VI

ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP, PLAN AND PROGRAMME OF THE BABBAR JATHA

The Chakarvartis felt the necessity of merging their jathas so that the activities of the toadies and police be counteracted effectively. The programme of the Chakarvarti jathas of S. Kishan Singh Gargaj as well as that of S. Karam Singh Daulatpur was almost similar. Both had tried to intimidate the toadies in their own way. Both felt the necessity of money to buy weapons. Both were seriously considering to bring out some journal to give wide publicity to their views. The leaders of both the jathas were known to each other and had taken part in the diwans held at Kot Fattuhi and Chamkaur Sahib. The arrest of S. Sunder Singh Makhuespuri on May 11, 1922 and that of Master Mota Singh on 16th June, 1922 precipitated the matter and impelled the Chakarvartis to follow a common programme by merging their groups into a single party. There were certain members like Assa Singh who worked along with both the groups. With their help, the steps were taken to organise Chakarvartis afresh.

Towards Unity:

Jathedar Kishan Singh deputed Assa Singh to bring S. Karam Singh to the house of one Hazara Singh of Pindori Ganga Singh within 10 or 12 days for the meeting. Assa Singh was able to locate S. Karam Singh in the house of Nigahia
Singh in Khuradpur. He conveyed Jathedar Kishan Singh's message. S. Karam Singh told Assa Singh that he would meet them on 9th July, 1922 at the wedding of Mihan Singh's daughter at Hayatpur. Jathedar Kishan Singh alongwith Assa Singh reached Hayatpur on July 9, 1922, but Karam Singh did not reach there as the police had arrived there to investigate the robbery of Ram Ditta nee Kaka Lamberdar of Bachauni. They stayed with Dharam Singh there and left for Kishanpura next day early in the morning. Karam Singh of Jhingar was already there. They all held diwans and delivered lectures in the villages of Pindori Phagorian, Pragpur, Jamser and Naripur. On their way to Lallian, they met Babu Santa Singh, Sadhu Singh, Udham Singh and Mirwair Singh of Pindori Nijjaran. At Lallian, they also delivered lectures and recited poems. Then they left for Baba Bakala. From Baba Bakala, Karam Singh Jhingar, Kishan Singh, Udham Singh of Pindori Nijjaran and Assa Singh went to Amritsar and stayed there for four days. There they met S. S. Charan Singh, editor of "Jathedar" and S. Ram Singh Dharowal, editor of "Ajit". The editors of both these papers were consulted about bringing out a newspaper but both advised Kishan Singh against the project.1

On their return from Amritsar, Jathedar Kishan Singh again sent Assa Singh to locate S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur. Assa Singh reached his village Phakrudi, got the clue from

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1. Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, p.222
   (Statement of Assa Singh)
Ali Mohanr, an oilman and found Karam Singh and Udai Singh there. Karam Singh who had in the meantime brought out two issues of the Babbar Akali Jatha, gave Assa Singh some copies of the same for Kishan Singh and desire that Kishan Singh should meet him immediately. Assa Singh reached Pindori Mijran where he found Santa Singh, Karam Singh Jhingar, Dalip Singh of Gossal, Sadhu Singh, Mirvair Singh, Udham Singh and Jathedar Kishan Singh. Jathedar Kishan Singh appreciated Karam Singh for having brought out the 'Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar'. Then all set out to the fixed place near Rehsival to meet Karam Singh and plan the next phase of their programme.

Formation of the Babbar Akali Jatha:

In August 1922 both the Chakravarti Jatha were merged. Since then it had been given the nomenclature of Babbar Jatha. It was after the name of 'Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar' since then 'Babbar' became a part and parcel of the movement of the militant Akalis and invariably stuck to Karam Singh who was the nomenclator of the movement as well as the founder of the paper. He came to be called either 'Babbar' or 'Editor', henceforth.

The meeting took place in the cottage of Sant Thakur Singh at Rajowal in the holy presence of Sri Guru Granth

P. Makhsuspur, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.86.
The prominent among those who participated were S. Karam Singh, Editor, Bhai Uday Singh of Ramgarh Jhuggian, Jathedar Kishan Singh 'Gargaj', S. Karam Singh of Jhingar, Assa Singh of Phakrudi, Baba Santa Singh, Master Dalip Singh of Gossal and Atma Singh of Bika. It was decided there to form an executive committee to chalk out further programme. The questions of bringing out the newspaper, of procuring weapons, collecting of funds and keeping an account of the funds were also considered. In the meeting, S. Kishan Singh, Dalip Singh Gossal and Babu Santa Singh were elected President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. The Working Committee included Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Karam Singh of Jhingar and Uday Singh among others. The decisions of this meeting were momentous. This meeting transformed the groups into a party. They had now one leader, one party and one policy.

4. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.87; Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali, op.cit., p.18; Dr. Kaplesh Mohan, The Babbar Akalis (Journal of Regional History, Vol.I, 1980, p.150 and Dr. Mohinder Singh, The Akali Movement, op.cit., p.117 have mentioned the place as Gajjowal but this is inaccurate and erroneous. All sources are unanimous that the meeting at Sant Thakar Singh's Kutiya and that Kutiya was at Rajjowal. Vide, Paper Book Akali Conspiracy case, p.52.


There is, however, no unanimity about the office-bearers. Milchha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangrah,(Mas),op.cit., p.17. mentioned Karam Singh Jhingar as treasurer, whereas Labh Singh Jassoval, Sankhup Tawari, Babbar Akali, p.48. mentions the office bearer as under:

President: 1) Karam Singh Daulatpur
Vice-Presidents: 1) Kishan Singh
2) Karam Singh.

f.n.contd...
Karam Singh of Daulatpur had already brought out two issues of the paper: 'Babbar Akali Doaba'. These issues highlighted the misrule of the foreigners, poverty of the country, cruelty of the Britishers and utter supinelessness of the Akali and Congress parties. This was a sort of manifesto of the extremist Akalis and it defined their plan, policy and programme. Jathedar Kishan Singh, though he praised Karam Singh for having brought out the Babbar Akali Doaba because such leaflets were the need of the hour, yet he pointed out that there was room for improvement. In his view the objectives and aims of the organisation were not property brought out. He remarked that they would not appeal to the educated classes. Consequently, Jathedar Kishan Singh was authorised to bring out the 'Akhbar'. Though Karam Singh remained de-jure Editor, yet it was Kishan Singh Gargaj who was its de-facto Editor. The Babbar Akali leaflet was brought out on August 20-22, 1922. Jathedar Kishan Singh got the duplicator brought from Phakrudi and called Udham Singh

| Treasurers       | i) Master Dalip Singh  
|                  | ii) Santa Singh       
| Granthi          | Dhanna Singh          
| Commander        | Udey Singh            
| Jamadar          | Atma Singh Bika       
| Postman          | Zaila Singh, Jassowal |

This does not seem to be correct. Dhanna Singh became member later on in early 1923, whereas Kishan Singh had been the acknowledged leader. Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.27 is correct in giving the date of election as October 1922. He has also not been corroborated by the living Babbars about the place of the meeting and personal of the committee. According to him Karam Singh and Kishan Singh were President and Vice-President respectively. He mentions Dalip Singh and Udey Singh as Secretary and Joint-Secretary, Karam Singh Jhingar as treasurer and Santa Singh as Granthi.

from Pindori Nijjaran to write its stencils. The place of publication was given 'forest' and thus its third issue was brought out on August 24, 1922.

S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur and Bhai Udley Singh were entrusted with the task of organising a squad to reform the jholichuk. Master Dalip Singh of Gossal, Babu Santa Singh and Asra Singh were asked to carry on the propaganda for it on a war-footing. Jathedar Kishan Singh took upon himself the duty of preparing a list of jholichuk in Jullundur area whereas the Editor was asked to prepare the same of Kandi area i.e. Sub-menta region. The Jatha, henceforth, came to be called the Babbar Akali Jatha. During that period, they had not a separate entity of their own and were considered as a part and parcel of the Akalis. In fact, they were a revolutionary group of the Akalis. The number of the Babbar Akalis was considerable and in the Doaba it was overwhelmingly large. According to S. Labh Singh of Jassowal, diary of S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur mentioned the total strength of the Babbars as 55,000. Professor Teja Singh in his speech at the Congress session of 1922 held at Gaya mentioned that its strength was 40,000. This may be an inflated figure and an over-estimate but the help they received from the villagers clearly pointed to their hold over the masses. In fact, the number of the actual activisits

seemed to be much smaller. It was not merely seven, but was certainly not more than 500. Diwan Durga Dass of Kapurthala State produced a diary of the Babbar Akalis in the court of Mr. L.A. Bull, Special Magistrate, Lahore wherein it was claimed if 500 revolutionaries came in the field they could overthrow the Government.

In the beginning of September 1922, Jathedar Kishan Singh Gargaj, Karam Singh Editor, Karam Singh of Jhingar, Dalip Singh of Gossal, Assa Singh and Babu Santa Singh met at Rajowal at Thakur Singh's Kutiya and planned to go to Amritsar to collect funds. On their way to Amritsar, they first, passed through Kishanpura and then reached Bandhawa Masandam. They met Basant Singh and handed over to him two guns of S. Karam Singh Daulatpur. Then they boarded the train from Fursunissi for Amritsar. At Amritsar, they met Bhai Teja Singh of Bhuchar and S. Ram Singh of Dharowal. Another duplicator was purchased out of Rs. 150/- received as an aid from Ram Singh of Dharowal. Babu Santa Singh was sent to Lahore who

11. The Akali (Urdu), December 9, 1923.
13. Paper Book, Babbar Akali conspiracy case, p. 631. It was confirmed by the statement of Jagjit Singh F/C Hira Singh Manager, Panjab and Sind Bank, Amritsar, who told the court that Cheque No. 46176 of Rs. 150/- of 8th November 1922 related to the pass book of S. Ram Singh of Dharowal and was in favour of Bhai Santa Singh.
The programme of the Babbar Akali Jatha was chalked out on well defined lines. They advocated the intensification of their propaganda campaign by printing the Babbar Akali Doaba on these duplicators. Meanwhile, the Akalis launched Guru Ka Bach morcha.

This morcha was launched on 9th August, 1922 and it lasted till November 17, 1922. In this morcha, 5605 Sikhs were arrested. The morcha was unique in its execution and consequences. The attitude of Mr. Mackpherson and Mr. E.G.W. Beaty who were Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of police, Amritsar respectively during the morcha, irked the Sikhs so much so that a section of them openly came in the field to seek revenge for the insults heaped on the peaceful Akalis. Mr. J.M. Dunnet and Mr. Jenkins (acting D.C. of Amritsar) gave wide reins to the police to display their repressive measures like pulling out the 'Keshas'. The leader of the Babbar Akalis, S. Kishan Singh Cargaj in a letter to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee exhorted it to allow the Sikhs to wield the sword. The Government was aware of this and even the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading.

14. Ibid, p.619. Also vide Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.94, Slam's duplicator was purchased from Panjab Religion Book Society, Lahore. Milkhi Ram, owner of the firm confirmed this.

15. Assacs, The Earl of Reading was the Viceroy of India from April 2, 1921 to April 3, 1926. His tenure, strangely, synchronised with the rise and fall of the Babbar Akali Movement.
conceded this in a letter to the Secretary of the State. The letter reads: 'At first the gang devoted energies to revolutionary propaganda. Meetings were held under the cloak of religious assemblies, violent speeches were delivered and in September 1922, during Guru Ka Bagh struggle, cyclostyled leaflets entitled "Babbar Akali Doaba Akhbar" prepared secretly in different villages of Jullundur Doab were distributed at Amritsar and elsewhere. Similar leaflets and articles appeared in more extreme papers under the signature of Jathedar Kishan Singh. These leaflets exhorted the Akalis to abandon non-violent creed, to revolt and kill foreigners and establish free government. Soldiers were also incited to murder their officers. They sent their message to the masses through the Babbar Akali Doaba'. If diwans had successfully conveyed the radical ideas of the Chakarvartis and stirred the peasantry against the toadies, the publication of the Babbar Akali Doaba augmented and incensed their wrath against the bureaucracy and its props. The soldiers were also being indoctrinated and the peasantry was growing bold. The first issue was brought out on 20th August, 1922, whereas the last one entirely the work of Babu Santan was brought out on May 21, 1923. In all, there were 15 issues brought out on Safari and Udru Press, as both Klam Duplicators

were called. Each issue, except one, began with a couplet which meant that only he who would fight and die for his faith would be considered a hero. These issues deepened the sense of indignation against the British injustice and oppression and prepared the people for the sacrifices and instilled in them the sentiments of patriotism. The alacrity and secrecy with which these were printed and distributed, free of cost, popularised not only the Babbar Akali Akhbar, but also made the Babbar Akali Jatha an object of hope for the masses.

It referred to the government and the Europeans in foul and abusive terms bordering vituperation. The loyalists were contemptuously called toadies and parties like the Akali Dal and Congress were ridiculed for following non-violent policy cowardly. The writers and contributors were mainly those who were deeply involved in the movement such as Jathedar Kishan Singh, Karam Singh Daulatpur, Amar Singh Kot Fatuhi, Piara Singh Granthi, Hari Singh Chela and Arjan Singh 'Sach' of Kharaudi, Babu Santa Singh and Master Dalip Singh of Gosal.

The distribution was mainly the work of Assa Singh of Phakrudi

13. Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali, op.cit., p.16 and Paper Book Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, p.60 mention that, Ram's duplicator which was first styled the "Safari Pres:", later came to be called "Udru Press", is not tenable. The two different names to two different machines were given to differentiate them. The first was purchased by Karam Singh's group out of the money robbed from Kaka Lambardar of Bachauri whereas the second was purchased with the help of Ram Singh of Dharowal.

17. "Sura So Pehchaniye, Jo Lare Din Ke Bet, Purza Purza Kat Mare, Kabhu na Chhadde Khet."
and Atma Singh of Bika. The different issues of the Babbar Akali Doaba highlighted the views and programme of the Babbar Akalis. In Babbar Akali Doaba of 24th August 1922, the plight of the Sikhs groaning under the oppressive rule was highlighted and the Sikhs were asked to give up their complacent attitude. It advocated unity and exhorted the Hindus and Muslims to join the Khalsa to stage an uprising. No time was to be lost.

In its issue of September 21, 1922 the nostalgic references to their heroic past were made and the Sikhs were ridiculed for their indifference to the desecration of the Gurdwaras, their subservience to the tyrannical rule of the British. In September, 1922 when Guru Ka Bagh morcha was in full swing, the Babbar Akali leaders exhorted the Akalis to abandon non-violence. They sent the volunteers to distribute Babbar Akali leaflets. The SGPC officials were alleged to have insulted even the volunteers. The 'Paniab Darpan' and the 'Akali Te Pardesi' also viewed the Babbar

22. The Tribune, Lahore, October 6, 1923, p. 10 (Translation of the Babbar Akali, September 21, 1922).
The attitude of the Akali Dal and SGPC was unsympathetic towards the Babbar Akalis. The Babbar Akalis, too, condemned SGPC for squandering the funds of the Sikh Panth and they appealed the Akalis to follow the path shown by the martyrs like Bhai Mani Singh and warriors like Akali Phula Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa. Though the SGPC, at the behest of the Panjab Government, had issued a statement repudiating the doctrine of violence preached in the Babbar Akali leaflets, yet the violence had won many adherents partly through terrorisation and partly through popular sympathy with the success and growing prestige of the Babbar Akalis.

The Babbars, who were sore at the collaboration of the loyalists and the rulers, printed the names of the informers in their paper warning them about the consequences with a view to demoralising them. It certainly created nervousness among the loyalists.

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25. The Tribune, Lahore, 7 October 1923 (Translation of the Babbar Akali leaflet of October 20, 1923).
28. Ibid., p. 75.
29. Ibid., p. 28.
The formation of the Babbar Jatha and duplication of its leaflets soon caught the eye of the Government. Mr. C.W. Jacob who was Deputy Commissioner, Jullundur from July 1922 to 1924 conceded that he received reports from the villagers that certain armed and extremist Akalis were going about the district, terrorising the people and making anti-government speeches in August 1922. It was in September that a villager from Nawanshahar Tehsil brought two Babbar Akali leaflets which were most violent and threatened the loyalists with all sorts of penalties and dire consequences, if they remained loyal to the British Government.30

As the situation was growing from bad to worse, he wrote to D.I.G., C.I.D. towards the end of September 1922 informing him of what was taking place and asked him that unless some special measures were taken, the murder of the loyalists could not be ruled out before long.31 Khan Sahib Mir Fazal Imam was then sent by D.I.G. to Jullundur to cooperate with the district police and take such measures as were necessary to deal with the situation. Soonafter, the D.I.G. himself visited Jullundur and a conference was held there in which the police of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts took part. Various measures were decided on and among others

it was decided to increase the rewards already being offered for the apprehension of the members of the Babbar Jatha. The situation, however, grew worse and the prevalence of terrorism in the district continued unabated. The same state of affairs prevailed in the neighbouring district of Hoshiarpur. The police were distinctly alarmed; to cope with the situation drastic measures were needed. Mr. F.C. Isemonger, D.I.G., C.I.D. P. 431 vouchedsafed these views and corroborated that a meeting between D.C. Jullundur, Khan Bahadur Seikh Abdul-Aziz, Khan Sahib Mir Fazal Imam, S.P. Hoshiarpur and Jullundur and other police officers of the two districts was held in November 1922. In this meeting decisions were taken to adopt more stringent measures for the suppression of the movement. It was also decided to offer alluring rewards for the arrest of Jathedar Kishan Singh and Karam Singh and other leading Akalis who were absconding from justice. Kishan Singh was an absconder in the case of crown v/s Tota Singh. The other members were also absconders as proceedings were started against them for having delivered inflammatory speeches.32 On 30th November, 1922, the rewards were announced for the apprehension of the Babbar Akalis. The biggest reward of Rs. 2000/- was offered for the arrest of Kishan Singh Gargaj, while the reward for the arrest of Karam Singh Daulatpur was Rs. 1000/-

The reward for the arrest of Karam Singh of Jhingar and Dalip Singh of Gossal was Rs. 500/- each. The smallest reward of Rs. 250/- was offered for the apprehension of Asa Singh. The handbills were also extensively distributed in the villages of Doaba Bist Jullundur. 33

The announcement of the rewards for the arrest of the Babbaras put them on the offensive. They launched a virulent campaign against the informers and touts of the police and it was decided to exterminate the toadies as their greed was likely to create difficulties in the way of the Babbaras. Consequently, on December 25, 1922 a general meeting of the Babbar Jatha took place in the Haveli of Hari Singh of Jassowal. 34 It was attended by Jathedar Kishan Singh, Dalip Singh of Gossal, Karam Singh of Jhingar, Babu Santa Singh, C. Karam Singh Daulatpur, Dhanna Singh Behbalpur, Udey Singh, Buta Singh Pindori Nijjaran, Asa Singh, Amur Singh Kot Patuhi, Hari Singh, Labh Singh and Karam Singh of Jassowal. 35

Kishan Singh informed that the propaganda had aroused


34. Hardit Singh of Jassowal in his interview on 8.9.33 to the writer disclosed that the first meeting took place in his Haveli on December 25, while the second on 30-31 December, 1922, was held in the Kutiya of Sant Charan Singh. Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangrah (MSS) writes that the venue of the first meeting was the Kutiya of Sant Charan Singh Jassowal where as Makhsuspuri, E.S., Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.96 held the view that it was held in Hari Singh's Haveli.

the sentiments of people and they had veered round to their
to views and had grown sympathetic to the movement. It had
unnerved the police. The rewards for the arrest of the
Babbars had been proclaimed and it was very likely that the
village folk be put behind the bars for the offence of supplying
food and basic necessities to the Babbars. He stressed the
need to put into practice the Babbar programme of reforming
the toadies, forestalling the official attempts to torpedo the
Babbar organisation, threatening the police action and striking
terror among the pro-government elements in the villages. He
declared that their movement would make headway only if the
notorious informers, hirelings and toadies were reformed. He
made it clear that the Babbar movement was on the crossroads.
There in the meeting, it was decided:

1) To bring out the next issue of the Babbar Akali Doaba,
the same day and the decision of reforming the
sycophants or jholichuks was to be published in it.

2) Arjan Singh Patwari was to be liquidated.36

3) The plan to attack jholichuks was to be prepared by the
working committee and this was to be published in
Kalgidhar Number of the Babbar Akali Doaba and all the
members were required to execute the programme.37

36. Ibid., p.97.
The next meeting was held on December 30-31, 1922. The working committee decided that no members should initiate any arbitrary action; if a toady met, all of a sudden, then the members should take action as the situation warranted; neither the belonging of the toadies were to be removed, nor their children and women-folk to be dishonoured. The members were asked to execute the directive of the working committee giving it priority. The Gurmata of chopping of the noses and ears of the toadies was withdrawn. However, it allowed the Babbar Akalis to plunder the property of the government, the informers, the touts, the toadies and notorious money-lenders. Milkha Singh of Pindori Nijjaran mentions the convening of a third meeting at Jassoval wherein Santa Singh had pleaded for the distribution of the share of the booty to the members to attract more persons, but Jathedar Kisan Singh rejected the proposal.

If the Babbar Akalis were busy in launching the offensive, the bureaucratic machinery was not moping or dozing. It soon started to reassert the authority of the law against the Babbar Akalis. The loyalists were worming into the Babbar inner circle and could cause much disaster. It visualised three-pronged attack: (i) The toadies were asked to step up anti-Babbar propaganda. (ii) More police was deployed to protect the loyalists and (iii) The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee was pressurized to condemn the Babbar activities.

37. Milkha Singh, Babbar Akali Sangrah (MSF), Ch.26.
The Government strategy had begun to work. Sant Kartar Singh of Pragpur, who had been very helpful at the nascent stage of the movement and had lent a helping hand to Kishan Singh, was arrested u/s 107 in June 1922. He was imprisoned for a year but he got his release after a murky deal in November, 1922. His conduct, since then, was more dangerous even than that of the toadies. He started playing a double game. On January 24, 1923 he informed the police when Jathedar Kishan Singh was putting up in the Haveli of Bela Singh Pragpur. He also threw a hint to Kishan Singh that Bela Singh's Haveli was the target of police surveillance. At the dead of night Kishan Singh slipped away and thus had a narrow escape from the clutches of the police.

The lavish promises of the rewards had a strong temptation and even blood relations began to betray. On 5th January, 1923, Karam Singh of Jhingar and Dalip Singh of Gossal were arrested at the instance of Kehar Singh, real brother of Karam Singh from his house. They were persecuted u/s 124 A and 153A. Karam Singh Jhingar was sentenced to 4 years' F. Dalip Singh to 5 years' term. Later on, they were tried along with other Babbars.

The programme of setting right and reforming the jholichuks was taken in hand to implement the decisions taken

40. Gurbachan Singh, Babbar Akali, op.cit., p.27 and Labh Singh Jansooval, Sankhep Tawarikh Babbar Akali, op.cit., p.49 give the name of Jhingar's brother as Fattan Singh. This is not correct.

41. Karam Singh and Dalip Singh were awarded life sentence in the Babbar Akali conspiracy case.
a: Jassowal. Karam Singh Babbar had prepared a list of 179 toadies. The first in the list was Arjan Singh Patwari allegedly responsible for the arrest of Master Mota Singh, but he could never be murdered. The first attempt was made on 16th January, 1923. Three different groups under Buta Singh of Pindori Nijjaran, Sarta Singh and Jathedar Kishan Singh respectively failed to catch him in their net. Another attempt on January 23, 1923, too proved abortive. Later on, the plan to murder him seems to have been dropped. Master Mota Singh is said to have sent a message through Munsha Singh of Johal that none of the suspects, supposed to be responsible for his arrest, be murdered. Perhaps, all the suspected informers had met him in jail to clarify their position. It was on February 2, 1923 that the Babbars committed a dacoity in the house and shop of Munshi Ram of Jadla. The final prayers were said by Karam Singh Daulatpur. The party consisted of 21 persons. This attempt did not bring them any

42. Home Political, File No. 134/II/1923, p. 75.
worthwhile financial gain as Munshi Ran had nothing at hand and had already sent Rs. 22000/- to Nawan Shehar. Only two ornaments, a chain of gold and an amulet of silver, fell in their hands. These were mortgaged with Partapa, brother of Assa Singh for Rs. 180/-. This amount was spent on buying a gun, 25 cartridges and 2 swords from Nahan. On 10th February, 1923 Bishan Singh, Zaildar of Rani Thua (Kapurthala State), a retired official of canal department, was shot dead near his village. His name appeared in the Babbar hit list at serial No. 141. He was instrumental in getting arrested or insulted each and every one who wore a black turban. He was rewarded with a watch and a sword for his services rendered to the government against the Akalis. The people had complained against him in a diwan at Buhani in March 1922. Again, it was he, at whose instance the police at Khajurala post subjected Bakhshish Singh Akali to severe thrashing and third degree torture. The threat of boycott by the Akalis at Phagwara and Khajurala diwanas did not deter him. Karam Singh of Daulatpur sent Kartar Singh, Sardul Singh of Burro Barlian and Babu Santa Singh to reform Bishan Singh. The group set out for the task after performing ‘Ardasa’. When they reached near Palahi, Kartar Singh and Sardul Singh entered the village to get meals prepared and Santa Singh was left to keep an eye on the Zaildar alighting

47. Home Political K.W.2 File No.245/1926, p.75.
the train at the railway station. The party dispersed without accomplishing the task as they could not find him in the village. He had gone to Kapurthala to attend the wedding of the princess of Kapurthala State. Babu Santa Singh left for Pragpur. Suddenly he saw Zalldar coming from Chaheru, near Madhopur village. He fired four shots at him. Only one hit him, while three missed the aim. Though about 15 persons were working around yet none came to his rescue. His grandson, Lachhu, who accompanied him, was left unharmed by Santa Singh, in consonance with the Jassoval resolutions. This was the first exploit of the Babbar in the chain of murderous assaults. It left the government machinery numb and dumb. Since then, the Babbar Akalis followed the arduous path consistently. Now the open encounters with the police and murderous attacks on the toadies seemed inevitable. The Babbars had opened their account of deceities with Jadla affair and that of murders with the elimination of Zalldar Bishan Singh of Ranltha. Both the actions had the blessings and involvement of Karam Singh Daulatpur who remained steadfast, constant and consistent all through and fell on the battle field at Babeli according to the Babbar principles and Sikh tradition.

On 13th February, 1923 a toady of Hayatpur, named, Divan was murdered. He used to help Sardha Ram of Samundra by supplying information about the Akalis. Sardha Ram's name

50. Ibid., p.24.
51. Paper Book Babbar conspiracy case, p.393. Lachhu also confirms that only one Akali shot, his grandfather, dead.
52. Makhespuri, Sundar Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.139.
appeared at number 109, in the Babbar hit-list. The work was mainly accomplished by Bhai Uday Singh, Surjan Singh, Dharam Singh and Assa Singh. It was Uday Singh who said final prayers and shot Divan dead. He was, then, buried in the Havali of Surjan Singh. From there, the left for Ramgarh Jhuggian and then proceeded to Jassowal. The adeptness and secrecy with which this murder was committed was commendable. For about 6 months the murder remained shrouded in mystery. Neither could the police get any clue nor did the dependents of the deceased suspect any foul play. It was on August 1, 1923 when Assa Singh turned approver, and disclosed the facts relating to this murder and the disposal of dead body by Sunder Singh, Surjan Singh and Dharam Singh. He took Mir Fasal Imam and the investigating party to Hayatpur, where the body was exhumed on the 3rd of August, 1923.

The Babbar influence went on increasing. Their patriotic seal was catching; it converted some of the dacoits and thus dross was changed into gold. It was on February 16, 1923 when Jathedar Kishan Singh and Babu Santa Singh prevailed upon Waryam Singh Dhugga, Banta Singh and Dalip Singh Dhawian, Dhanna Singh Kotali Bawa Dass and Duman Singh Pandori Mahtaman to come into the Babar fold. They were advised to observe the following code:

53. Home Political Department, K.W.2 File No.245/1926, p.75.
54. Loc.cit.
55. Home-Political, File No.13h/II/1922, p.56.
1. Recitation of Five Banis was obligatory and it was to form a part of their morning regimen. 2. No action was to be committed for personal spite. 3. No woman was to be maltreated or molested. 4. The dictates of the Jatha were to be followed in letter and spirit.

After the murder of Zaildar Bishan Singh, the police unleashed a wave of repression. Indiscriminate arrests of the Akalis and the resultant atrocities perpetrated on them compelled the Babbars to evolve a plan to save the common villagers from police brutality. On February 22, 1923 a meeting was held in the Havelli of S. Hardit Singh of Jassowal which was attended by Jathedar Kishan Singh, Babu Santa Singh, Dhanna Singh of Bhabalpur, Uday Singh, Bata Singh of Pindori Nijjaran, Harbakhash Singh and Hardit Singh of Jassowal. It was considered that two or three Babbars should own Zaildar Bishan Singh's murder and henceforth all murders should be owned by them to save the innocent people from police harassment and torture. No decision could be arrived at as S. Karam Singh of Daulatpur was not present in the meeting.

When they were thus planning their future programme and evolving a strategy to outwit the government machinery and administer a crushing blow to the toadies, the movement received the severest set-back. The spirit behind the


57. Makhauspuri, S. S., Babbar Akali Lehar, op. cit., pp. 113-114. Also see Milika Singh, Babbar Akali Sangarh (Mss), Ch. 26. He adds that Jathedar Kishan Singh rejected the proposal of Babu Santa Singh to give share of the booty to the members with a view to attract more people into the Babbar fold.
movement, Jathedar Kishan Singh Cargaj, was arrested on 26th February, 1923 through the connivance of his chief confidant Kabul Singh of Birring. Kabul Singh had an intimate connection with Hakim Qumur-ud-din Maulvi who formerly used to live in Birring. He was a C.I.D. functionary and he, through Kabul Singh and his father-in-law, Labh Singh of Dhada Fateh Singh, laid a trap for Kishan Singh. As the Babbar needed money desperately to purchase weapons, it was given out that the Maulvi could turn common metal into gold. This Maulvi had now shifted to Pindori Mahal and resided in an isolated building, commonly known as Masit (Mosque) Khaki Shah, between villages of Pindori Mahal and Dhada Fateh Singh. Kishan Singh went there on February 25, 1923. He was accompanied by Buta Singh. Buta Singh alluded to the fact that Kishan Singh too doubted faqir's capability to turn ordinary metal into gold. Buta Singh too expressed doubts over the efficacy of faqir's claim. Buta Singh was then sent with a letter to Ram Singh of Dharowal at Amritsar and was asked to contact Dhanna Singh of Behbalaur on the way who might have reached Pindori Niujaran. Kishan Singh taking a hint from Buta Singh desired to go to Saidpur but Kabul Singh prevailed upon him to stay. At night, Kabul Singh and

59. Satya, M. Rai, Panjabi Heroic Tradition, p. 80 is not correct in stating that Kabul Singh took Kishan Singh, who was not keeping well, to his house, on the pretext of looking after him. The account narrated by Buta Singh is quite different and seems to be correct and has been corroborated by many other sources.
60. Vide interview of the writer with S. Buta Singh, 20th November 1982 at 28-Vasant Vihar, Jullundur City.
Kishan Singh took seals which were sent by Labh Singh Dhada. In the meantime Labh Singh and Maulvi Qamar-ud-din arranged the police raid. Mr. H. Mathews Superintendent police, Jullundur surrounded the place at 4 a.m. on 26th February, 1923. As soon as it was dawn, he sent for the village carpenter and asked him to make a hole large enough in the door so as to admit of Kishan Singh's hands through the hole. When he did so, Kishan Singh was handcuffed at once. Kabul Singh was also arrested but police had no fear as regards Kabul Singh.61

The Babbar were outraged at the treachery and they carried on their campaign of murders and dacoities more virulently. The arrest of Kishan Singh Gargaj did not work as a damper to their activities. Their activities continued unabated.

They first attempted to assassinate Zaildar Ram Narain Singh of Mahalpur. The plan was chalked out by Dhanna Singh Behbalpur, Ratan Singh of Pindori Nijjaran, Babu Santa Singh and Banta Singh of Dhamian in the attic of Kartar Singh Burro Barrian at the latter's suggestion, on 28th February, 1923. Their attempt did not materialise, but when Zaildar came to know that the Babbars were after him, he died out of fear.62

62. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.121 also vide paper Book Babbar Akali conspiracy, p.89.
Such was the Babbar terror.

On 3rd March, 1923 Babu Santa Singh, Banta Singh of Dhamian, Sadhu Singh and Banta Singh of Pragpur attacked Jasser railway station. This affair was of little material consequence. The house of station master Chanan Ram was looted but the ornaments they could lay their hands were of little value. Only two or three ornaments of silver were found from Jassadar Samouran Singh's house. Then they brought station master to the Station and got opened the cash box. They could get Rs. 30/- only from there. The callous and cruel treatment of the Station Master with the passengers had invited the ire of the Babbars. The station master was told that he should not charge money from any person travelling without ticket. He was also advised to relinquish the government service at the earliest otherwise he would be murdered one day.

The next target of the Babbar vengeance was Buta Lambardar of Mangal Shamran. He had exceeded all the limits of endurance and defied the warnings of the Babbar Akalis. He was taken to task on account of the assistance he gave to the police in harassing the Akalis. His name appeared at serial

63. Home-Political file 13/II, p. 75. The viceroy of India Lord Reading writes to the Secretary of State that the incident took place on 4.3.22. The incident took place on 3 March, but F.I.R. seems to have been lodged on 4th March, 1923.
64. Home Political Deptt., K.W. 2 File No. 245/126, p. 79.
number 13 in the Babbar hit-list. He was attacked on March 10, 1923, by 12 persons led by Babu Santa Singh. Buta went to the roof of his house and shouted for help. The Babbars followed him to the roof. A scuffle ensued and Dhanna Singh fired two shots. Buta fell dead in the courtyard of his neighbour, Dina. None had the courage to come to his help. The Babbars made away with 2 gold and 2 silver ornaments found from his house. Dhanna Singh Kotli Bawa Dass murdered Surjan, Buta’s grandson. Santa Singh admonished him for this, as it was tantamount to a violation of the Babbar dictates.

The assassination of Buta was an open affair. He too had been apprehending the impending danger to his life as date of his reformation was announced beforehand. A police party was posted on patrolling duty due to the influence of his son who was an army officer and was posted at Jullundur. The Babbars shut all the inhabitants of the village in their houses, said their final prayer in the village Gurdwara and attacked Buta at a time when the whole village was awake. None dared come to help him. Even the police party on duty failed to

66. Makhmuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op. cit., p. 144 is not correct in stating that the attack took place on 11th March, 1923. Vide Home Pol. Deptt. K.W.2 file 2245/1726, p. 32, wherein it has been stated that the first information report was lodged at the Sadar Thana at Jullundur by Bhola Chaukidar, at 1 a.m. on the 11th March, 1923. The attack took place on the night of 10th March, 1923.

arrive there in time.68

The next victim of the Babbar fury was Labh Singh of Garh Shankar, an ex-mistri of Police Training School, Philiaur. He was suspected for his complicity in the arrest of Jathedar Kishan Singh as he was enlisted in the special police which was set up exclusively to watch and curb the Babbar activities. He was killed on 19th March, 1923 at the time of Dansiwal Chhinj by Babu Santa Singh, Dhanna Singh, Dalipa Dhanian and Batten Singh of Pindori Nijjaran. After the fair, he left towards Behra Kukran, accompanied by a lad. When he reached near a grove of mangoes at a distance of 300 yards from the Chhinj site, Dhanna Singh shot him dead. Then Batten Singh also struck a blow on the stomach with his kirpan.69 After the murder they ran in an easterly direction and reached Jassowal.

It was strange that the Babbars could not reform the traitors who had caused the arrest of Master Mota Singh earlier and Kishan Singh of late. They made three attempts to kill Labh Singh of Dhadda Fateh Singh and Kabul Singh Birring whose names appeared in the Babbar list at serial No. 26 and 27 respectively. Labh Singh had actually received a reward of

68. The Akali Patrika, Jullundur, August 27, 1931 (vide an article by Gurbadian Singh on the authority of an eyewitness account of S. Gurdial Singh Phul).

Is. 750 for the part he had played in the arrest of Kishan Singh. The three attempts were made on March 14, 17 and 23, 1923. The first attempt was made by 7 Babbars but was abandoned for want of correct timely information about Labh Singh's whereabouts. The second attempt failed as Surain Singh Bisraapur, an unwilling accomplice took to hiding. The third attempt was abandoned as the party contained urchins like Milkha Singh to carry out this operation as that was likely to land them in a terribly difficult situation.

70. Ibid., p.83.

71. Babu Santa Singh, Dhanna Singh Behbalpur, Dalip Singh Dhramian, Shiv Singh Haripur, Kartar Singh, Sadha Singh and Batten Singh Pindori Nijjaran discussed the first attack at brick kiln of Sham Chaurasi vide Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op.cit., p.149.

72. Paper Book, Babbar Akali conspiracy case, p.83, Dhanna Singh Behbalpur, Babu Santa Singh, Waran Singh Dhugga, Banta Singh of Bopa Rai, Shiv Singh of Haripur, Amr Singh of Rajonal, Ujjagar Singh of Bisraapur, Sadha Singh, Sadha Singh, Daman Singh, Bala Singh of Bopa Rai, Banta Singh and Dalna of Dhramian, Batten Singh of Pindori Nijjaran. Sixteenth was Surain Singh of Bisraapur who told that Ujjagar Singh had deceived him and was afraid to participate in the contemplated murder. This detail has a minor deviation. Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar op.cit., p.149 mentions Dhanna Singh of Kotli Bawa Dass instead of Dhanna Singh of Behbalpur.

73. The Aasi, March 1922, p.44. It consisted of S.Karam Singh of Deulatpur, Bhai Udey Singh, G.Dhanna Singh of Behbalpur, Dalip of Dhramian, Babu Santa Singh, Bakhshish Singh, Sadha Singh of Pindori Nijjaran, Sadhu Singh(these three were minors), Udham Singh and Batten Singh of Pindori Nijjaran. Jatehdar Karam Singh reprimanded Batten Singh for having brought urchins like Milkha Singh and venture had to be abandoned.
Historic Decision of the Babbars:

It was on March 22, 1923 that the Babbars met in a conclave at the hermitage of Sant Thakur Singh Rajcowal to own the responsibility of the murders committed by them as the police was perpetrating untold atrocities on villagers to conceal its failure to trace real culprits. In the conclave Karan Singh Daulatpur, Udjay Singh and Dhanna Singh Babbalpur offered to own responsibility for these murders. It was also decided that no Babbar would offer himself for arrest alive. Consequently, the first Babbar Declaration was prepared and an open letter was sent to Lieutenant Governor of the Panjab.

It made manifest that the Babbars had taken recourse to sword and left the path of non-violence due to the suppressive and coercive policy of the Panjab Government. It stated that Bhishan Singh Zalldar of Rani Thua, Buta Lambardar, his grandson Surjan and Mistri Labh Singh of Garhshankar had been murdered. It was further mentioned that another person was undergoing imprisonment for life in the Babbar Akali jail and that having no penal code of their own, the Babbar Akalis had devised three forms of punishment, namely: (1) Death, (2) Mutilation, (3) Fine. The letter was signed by S. Karan Singh of Daulatpur, S. Dhanna Singh of Behbalpur and Bhai Udjay Singh of Ramgarh Jhuggian and its copies were sent to the Deputy Commissioner, Jullundur, Diwan Durga Dass and Mian Sahib, Minister of Kapurthala.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}}\] Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, Judgement 1925, pp.4-7.
State. Its copies were also pasted in Pindori Nijjaran and were sent to many other villages. The police raid on Pindori Nijjaran on 23rd March, 1923 was conducted on the information of Bhagwan Singh and Karnam Singh, Lambardars and Maulu and Jiwan, Chaukidars. The village was a stronghold of the Babbar Akalis. At least 13 persons of this village joined the Babbar Akalis. The Babbars had issued warning to the Jholichuk Lambardas and Chaukidars. In September, 1922, too Udham Singh had written notices with his own hand and pasted them on the village walls with the help of Tufail Mohammed.

The notice read:

"Badzat Jivan, Badzat Maula ko, Farsava Jata hai, Apni Sheraton se bas a javen, warna Nak Kan Kat Javenge." 76

They did not mend their ways. The raid on 23rd March, 1923 aroused the ire of Babu Santa Singh and he decided to do away with the toadies of this village. The first meeting in this connection was convened on April 3, 1923. Karan Singh of Daulatpur, Dhama Singh of Behbalpur, Udey Singh of Ramgarh, Babu Santa Singh, Sadha Singh, Bakhshish Singh, Kartar Singh and Udham Singh Pindori Nijjaran took part in it. But the decision to murder Jholichuk was deferred. Again on April 20, 1923

76. Makhsuspuri, Sunder Singh, Babbar Akali Lehar, op. cit., p. 15 Also vide Paper Book Babbar Akali conspiracy (Statement of Tufail Mohammed, P.W. 14, p. 177).
Another person on the hit-list of the Babbar was Hazara Singh of Behbalpur. He was shot dead in the early hours of 27th March, 1923 in front of his house. He was killed by S. Dhanna Singh, Karam Singh of Daulatpur and Udey Singh and the fact was announced in the Babbar Akali Doaba of April 14, 1923 that toady Hazara Singh at blacklist No.136 had been given three squares of land.

On 17th April, an ex-Subedar, Genda Singh was assassinated in front of his house in Jullundur District. The plan to
murder him was finalised in the Kutiya of Sant Thakur Singh at Rajowal. Babu Santa Singh, Anup Singh, Karam Singh of Manko, Nand Singh of Churial and Bittan Singh of Pindori Nijjaran attacked him. While Subedar and Nand Singh were grappling, Bittan Singh placed his pistol against Subedar's stomach and fired. Anup Singh too fired a shot in the air and then struck the Subedar on the head with the butt of the gun. Karam Singh of Haripur struck him with the sword. Bittan Singh missed his mark four times, so Santa Singh took aim and shot him dead.

Though the year 1923 did not augur well for the Babbars yet it was even worse for the toadies. The arrests of Karan Singh of Jhingar, Master Dalip Singh of Gossal on January 5, 1923, Kishan Singh on February 26, 1923, Assa Singh on March 1, 1923 and that of Amr Singh of Kot Fatuhi on March 26, 1923 were no doubt crushing blows to the Babbar Movement, but the relentless with which they carried on the campaign of elimination of bureaucratic props, threw cold water on police enthusiasm. It was after the murder of Buta of Mangal Shamman that it intensified its operation against the Babbars. On 19th April, 1923 the Deputy Commissioner of Jullundur District, along with Superintendent of Police and Inspector Police Station, Adampur reached Churial. Again on April 21, Abdul Aziz Supdt. C.I.D. and Deputy Commissioner, Jullundur reached there with military, pressurised people and...

raided Ghurial, Manko and Chukhiana. The Akalis of Ghurial informed the C.G.P.C. about the police barbarities. The repression of the police touched new heights. Though the Babbars gave shocks to the police and the toadies by swooping down upon them many times till December 1923, yet they were by and large on the defensive in their encounters and confrontations. It was now the turn of the police and the bureaucracy to stifle and suppress the movement with an iron-hand. It exerted pressure on the villages not to give the Babbars "any quarter, nor help them in any form or manner." The police fanned out in the villages and began to haunt and hound them.

82. Gulab Singh, Under the Shadow of Gallows, Delhi, 1963, p. 36.