Appendix I: Sukhdev’s posthumous letter

Dear Brother,

Since long certain feelings were arising in my mind which, owing to some reasons, I suppressed up till now, but I cannot do so any longer nor do I consider their suppression appropriate. I cannot say how you would take the expression of my thoughts in this manner, whether in good or bad light; whether they will receive your attention; whether they will be in accordance with your views and whether they will be agreeable to you or not. But I am doing what I feel is proper. You may act upon them if you like, that rests with you. If you reply to this letter it would be a good thing. Its advantage would be that my thoughts would be cleared up and I would know whether the four walls of the jail have deprived me of my judgment and I am only apt to think of idle and vain schemes being cut off from the field of practical life. Since the time we have been jailed the atmosphere outside is becoming heated. So far as “actions” are concerned, it is gleaned through newspapers that in almost every province especially in the Punjab and Bengal things are going to extremes. There the bomb has become a simple affair. So many “actions” were hardly committed in the past. It is about these actions that I wish to tell you something and what our policy was in regard to these I shall place before you. After that I shall express my own views regarding “actions.” We people did only two “actions,” one Saunders’ Murder and the other Bomb in the Assembly. Prior to that we made two or three attempts but did not succeed. In this connection I can say this much that our actions were of three kinds: (1) Propaganda (2) Money (3) Special. Out of these three our main attention was centered towards actions for propaganda. The other two were regarded as of minor urgency. By this I do not mean to detract from their importance, but at any rate the aim of our existence was to foster actions for propaganda...Leaving aside the latter two kinds of action about propaganda. The word propaganda perhaps does not properly signify these actions. In fact these actions use to be in accordance with the wishes of the people. For instance, take the
case of Saunders’ Murder: When Lala received lathi blows we saw that there was a great unrest in the country. Moreover, the attitude of the Government added fuel to the fire. The people make much annoyed. This was a very good opportunity for us to attract public attention towards the revolutionaries. First of all we thought that one man should be sent with a pistol and after killing Scots should there and then give himself up. Then in the statement he should give out the revenge for national insult, so long as the revolutionaries exist, could be taken in that way. It was however, thought better to send three men as man power was believed to be deficient in the people. In this too the object of making good escape was not predominating. It was not so much wished (.... illegible). At the same time we were determined to pay more attention to kill him rather than to save our lives. We did not like that the person. We aimed at should die in hospital. For this reason even after Raj Guru had fired a short, Bhagat Singh did not cease firing till he was satisfied that he was dead. To run away after the murder was not our plot. We wished to enlighten the public that it was a political murder and that its perpetrators were revolutionaries and not the associates of Malangi. We therefore, affixed posters after that and sent some for publication. Alas, neither our leaders nor the press rendered any assistance at that stage, and in order to deceive the Government they deceived their countrymen. We desired that should write in roundabout way that it was a political murder and was the result of Government’s policy and that it was responsible for such an action. But they knowing all this and inspite of my repeatedly saying did not dare to say so. It was a good thing that we were arrested and everything came to light to the people.

Dear brother, I consider my arrest as good luck only for this reason. After clearing the nature of this action I want to dwell on the policy. (Note:- Just at the moment we come to know that judgment will be delivered to­day. To enquire whether we would like to go or not Khan Sahib and Bakshiji came to us, but we all refused.) I want to show that our idea was that our actions should fulfill the desires of the public and should only be in response to those grievances against the Government so that they
might attract public sympathy and support. With this in view we wanted to infuse revolutionary ideals and tactics in the public and the expression of such ideas looks more glorified from the mouth of one who stands on the gallows for the cause. Our idea was that coming in direct conflict with the Government we should be able to frame a definite programme for our organization. I do not want to say much regarding the other two kinds of *actions* (...illegible).450

43°The Tribune, Sukhdev’s Posthumous Letter, 28-3-1931.

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