in the earlier stages.

**Propaganda Campaign of Jathedar Kishan Singh Gargaj:**

The programme of *diwans* and conferences had the blessings of Master Mota Singh. The spate of *diwans* proved fertile recruiting ground for the Akali Dal as well as the Indian National Congress. It had volcanic effect on the people. Kishan Singh Gargaj had endeared himself to the people because he gave them hope in his speeches. He, alone, had delivered 327 speeches at different places in the Majha, Doaba and Malwa till his arrest.

His group made a hurricane tour of the Doaba. After the Rurka Conference in November, 1921, the group went to Jandiala

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84. Ibid, p.18.


86. Ibid., p.149.
and from there it proceeded to Samranwan to hold a divan. It was followed by a divan at Kotli Than Singh where Babu Santa Singh joined the Jatha in January, 1922. He was posted at Jhelum Contowment as a clerk in the 84th regiment which he resigned on 26th January, 1922. Atma Singh of Rika was also a member of this Jatha at that time. This group was able to create a stir by its ceaseless propaganda in the Sirhowal area, Haripur, Bolina, Bhojowal, Kotli Than Singh, Pindori Nijjaran, Dingrian, Churial, Khuradpur, Manak Dheri, Manak Pali, Kala Bakra, Kishan Pura, Nasrila, Mankhiana, Rajpura, Mankot, Birring, Buhani, Piddi Khalsa and Sangowal.

The divan at Bhubiana in January 1922 and a conference at Borka Kalan were important but the divans at Pindori Nijjaran and Dingrian were very vituperative. Pindori Nijjaran became important centre of the Chakarvarthi. This village contributed 13 active workers, the most important of them being Buta Singh who remained very close associate of Kishan Singh Gargaj. Kishan Singh Gargaj in his speech at Pindori Nijjaran exhorted the

87. Babbar Akali case Judgement, p.149. The statement, that Babu Santa Singh joined the Jatha of Karam Singh of Daulatpur, is not correct. See, Wasakha Singh, Malwa Ittehad, Vol.III, op.cit., p.1023, where Babu Santa Singh states that he joined Kishan Singh's group in the beginning. However, later on, he associated himself with Karam Singh of Daulatpur due to his differences with Kishan Singh Gargaj.

88. Ibid., p.1026.

89. Vide paper Book Babbar Akali case, pp. 52-56.
Sikhs to join the Akali Dal, intimidate jholichucks and wage a relentless struggle to reform the Gurdwaras. He also announced that he would compel the British to get out of India. He also suggested that the toadies like Lamberdar Bhagwan Singh and Harnam Singh as well as chaukiders of the village, named Jivan and Maulube, reformed.

The diwan at Pindori Nijjaran was organised by the Congress Party. But the Chakarvartis made full use of the same. Sant Kartar Singh sought permission for a 'prem' to deliver a lecture. Then Kishan Singh delivered the lecture incognito. His next lecture was at Dingrian which was arranged by Master Bishan Singh. Here Sundar Singh Makhuspuri recited the poem:

**Hind de Babaduro Mahin Vela Saun Da**

*Aa gya waat Teph De Uthaun Da*

(°Brave Indians it is not time to slumber and stagger. The time is ripe to wield the dagger.)

Jathedar Kishan Singh's activities were being widely acclaimed. He was not only an eyesore to the Government, but also to certain Akalis who began to oppose him. Hari Singh Jullunduri wrote articles and editorials against him in the Akali-Te-Pardesi. It gave Kishan Singh many anxious moments. However, reconciliation took place. All acquiesced to Hari Singh's suggestion that the reformation of the jholichucks should also be taken in hand.


Pindori Nijjaran to carry on its activities.

The contract with the students of the Khalsa High School Jullundur began those days. It was Babu Santa Singh who visited Bakhtawar Singh. Milkha Singh came to know of it and he went with Santa Singh to Patara where he met Kishan Singh in the attic of Bhai Udham Singh, a close associate of Master Mota Singh. From there Bhai Kishan Singh and Milkha Singh went to Pindori Nijjaran.

Babu Santa Singh and Milkha Singh were sent to Amritsar who met Teja Singh of Bhuchar, Editor of the Gargaj Akali and Ram Singh of Dharowal, Editor of the Ajit. On their return, Milkha Singh narrates that there was a large number of people in his Haveli, which included many from Dingrian and Khuradpur. Bhai Kishan Singh delivered a fiery speech which was highly critical of the Congress Party.

This Jatha also toured some parts of Ambala District. It had proceeded to attend Gurpurabs at Chamkaur Sahib, and Sirhind but the enthusiasm and eagerness of the people prompted them to hold divanes in the surrounding villages, too. In this incursion Kishan Singh was accompanied by Sunder Singh of Makhsuspur and Karam Singh of Jhingar. Assa Singh, Hari Singh

73. Ibid., p.70.
of Sundh and Karam Singh of Daulatpur too accompanied them for some days. At the time of Shahidi-Jor-Mela in December, 1921 at Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind, Kishan Singh delivered a thunderous speech. On the testimony of Giani Nahar Singh, he began his speech with the invocation to the weapons. Bijla Singh Chahran too accompanied him. The fact has been further supported by the disclosure of Bhai Ram Singh who stated that Bhai Kishan Singh Gargaj and Bhai Ram Singh of Dharoval delivered anti-British speeches whereas Maharaja of Patiala tried to influence these Akalis by doing out money as he wanted to use them against the Nabha ruler. The speeches actually created a consternation in the mind of Maharaja of Patiala and he feared forcible seizure of the Gurdvara Fatehgarh Sahib and to avoid this he exerted his influence. Bhai Kishan Singh's group also staged diwan in Sudhupur, Sirhind Bassi and many villages of Kharar Tehsil. The area was virgin for political propaganda as neither any Akali nor any Congress worker had ever penetrated there. On 5th January, 1922, a diwan was held at Bharatpur and at the time of Maghi fair, a diwan was arranged at Surapur. During this

96. The Navan Sahit, Delhi, op.cit., 1982 (an article by Jamuna Dass Akhtar).
tour, the Jatha enrolled 5000 Akali and Congress members. In their speeches they exhorted the people to give up non-violence. The people were made conscious of the fact that the peaceful means had failed to achieve the object.

On 12th January, 1922, the Sikhs of Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts, under the leadership of Mula Singh of Bahowal, took possession of Takhat Keshgarh Sahib (Anandpur) and Kiratpur Sahib. As it was attempted without the permission of the S.G.P.C., so the committee disapproved of this action. Actually, it was the "Chakarvarti Jatha" of Kishan Singh, comprising Sunder Singh, Karan Singh of Jhingar and Gian Singh of Bela that made plans to capture Gurdwara Kiratpur. It were they who sent messages to villagers who came in flocks and Gurdwara of Kiratpur was taken possession of before the day-break.

This Jatha made its next appearance at Churial in a diwan held from 24th to 26th February, 1922. Sant Gurbakhash Singh had arranged 101 uninterrupted recitations of the Holy Granth. On the last day, speeches and poems captivated the audience. On the authority of Milkha Singh Nijjar, who himself recited a poem, "Natha Jan Feringhee" (The English hare taken to heels),

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98. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit.p.60.
100. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit.,p.60.
two camel riders alighted and took up the stage. One of them, Bhai Sunder Singh recited a beautiful poem, "What will the people say, if the Feringhee is not hit on the head". 101

Then Jathedar Kishan Singh delivered a forceful speech which held the audience spell-bound. In February 1922, diwans were also held in the villages of Kapurthala state such as Lakhpur, Sahni, Funira, Babeli, Domeli, Narur, Panshet, Palahi, Mansak, Sanratpur, Hardaspur and Maharu. 102

No occasion was missed to use the stage for propaganda. In March, 1922, the Congress party was holding a conference at Khuradpur, which was addressed by C.R. Dass, Lala Hans Raj, Smt. Lajjuswati and Swami Satya Dev. When the leaders had left, Jathedar Kishan Singh came to the stage and addressed the assembly with an unsheathed sword. He remarked that the people of the Bania party, who just left, had destroyed the country. The time was certainly critical for the Congress. Non-cooperation Movement had failed and Gandhi ji withdrew it after Chauri-Chaura incident. 103 The leaders were put behind

101. Paper Book Babber Akali Conspiracy case, p.53. The couplet reads In beautiful Panjabi as under-

Ki Kahu Lokai Singhan Mal Buri Hoi,
Ghotne di shot Ja Feringhee Sir Lai Nan.


103. Chauri-Chaura is a village in Uttar Pradesh near Gorakhpur. The police had opened fire but when their ammunition was exhausted they shut themselves inside a building. The mob set fire to it and burnt 22 policemen to death on February 5, 1922.
the bars and were the subject of ridicule. Lachhan Singh, who was Secretary of this conference, forbade Kishan Singh to speak further but the audience insisted on Kishan Singh to continue. They became hostile to Lachhan Singh. A Muslim boy, Tufail Mohammed of Pindori Nijaran came into the chakarvarti fold here and since then began to act as a herald of the Chakarvartis. He was given the responsibility to announce the holding of divans by the beat of drum. This Jatha organised divans and conferences in the Phagwara Tehsil of Kapurthala state as well.

While Kishan Singh's group busied itself in Ambala District and then in Jullundur and Kapurthala, the group of Karan Singh of Daulatpur held meetings at various places in Hoshiarpur. On return from Chaukaur Sahib 'Martyrdom fair' their centre of activity in January and February 1922 were mainly Balachaur, Mahal Gehla, Nawanshehr, Chak Sangha, Ramgarh Jhuggian, and Langroa, Bhai Ude Singh of Ramgarh Jhuggian and Dhanna Singh of Bahbalpur were new entrants. Master Dalip Singh of Gossal delivered speeches at Purka Kalan, Mahal Gehla and Apra. His arrest warrants were issued in March, 1922.

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The conference at Kot Fatuhi was a rendezvous for all the chakarvarti groups. It was organised from February 24 to 26, 1922, and was mainly the result of the efforts of the residents of Kot Fatuhi, such as Partap Singh an emigrant from Canada, Raja Singh and Giani Ram Singh. Other important members who helped the chakarvarti and shielded them, were Bhai Lakha Singh and Hardit Singh. Amar Singh of Kot Barre Khan, granthi at Kot Fatuhi and an approver of the First Akali conspiracy case, too, was there. The audience organised a formidable ring round chakarvarti and police dared not risk the clash. The arrival and departure of Master Mota Singh after delivering an hour long speech reads like a fairy tale. He rode a mare given by Bishan Singh of Mangat and went straight towards Kot Fatuhi and reached near Pindi Kotla on the banks of Basiin. There he dismounted the mare and asked Lakha Singh to mount. Immediately, he disguised himself as a sadhu and went straight to the police camp, talked to the officer and reached a day earlier at Kot Fatuhi. This is nothing short of a detective story. Next day, at about 3 p.m., he delivered a lecture fearlessly and was able to hide safely in the house of a poor Muslim named Fullia and thus foiled all the attempts of 50 policemen and 100 artillery men to arrest him. 

107. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lohar, op.cit., p.63
108. The Pardesi Khalsa, Amritsar, March 4, 1922.
109. Ibid. Dr. Karleesh Mohan's statement that the conference at Kot Fatuhi was organised by Karam Singh, vide Journal of Regional History Vol.1, 1982, p.148, is not corroborated by any contemporary source.
110. He was martyred at Babeli, on September 1, 1923.
111. Salhu Singh Mastana, Master Mota Singh Ji. Jivani, f.n.111 & 112 next page.
of the conference lies in the fact that it demoralised the
government machinery, encouraged the chakarvartis and added
to their popularity in the Doab. The Speaker after speaker
in the divan had urged the policemen and the soldiers in the
army to leave the government service as it was 'Haram'. The
divan was concluded with the resolution appreciating the
services of S. Kishan Singh Gargaj, Master Mota Singh, Giani
Ram Singh Satantar, Sunder Singh Akali and Maulvi Wali Mohammed
for the national cause. 113

During the year 1921-22 the Doab had become a hotbed of
sedition and anti-government activities. No wonder, the
Jullundur area found its leaders in Kishan Singh and Sunder Singh,
the Banga area had Karam Singh of Jhingar and Dalip Singh of
Gossal, while S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur was active in the
Nawanshehahr belt. Dalip Singh of Sadhara and Dharam Singh of
Hayatpur Rurki were active in Mahalpur area and Harbans Singh
of Sirhala and Artar Singh of Condpur were active in the
periphery of Hosiarpar and Shaz Chaurasi. Every important
village had Akalis who became chakarvartis. Even the State
of Kapurthala had its rich contribution in Subedar Amar Singh
of Dhalliwal, Chanda Singh of Plahi, Shiv Singh of Buhani

F.n. 111 + 112.

op.cit., pp.27-31. The gist of the talk of Master
Mota Singh and the Police Officer is reminiscent of his
influence over the people. The police officer stated
that Master Mota Singh did not run away but took to
wings. Bhagat Singh Bilga, Secretary, J.B.Y.K. Jullundur
also vouchsafed it in an interview with the writer on
November 20, 1982.

112. Ibid., p.32.
113. The Pardesi Khalsa, Amritsar, March 4, 1922.
and Kartar Singh of Domeli. It was here that the sting of the rulers was the sharpest. Siwan Durga Dass was more loyal to the British than the British themselves. His atrocities knew no limits. The wearing of black turban was an unpardonable offence with him. The Shiromani Akali Dal in its Interim meeting on April 2, 1922 under the Presidentship of Kartar Singh Jhabbar condemned the atrocities on the Sikhs in Kapurthala where their holy symbols, especially, the Kesha were desecrated. Hoocha water was poured out on their hair and they were beaten with shoes. This was too odious for the chakarvaris to bear. They began to challenge the police officers openly and warned their touts to desist from the despicable path. This became evident in March 1922 at the time of Hola Mohalia fair. Jathedar Kishan Singh Gargaj along with his companions delivered a seditious speech expressing British atrocities. He also challenged the police party present there to arrest him. When the police tried to act, there was a melee in the fair and hundreds of the Akalis encircled the policemen. Isher Singh, Sub-Inspector had to ask the constables to be prudent. The force of the chakarvaris was even confirmed by the Inspector

115. The Pardesi Khalsa, Amritsar, op. cit., April 7, 1922.
in the court when he appeared as a prosecution witness in the Babbar Akali case.116

Soon after the fair, a meeting was addressed at Dhanowali near the Dhanowali railway crossing on Grand Trunk Road. Bhan Singh of Birring, Zaildar Sham Singh of Talhan, Buta Singh Lambdar of Nangal Shamran, Amar Singh Sufedposh of Johal, Jamadar Dalip Singh of Salempur were holding a meeting to discuss the question of boycott of the Zaildar Talhan and his family by the Akalis. In the meantime Kishan Singh Gargaj, alongwith Sunder Singh Makhsuspuri, Mula Singh of Bahowal, Karam Singh of Jhigar and Jogindar Singh of Khuradpur arrived in a car. They took hold of the stage without allowing the audience to go. Karam Singh of Jhigar was holding a sword whereas Mula Singh was armed with a gun and they were standing by the side of Kishan Singh Gargaj who was delivering the speech. F. Kishan Singh Gargaj remarked that the Jbolichucks expected rewards and squares of land, but they would get no such preserve as the Akalis were about to destroy not only the preserves but also the jar which contained the preserve.117


This was followed by a divan at Buhani in March, 1922, in Phagwara Tehsil where the toadies were given a strict warning to mend their ways. This was attended by Kartar Singh of Goodpur and Harbans Singh of Sirhala and was addressed by Master Mota Singh and Jathedar Kishan Singh. Kishan Singh remarked in his speech that there were quite a few white turbans in the audience which he would like to see them changed into black ones. A person wearing a white turban stood up and told that Bishan Singh Zaildar of Rani Thua would not even let them recite 'shabads' what to talk of wearing black turbans. Then Kishan Singh declared if there was any relative or well-wisher of Bishan Singh, he should advise him against such things. If he did not pay any heed, then one of his brave fellows would reform him with the sword.

They held next divan at Piddi Khalsa. Then Kishan Singh, Babu Santa Singh, Harbans Singh of Sirhala, Kartar Singh of Goodpur and Sant Kartar Singh went to Jullundur Cantonment and met Naik Ganga Singh. He was advised to spread dissatisfaction among the troops and convert them to the militant views. At Jullundur they also met Milkha Singh and some other students of Khalsa High School. There they stayed with contractor Teja Singh of Dingrian. From there Kishan Singh proceeded to Phojowal on 15th March, 1922 to hold a divan but the programme was changed due to the presence of heavy police force. He went to Sangowal, then

118. Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy Case, pp. 53-54.
to Kishan Pura and turned back in the evening.

It was on 17th March, 1922 at Sangowal where Jathedar Kishan Singh delivered a lecture along with his companions like Babu Santa Singh, Kartar Singh of Gondpur, and Sunder Singh Makhsuspuri. With the arrival of the police they went to a well outside the village. It was with the help of their sympathisers, who gave them timely information, that they narrowly escaped; otherwise they would have fallen in the hands of the police.

Sangowal Diwan and its Aftermath: The chakarvartis had a tough time at Sangowal diwan on 19th March, 1922. The people were really under police duress and the toadies had become so bold that they created disturbance in the diwan. None from the village dared to become Sabhapati of the diwan. Jathedar Santa Kishan Singh, Sunder Singh, Babu Singh, Kartar Singh of Gondpur and Harbans Singh of Sirhala Khurad met in a conclave at a well between the villages of Beas and Sangowal. It was suggested that razors be purchased for cutting off the ears and noses of the notorious jholichucks. First, they were to be warned, then, chopping off the limbs was to be resorted to. In case, it did not prove of any avail then, the only alternative left was to reform them with the

121. This village was in the news during the Ghadar movement of 1915. Chanda Singh of Mangal Kalan had got arrested. S. Piara Singh of Langeri and was, consequently, made contd...
Some of the toadies such as Sham Singh Zaildar of Talhan and Harnam Singh Sufedposh of Mehdipur were marked for immediate action. Also, it was made obligatory for the Chakarvartis to keep themselves armed.

Babu Santa Singh bought 4 razors from Jullundur cantonment. The Chakarvartis, then met in the cottage of Sant Thakur Singh of Mundial at Rajowal on March 24, 1922. S. Kishan Singh asked Thakur Singh to send for Hazara Singh of Murder. On his arrival, Jathedar Kishan Singh gave two razors to Babu Santa Singh, one to Hazara Singh and one he kept with himself. He told Hazara Singh that the razor had been made over to him to cut off the nose and ears of Harnam Singh Sufedposh of Mehdipur, and he was told to seek the help of Amar Singh of Rajowal, Chajja Singh and Diwan Singh of Massania.

Harnam Singh of Mehdipur was the special target of the Chakarvartis because he had appeared as a prosecution witness against S. Naginder Singh of Kandhola in the court who had presided over a meeting held by 'Akalis' at Khurdpur on August 21, 1921.

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122. Loc.cit.
1921. Consequently, the latter was sentenced to 2 years' rigorous imprisonment. Within a few days of the sentence, Hazara Singh of Munder along with his companions, grievously assaulted the Sufedposh. Sundar Singh of Makhsuspur was entrusted with the reformation of Sham Singh Zaildar of Talhan. To accomplish this, he took Basant Singh Canadian of Sirhala Khurad with him and went to Sirrampur to contact Ujjagar Singh. They failed to accomplish the project because Zaildar Sham Singh was away in connection with a marriage. When they learnt this from Ujjagar Singh, they left for their villages. The Chakarvartis, no doubt, were acting boldly and were putting up a brave front to cow down the sycophants. A few small incidents, too, emboldened them.

In April, 1922, Jathedar Kishan Singh, Sundar Singh, Babu Santa Singh, Kartar Singh of Gondpur and Harbons Singh of Sirhala Khurad went on doing propaganda near about Jullundur cantonment. During their itinerary, one day, they came to know that an Akali, named, Bakhshish Singh was being beaten in the police post of Khajurala for the offence of keeping a Kirpan and wearing black turban. The Chakarvartis challenged them and this brought the offenders to their knees. They begged pardon for their foolish action. They also divulged that they were doing so at the instance of Bishan Singh Zaildar of Ranipur Thya.

In the first week of May, 1922, Kishan Singh, Baba Santa Singh and Bela Singh of Pragpur met Kirpal Singh of Malakpur (Rawalpindi) and Partap Singh of Sialkot who were serving in 52 Sikh regiment at Jullundur. They also met Ganga Singh Niaik of Gurdaspur here. All were persuaded to spread disaffection in the ranks and procure ammunition for the Chakarvartis.

During this period Jathedar Kishan Singh and Babu Santa Singh also went to Khalsa High School, Jullundur. Milkha Singh of Pindori Kijjaran had already become a protagonist of this group and it was on his request that Jathedar came there and met some more students. They included Gurdial Singh Bhullar who rose to become Superintendent of Police, Karam Singh of Haripur, Sampuran Singh of Haripur who retired as Headmaster, later on; Pritam Singh of Khuradpur, Surain Singh and Rattan Singh of Manak, Swaran Singh (Ex-Foreign Minister of India) was also their class-fellow, but he did not evince any interest in political activities at that time.

The students were captured by the spell of the Jathedar and they immediately, offered their services for the cause of the motherland, but he persuaded them to continue their studies till the appropriate time.

This group brought an unforeseen enthusiasm among the people by a spate of diwans in the villages of Sundh,
Sandhavan, Chabbeval, Mahalpur, Zian, Barrian Kalan, Sirhala Kalan, Kukar Muzara, Bahoval, Jandoli, Kulewal, Lehlian Kalan, Lehlian Khurad, Bassi Kalan, Bilaspur, Garhshankar, Moila, Bibra and Jassowal, etc. During this period, the enrolment of the Akali and the Congress members were also carried on by the Chakarvartis simultaneously. Till this time, they supplemented the activities of the Akalis and Congress. In the Punjab they were like contributory streams to the river of National Emancipation. 128

SUNDH AFFAIR: It was at Sundh that the pro-government villagers made first assault on the Chakarvartis. On May 11, 1922, Jathedar Kishan Singh and Sunder Singh were going to Pragpur from Pindori Ganga Singh. Near Baddon Chattar Singh of Kandola and Arjan Singh of Sundh joined them. Arjan Singh told the Jathedar that his brother Hari Singh had been arrested by the police, three days ago. At this, they proceeded to Sundh ostensibly to sympathise with the wife of Hari Singh. 129 They took their veals there. Chattar Singh stayed there with Milkhi Ram, Congress President of the local unit. Jathedar Kishan Singh and Sunder Singh left the place and Arjan Singh went

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128. There was no Babbar organisation as yet. See, Makhauspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.70.

129. Ibid., p.72. The purpose of their visit to Sundh explicitly might be to express sympathy with Hari Singh's wife but implicit reason was to terrorise the loyalists so that they might not create trouble in future. Vide Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangrah (Mss.)Ch.14.
along to see them off. The loyalists seemed to be after rewards. Jathedar Kishan Singh had been under the arrest warrants since June, 1921 and Sunder Singh since October, 1921. Rewards had been proclaimed for their arrest and the toadies of Sundh set their eyes on the rewards. Lambdar Sher Singh had brought two constables, Ganda Singh and Ghulam Mohammed since 9th May, 1922, from Banga police station to affect Arjan Singh's arrest. The mob was incited by the Lambdar. Jathedar, sensing the danger advised Arjan Singh to offer himself for arrest but the tall talk of Sunder Singh created trouble and in the skirmish, that ensued, Sunder Singh was arrested, while Kishan Singh managed to escape by resorting to firing at blank range. It was considered inexpedient to shoot at the mob as that would have landed Arjan Singh into trouble. S. Kishan Singh reached Plahi at midnight on Chanda Singh's well. He wrote the whole incident for the Gargaj Akali to be published in it and sent the same to its Editor, Bhai Teja Singh of Buchar through Chanda Singh. From Plahi, he reached Pragpur and taking Babu Santa Singh


131. Ibid., Ch.14. Sunder Singh was sentenced to 1½ years for keeping kirpan, cartridges and for delivering seditious lectures whereas Arjan Singh was imprisoned for 6 months. Later on, Sunder Singh was included as one of the accused in the Babbar Akali case and the persons who had helped in arresting him were rewarded. Six persons got a square of land and Rs. 100/- each. Three Lambdars got a cash reward of Rs. 100/- each.

along with him went to Patara to seek the advice of Master Mota Singh, of Jhingar, Master Dalip Singh of Gosal, Kartar Singh of Gondpur and Harbans Singh of Sirhala, too, had reached there. It was proposed to set Sundh on fire but Master Mota Singh advised against this as it would have brought notoriety to the Chakarvartis and they would have lost the sympathy and support of the common people.133

The arrest of Sunder Singh came as a rude shock to the Chakarvartis. They pondered over this and decided to warn the toadies so that they might not follow the footsteps of the people of Sundh.

The group led by Karam Singh had been also active since 1920. Karam Singh of Daulatpur arranged a political conference in Mehatpur as it could not be held in his own village due to prohibition imposed u/s 144.134 He was helped by Assa Singh of Phakrudi, another returned emigrant from Canada.135 The forcible seizure of the keys of Golden Temple took place on 7th November 1921.136 On 15th November, 1921, they had attended Nankana fair in connection with the birth of Guru Nanak Devji and were enthused to listen to the speeches of Baba Gurdit Singh of Kama Gata Mau and Master Mota Singh.137

135. Ibid., p.216. also Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, op. cit., p.115.
136. Ibid., p.135.
137. Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy, p.216.
Then Assa Singh, Karam Singh of Jhingar, and Karam Singh of Daulatpur arranged a political diwan in Jhingar and as a result of this diwan, their arrest warrants were issued. They became chakarvartis and an incessant chain of lectures started. In a lecture at Balachaur Karam Singh of Daulatpur was alleged to have told that they would take over the courts and a Sikh would take the place of the British Deputy Commissioner. Assa Singh confessed having recited the poem written by Karam Singh of Daulatpur in which the Indians were asked to awake as their country was being ruined.\textsuperscript{138} This was followed by a diwan at Mahal Gahla and Nawanshehar in January 1922. Then the group went to Chak Sangha where Inder Singh, a returned emigrant, joined them and next they met Bhai Udey Singh of Ramgarh Jhuggian. In February 1922, a lecture was delivered at Langroa where Assa Singh openly asked the people not to pay land revenue and exhorted the audience to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales. He also visited Anandpur at the time of Hola Mohalla and heard Kishan Singh's lecture. He admitted that he had bought 3 feet long Kirpan under the inspiration of his lecture.\textsuperscript{139}

This group included some very daring individuals of whom its leading light, Karam Singh of Daulatpur, was a staunch

\textsuperscript{138} Loc.cit.

\textsuperscript{139} Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy, p.217.
advocate of violence and remained so till the end. He started a factory to prepare swords in his own house and arranged the meetings and divans, to propagate his views, in Daulatpur. Rajewal, Dianatpur, Kotli, Jassowal, Bachouri, Garhi Kanungoan and Rakkar Bet. Rattan Singh of Rakkar was a notable militant who came under his spell and astounded the Doaba in the thirties by his heroic exploits. This group decided in its meeting at Sadhara on April 13, 1922 to 'reform' the toadies.  

The meeting was attended by S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Karam Singh of Jhingar, Dalip Singh of Sadhara, Jdey Singh of Ramgarh Jhuggian, Dharam Singh and Surjan Singh of Hayatpur Rurki. It was their first Gurmata. In the last week of May, Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Jdey Singh, Harnam Singh of Garhi Kanungoan, Dalip Singh of Sadhara, Bawa Singh and Udham Singh of Kaulgarh and Assa Singh met in the Haveli of Udham Singh at Kaulgarh. 

The arrest of Sunder Singh and the mounting pressure of the toadies sent a wave of shock among the militants. It was proposed that a newspaper be brought out to propagate their views to make people conscious of their duty. Karam Singh of Daulatpur also urged the necessity of procuring weapons and reforming the toadies, who were getting the Akalis arrested.  

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141. Ibid., p. 11.
142. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op. cit., p. 81.
This decision was like the Sangowal decision of Kishan Singh group, though taken independently. But Assa Singh dissented to the proposal of murdering toadies and of staging a rebellion against the Britishers. His views were based on the fact that they neither had any weapons nor money nor could they look for assistance to any native state while the government had troops and guns. This irked others, especially Bhai Udy Singh who called Assa Singh timid and insisted that the suggestion of Karam Singh be carried out. Though no final and formal decision could be agreed upon yet the consensus for a strong step against the toadies was desideratum.

Basiala Meeting: This showed that some of the members of Karam Singh group were looking to Kishan Singh for advice. It was not incidently that Dalip Singh of Sadhara and Assa Singh met Kishan Singh at Basiala soon after the Kaulgarh meeting. Kishan Singh agreed with them that the time to murder jholichuka was not ripe then, yet there was need to intensify propaganda activities to fan the public feelings. Master Dalip Singh of Gossal, Babu Santa Singh and Aaram Singh of Jhingar were also present there. All went to Dauletpur to meet Karam Singh so that common programme be chalked out. But Karam Singh was not

144. Dr. Kamlesh Mohan, The Journal of Regional History, p. 150
is wrong in calling both Assa Singh and Ude Singh as dissidents. Only Assa Singh dissented and sought the advice of Kishan Singh at Basiala.
available, so all left for Hayatpur where Assa Singh introduced Surjan Singh, Dharam Singh and Sunder Singh to Kishan Singh.145

Next day, they left for Moranwali and then proceeded to Patara where they met Master Mota Singh, Santa Singh, Lal Singh, Rajinder Kaur w/o Lal Singh, Hari Singh Jullunduri and Bhag Singh, a book-seller of Jullundur. Hari Singh used to write articles against Kishan Singh and Karam Singh of Jhingar, branding them informers as being on the pay-roll of Nabha and Patiala States. Master Mota Singh told him that they were not informers of the States and were good workers of the Panth.146

Kishan Singh deputed Assa Singh to arrange Karam Singh’s meeting with him for chalking out a concrete programme. In the month of May, 1922 two incidents crystallised the approach of the Chakkaravarts towards the toadies. Kishan Singh group in pursuance of its Sangowal decision of March 19, 1922 and Rajowal decision of March 24, 1922, attacked Harnam Singh of Mehdpur on May 20, 1922. Hazara Singh s/o Inder Singh, Hazara Singh s/o Sher Singh, of Mundra, Chajja Singh of Massanian and Amar Singh of Rajowal participated in the action. It was an eye opener and was the first offensive of the militant Akalis against those people who were acting as ears and eyes of the

145. Surjan Singh was brother of Dalip Singh of Sadhara’s wife. Sunder Singh and Dharam Singh were her nephew, vide Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali op. cit., p. (30). Karam Singh’s group was strongly linked with Dalip Singh and it can be deduced that it was a progeny of Mirwair Shahid &ewok Jatha, Doaba.

bureaucracy. The Daulatpur group was also thinking on similar lines in its Kaulgarh meeting but in June, 1922, Master Mota Singh's arrest whipped up their fury against the toadies and it proved helpful in the formation of the Babbar Akali Jatha.

**Arrest of Master Mota Singh:** Master Mota Singh was the nucleus round which the militant movement revolved. The then Government of India was anxious about his arrest. On 30th March, 1922, Donell wrote from Delhi on behalf of the Government of India to the Chief Secretary, Panjab, Mr. S. Wilson Johnstone to make special effort to arrest Master Mota Singh. The Panjab Government deputed C.I.D. special police and raised reward of Rs. 1000/- already announced to Rs. 3,000/- to arrest him. The police were instructed to arrest him from anywhere, at any cost. On 22nd February, 1922, too, efforts were made to arrest him. Bhan Singh of Birring and Sant Tartar Singh of Pragpur, coming from Jullundur railway station, were mistaken for Master Mota Singh and Kishan Singh. The police followed them to Birring. The houses of S. Kishan Singh and Bhan Singh were searched by the police who found nothing but disappointment. At last this case was taken in hand by

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147. Milkha Singh, *Babbar Akali Sangarsh* (Ms.), Ch. 15.
149. Loc.cit.

Also, vide letter of S. Kishan Singh Gargaj published in the *Akali*, May, 1922.
Khan Bahadur Sheikh Abdul Aziz who succeeded in arresting him on June 16, 1922. About 800 strong military and police force practically besieged Patara on 16th June, 1922, at 8.30 a.m. on the information received from Isher Singh. The police practically conducted search thrice in the village but could not find him anywhere. Giani Ram Singh Teghadi had hidden him in a big basket, covered it and carried him off to his well, pretending to bring sugar cakes from his well, where cane-crusher was working. On reaching there, Master Mota Singh changed his mind, thinking of police brutality over his village brethren; he, then, offered himself for arrest. He was brutally beaten because F.C. Isemonger, D.I.G. as well as Sir Edward Maclagan, Governor of the Panjab, were firmly of the view that his speeches were responsible for all the turmoil and trouble in the Doaba-Bist Jullundur. The Chakarvartis suspected the hand of Arjan Singh s/o Charat Singh Patwari of Haripur, Fauja Singh Havaldar of Chhajalvadi and Pritam 'Mast' of Sihour (Patiala) in Master Mota Singh's arrest.

Gurbachan Singh Giani of Amritsar alleged the involvement of a member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee but this was strongly refuted by S. Kartar Singh Jhabbar who was in

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151. Home-Political, File No.1/X/1924.
152. The Gargaj Akali, Amritsar, June 19, 1922.
Pata on June 16, 1922 and according to his eye-witness account Master Mota Singh offered himself for arrest at about 2 p.m. 155 It was never conclusively ascertained as to who passed on the information about Master Mota Singh to the police leading to the police raid on his village. It was now evident that the greedy persons were on the prowl to get the Chakarvartis arrested. The police was becoming more and more active and this required Chakarvartis to make concerted bid to create an awe and spread terror among their antagonists including the police and the toadies.

While Kishan Singh's group had opened its account by attacking Harnam Singh, Zaildar of Mehdipur, to settle scores with the toadies, the other group headed by S. Karam Singh, too robbed Kaka Singh, Lambardar of Bachauri on July 3, 1922 of the Government revenue of Rs. 570/- and annas two. 156 This amount was utilised to purchase arms 157 and a cyclostyle machine 158 called "Safari Press" to intensify propaganda against the rulers. This was the work of Sardar Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Labh Singh, Prem Singh of Daulatpur and Bhai Udhy Singh of Ramgarh Janjgian and

155. The Akali, Lahore, June 21 and July 1922.

156. Makhsupuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.126 mentioned the amount as Rs. 575, but Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangarsh (Mss.), p.97 gives the correct amount as Rs. 570 and annas two.


158. Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangarsh (Mss.), p.97.
Though Kaka Lambardar impleaded nine persons in the robbery case yet only Labh Singh was challaned and he, too, was, later on, acquitted for want of an eye witness.