The establishment of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal in December 1920 heralded a new era in the history of Punjab politics. The Gurdwara Reform Movement was started by Sikhs to free their Gurdwaras from the control of Mahants (Priests). Gurdwaras are the places for worship for the Sikhs. In the early days Gurdwaras were simple Dharmsalas. But with the passage of time these Dharmsalas became a centre of Sikh community, where, apart from worship and religious ceremonial activities connected with births, baptisms, betrothals, marriages and obsequies were observed. There was a free kitchen, the Guru-Ka-Langar, and also a school (Pathshala) where children learnt the alphabet and their daily Prayer. These Dharmsalas were later called Gurdwaras. In other words the Dharmsalas or Gurdwaras were the important institution of the Sikhs. According to Sikh tradition the priests in the early days as well as other persons were placed in-charge of various Gurdwaras. It was in tune with the advice of Guru Nanak. Moreover, they

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wished to dedicate their life to prayer and service of the community.\textsuperscript{391} Further, they did not look upon the offerings as their personal wealth or property. The Gurdwaras had no property in starting. Even some of the priests like Bhai Lakha Singh, Bhagat Singh, and Suba Singh had refused personal jagirs offered to them by the various Sikh chiefs.\textsuperscript{392}

But during the period immediately following the death of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716 and up to the rise of Sikh misals, the Sikhs were under the control of Bahadur Shah, Farrukh Siyyar and their governors in Punjab. During that time a large number of Sikhs along with Sikh Preachers were forced to go into exile and the Sikh shrines passed under the control of \textit{Udasis}.\textsuperscript{393} Gradually the Udasis in charge of various Gurdwaras were also well versed in the Sikh scriptures and devoted themselves chiefly to reciting the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.\textsuperscript{394} Most of them, who looked to ecclesiastic jobs in different Gurdwara, were not attached to any particular shrine and some who established institutions admitted followers and became heads of their \textit{deras}, \textit{akharas} and Gurdwaras.

\textsuperscript{392} Ibid., pp. 15-16.
\textsuperscript{393} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, Atlantic Publisher & Distributor, New Delhi, 1988, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{394} John Caambllel Oman, \textit{The Order of the Udasis}, in the Punjab Past and Present, September, 1969, pp. 190-91.
and came to be known as the Mahants. Under the Sikh misals and thereafter under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other Sikh rulers assigned large estates to their favorite shrines. Some important Gurdwaras and their Granthies had sizeable Jagir of lands. With the introduction of Canal irrigation, the income derived from land of the Gurdwaras assumed princely proportions. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 the Mahant of the Gurdwaras had become negligent in their duties to a certain extent.

But with the establishment of the British Government in Punjab the situation was entirely changed. After the annexation of Punjab in 1849 the administration of the most of the Sikh shrines had gone into the hands of those hereditary mahants (Priests) who were appointed and protected by the British administration and these men always worked in the interests of British Government. They were usually greedy, corrupt and immoral. In other words the religious section of the Sikh community had fallen a prey to a number of social evils. The Dardar Sahib at Amritsar and Tarn-Taran gradually passed into the hands of British Government. For a long time, it had been the custom for the Mahants of Golden temple that refused even the baptized Sikhs of the so-called lower

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castes to enter the temple freely. They had become the virtual proprietors of the Gurdwaras and their wealth. In many cases, with the Government officials, the priests got the Gurdwaras property transferred to their own names and became their owners.\textsuperscript{396} Moreover, some of them had been leading luxurious life and squandered large earnings of Gurdwaras on wine and women.\textsuperscript{397} In August 1906 certain visitors found the priest of Muktsar drunk and holding a music party within the temple.\textsuperscript{398} Some priests sold a \textit{bungah} of the temple of Tarn-Taran to Christians. Gurdwara Panja Sahib's priest Mitha Singh got the land attached to the Gurdwara transferred in his own name.\textsuperscript{399}

Up to the beginning of Gurdwaras Reform Movement in the early 20th century there had been movements like Nirankari, the Namdhari and the Singh Sabha. In fact the Gurdwara movement was in the making. The Nirankari Movement started by Baba Dyal of Peshawar and Rawalpindi developed between 1854 and 1870. He preached against the idolatry, worship of graves and sought to restore the worship on one formless God (Nirankar) to remove the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{396} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{397} \textit{Proceedings Home Political}, No. 942/1922 (N.A.I).
\item \textsuperscript{398} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{399} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 93.
\end{itemize}
evils that had slowly crept into the Sikh social and religious life.\textsuperscript{400} But this movement could not make a big impact on the Sikhs because they still lacked in modern education and social awareness.

After the Nirankari Movement, there came the Kuka Movement. The movement soon became a powerful force among the Sikhs under the leadership of Baba Ram Singh, a carpenter saint of village Bhaini, District Ludhiana. This happened by 1863. Baba Ram Singh particularly enjoined upon his followers the worship of one God through prayer and meditation. The Kukas had incurred the displeasures of British rulers because they had boycotted English Schools, foreign goods, courts and post office services, preached self reliance and worn homespun Swadeshi clothes.\textsuperscript{401} Baba Ram Singh also protested against some social evils like female infanticide, child marriage, and caste-system and dowry system.\textsuperscript{402} Rooted in the Khalsa past the teachings of Baba Ram Singh seem to have had a wide appeal to the Sikh masses. With the increasing popularity of the movement, the Government began to take a very serious view of it. In 1871 some of his more fanatic

\textsuperscript{401} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arhat Akali Lehar}, p. 12.
followers murdered some Muslim butchers of Amritsar, Raikot and Malerkotla and they were as a punishment, blown off from the mouths of cannon.\textsuperscript{403} This event infuriated the whole province and the authority’s action against the Kukas as it increased feelings against the British rule in Punjabi people which helped to the prepare ground for the Gurdwara Reform Movement in the early twentieth century.

After the Namdharies, Singh Sabha Movement was established by the Sikhs for improving the condition of the Sikhs by 1872 and after it. Due to the annexation of the Punjab, a number of Christian missionaries had moved into the province. So much so that four Sikh students of the mission school at Amritsar announced their intention for conversion into Christianity in 1873. Moreover, by the same time Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri delivered a speech against Sikh faith at Amritsar in which he distorted the facts of Guru Nanak’s life.\textsuperscript{404} These events greatly shocked the Sikhs. To safeguard Sikhism a meeting was assembled by the prominent Sikhs at Amritsar. In this meeting they deliberated over the challenges facing the Sikh community and formed an association called Singh Sabha. Thakar Singh Sandhawalia was President of the Sabha and Gyan Singh was

\textsuperscript{403} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali struggle- A Retrospect}, p.7.
\textsuperscript{404} G.S. Chhabra, \textit{Advanced History of Punjab, Vol. II}, p. 456.
Secretary. The main objectives of the Sabha were the revival of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, the production of religious literature in Punjabi, the development of western education, reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates. Another Singh Sabha was established at Lahore in 1879 by a group of educated people. In 1883 these Sabhas met together and set up a general Sabha which was named Khalsa Diwan. With the efforts of Diwan, the Khalsa College, Amritsar was founded in March 5, 1892, by Sir James Lyall. This institution became a degree college in 1899. Although, the Singh Sabha was not politically against the British Government, yet the development of the education among the Sikhs made them conscious of their religion and political disabilities. This movement awoke the Sikhs and prepared the ground for the genesis of Gurdwara Reform Movement directed against the Mahants and other vested interests in Sikh Shrines on the one hand and against the British imperialism in Punjab on the other.

Another factor of estrangement between the Sikhs and the Government was Kamagata Maru Tragedy. In 1907 immigration laws were passed by the Canadian Government to prevent Asiatics from entering Canada, which affected the Indians most. To fulfill the immigrate conditions of the Government of Canada a ship took

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405 Ibid.
on charter by Gurdit Singh, which was named as the Kamagata Maru. The ship was hired on a time charter and started off from Hong-Kong on 4 April 1914 with 105 passengers on board. Other passengers joined at Shanghai, Moje and Yokohamma during the way\textsuperscript{408} when the ship reached Vancouver, where a whirlwind campaign was already afoot to deport them back to Hong-Kong.\textsuperscript{409} The passengers appealed to the Canadian people and Government for justice and sent telegrams to India and England. But these efforts were unable to yield any positive response. After remaining for two months in Canadian water the Kamagata Maru started on its return voyage on the morning of 23 July 1914.\textsuperscript{410} Its passengers were by this time in a bad temper as most of them had staked all their possessions on this venture. The ship arrived at Calcutta on the night of 29th Sept. 1914. At the Budge-Budge harbour Calcutta, through the foolishness of some police officer, a tragedy was enacted, where by the Government officer's ordered fire at innocent Punjabis who were returning from Canada.\textsuperscript{411} This tragedy infuriated the whole Sikh community. In spite of this the revolutionary Gadar Propaganda made major headway in the Punjab during the First World War. Punjabi immigrants to Canada


\textsuperscript{409} Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Hindustan Gardar Part-A Short History}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{410} Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Hindustan Gardar Part-A Short History}, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{411} Sardul Singh Caveeshar, \textit{The Sikh Studies}, National Publications, Lahore, 1937, p. 188.
and U.S.A. were in the largest component of the Gadar Movement. During the war Gadrities made efforts to develop contacts with Indian soldiers, specially the Sikhs.\textsuperscript{412} The mahants of Amritsar Sahib issued the \textit{Hukamnamas} against the Gadrities. They were under the influence of the British Government.

Chronologically, the first incident was the Rikab Ganj affair. Gurdwara Rikab Ganj is in Delhi built on the site where the body of Guru Teg Bahadur, martyred by Aurangzeb, was cremated. After the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, when in the course of the building of the new capital, the Government acquired land attached to Gurdwara Rikab Ganj in Delhi and demolished an old boundary wall.\textsuperscript{413} This aroused the resentment of the radical Sikhs against the Government. There was talk of launching a morcha but due to the war, the issue was postponed for some time. But after the end of war, the agitation of Rikab Ganj was further started by the extremist Sikhs.

Another cause of foundation of Gurdwara Reform movement was the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy. The Sikhs were thrown into the vortex of Martial law as a consequence of agitation against the Rowlatt Act. This martial law gave birth to the tragedy of


\textsuperscript{413} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 53.
Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The Darbar Sahib Amritsar was already under the Control of Government. From the Akal Takhat authorities presents were given to General Dyer. Traditionally this Takhat was the symbols of Sikh baptismal. General Dyer was the main responsible person for the happening of Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy. The most painful for the victimized Sikhs that General Dyer was declared whitewash by the Golden Temple management and a Saropas (Symbols of Respect) was given to him and this was felt as a great insult into the whole Sikh community.\textsuperscript{414}

These events and tragedies were main responsible factors for the initiation of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The Sikhs felt the need to get free their Gurdwaras from the immoral priests. The Gurdwara Reform Movement started by the Sikhs to get free their Gurdwara from priests. When the Government took the side of priests, Sikhs held morchas to get free their Gurdwaras.

The Central Sikh League was established on 30 March 1919, in the Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore\textsuperscript{415} Its inauguration was backed by a powerful section of the Sikhs for the constitutional reforms in Sikh community after the end of war. After the dissatisfaction of Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, the Central Sikh League got


\textsuperscript{415} \textit{The Tribune}, 29 October, 1919.
involved in the Gurdwara Reform Movement as a result of its earlier interest in the Rikab Ganj affair. The second conference of Central Sikh League held on Oct. 1920 under the Presiding of Sh. Khark Singh. At a subsequent meeting at Lahore the League passed a resolution of non cooperation against the British and decided to send volunteers (Shahidi Jatha) on 1st December to take forcible possession of Rikab Ganj land acquired by the Government and reconstruct the wall. It also demanded that the management of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, be taken out of official control and placed in the hands of a Sikh Committee. The Government realized the seriousness of the situation. Before the Jatha arrived at Delhi, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, intervened in the matter and arranged for the reconstruction of the wall of Rikab Ganj on the behalf of the Government So the first Sikh morcha ended successfully.

The second serious conflict between the Government and the Sikh occurred at Babe-di-Ber at Sialkot. When mahant Harnam

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419 During his life time, Guru Nanak had visited Sialkot and sat under a Ber tree, which exist upto this time, the Gurdwara is known as Babe-di-Ber. After the annexation this institution was under the priests who were supporter of the British Government. After the death of one Priest his relative became the in charge of shrine. The priests there were mostly immoral. See for more detail, Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 121.
Singh died, his widow had a minor son appointed as successor under the guardianship of one Ganda Singh an Honorary Magistrate.\textsuperscript{420} This event infuriated the whole Sikhs and a very strong voice of opposition was raised by the whole Sikhs against this outrage. Various Singh Sabhas sent telegrams to the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Lieutenant Governor of Punjab. However, E.A.C. the collector ignored all opposition and sanctioned the mutation in favour of the Mahant Gurcharan Singh a minor son of the Mahant. The reformers reached by filing a civil suit in the court of the District Judge who ordered the plaintiffs to pay a court fee of 50,000 by 30 Aug. 1920.\textsuperscript{421} The Sikhs had heroically fought their case in the courts, but law had utterly failed to help them. Having thus failed to achieve their object, they decided to help themselves. They formed a Khalsa Sewak Jatha and reformed the Gurdwaras in the city. They began to hold weekly and then daily morning services in the Gurdwara of Bade-di-Ber.\textsuperscript{422} Ganda Singh placed many difficulties in the way of Sikh reformers. A party of gundas was daily seen visiting the place just at the time when worshippers from the city would come to hold their musical

\textsuperscript{420} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle-A Retrospect}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{421} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 132.
performance. John Hadow, the son of Mr. Ganda Sihgh, is also said to have shown his pistol in the Gurdwara.\textsuperscript{423} As agitation increased against the manager, the Gurdwara began to present a strange spectacle. While Sikh \textit{Sat Sangh} hymns, were being conducted scores of \textit{gundas} hovered about them, ready to pick up a quarrel and create a raw. British Government authority was supporting the priests. Warrants were issued against Bhai Bhag Singh, Jawahir Singh, Nanak Singh, Ram Singh and Mahan Singh by Deputy Commissioner under the Section 107.\textsuperscript{424} But finally Sikhs succeeded in taking over the control of the shrine. On 5 Oct. 1920, the Sikhs held a big Diwan and elected a permanent committee of 13 members for the control of the Gurdwara.\textsuperscript{425} And cases of five Sikhs were withdrawn by the Government. So this agitation was successfully won by the Sikh community.

After the successness of Babe-di-Ber next action of the Sikhs was at Golden Temple, Amritsar. When the British Government annexed the Punjab the administration of the Golden Temple had gone under the control of Government Priests and the \textit{Sarbrah} was appointed by the Government. They spent their time in appropriating the huge wealth of the shrine, and consequently,
neglected their daily religious duties. The precincts began to be used by pandits and astrologers and idols were openly worshiped in the holy compound.⁴²⁶ The priests were corrupt and immoral and worked in the favour of British Government. For a long time, it had been the custom for the mahants of Golden Temple to refuse even the baptized Sikhs of the so called lower castes to enter the temple freely and worship there without any hindrance. During the early days of Gurdwara reform movement, Arur Singh was the Sarbrab (Manager) of the Golden Temple. And Gurdwara Tarn Taran which situated within 15 Kilometers of the City Amritsar had been under the same management as that of Golden Temple. Sarbrab Arur Singh declared that the Kamagata Maru Sikhs had been condemned at the Akal Takhat. During the Martial law regime, after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, General Dyer was given presents of Sikh baptismal symbols from the Akal Takhat authorities, where even Maharaja Ranjit Singh had been once condemned and punished for an un-Sikh like act.⁴²⁷ This white washing of General Dyer by the Golden Temple management was felt as a great insult offered to the whole Sikh community. In spite of this during the time of Arur Singh, Akal Takht Sahib under the

influence of the British Government issued the *Hukamnamas* against the Gadrities. One priest openly said that he would mix tobacco with the sacred food.\textsuperscript{428} The Akali news paper criticized the Golden Temple management continuously. The Central Sikh League held a meeting at Amritsar and a resolution was passed that the management of the Golden Temple should be handed over to a representative committee of Sikhs. One day a priest during the holy congregation were abused at the Akal Takhat and refused was the morning service. The Sikhs came to the manager's home and complained. The manager of the temple promised to go himself next day at the morning service and to make the priest beg pardon. But he never came next day.\textsuperscript{429} After it there was spread unrest among the Sikhs. Once again they organized public meetings, passed resolutions against the Sarbrah and Priests. The Deputy Commissioner supported the Sarbrah and sent police to disperse a meeting of Sikhs within the presents of the temple.\textsuperscript{430} In spite of it the people held a meeting and passed resolution against the manager and authority inspite of the police. The manager was punished and sent on leave for two months. But public wanted his resignation. It was decided to hold a Diwan in Jallianwala Bagh

\textsuperscript{428} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{429} *Ibid*, pp. 148-49.
\textsuperscript{430} Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchain Da Itihas*, p. 41.
and threatened to take out a mock funeral of the effigy of the Sarbrah in case he failed to resign by 29 Aug. 1920.  

The Sikhs held a meeting on Jallianwala Bagh and Sarbrah appeared before the people and begged with folded hands their mercy and announced that he resigned. Sh. Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was appointed the new manager by the deputy commissioner. It was a big achievement of Sikh reformers. After it on 12 Oct. 1920 a good many Akalis with a large number of duly baptized Sikhs from amongst the untouchables with Karah Parshad offerings went into the temple. The priests refused to offer prayer in their behalf. The Sikhs insisted on the right of every Sikh to get his prayer made at or by the temple. In the end, the Holy Book was consulted. Luckily, the controversy was settled in favour of the reformers. Everyone, in the audience was visibly affected. The priests, too, were convinced and they agreed to offer prayer and accept the sacred food from the hands of the newly converted lower caste Sikhs. But this compromise by the priests of the Golden Temple was not approved of by the priests of the Akal Takhat and they vacated their seats and went away to their homes when the

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431 Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 149.
432 Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchain Da Itihas, p. 42.
433 Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, pp. 86-87; Ruchi Ram Sahni, Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines, p. 62.
whole party was going towards the Akal Takht. The reform party took up the challenge and appointed their own persons to take temporary charge of the sacred institution. After some time on 13 Oct. with the agreement of Deputy Commissioner and Sarbrah formed a provisional committee of nine Sikhs with the inclusions of Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia (New Sarbrah) as its head. With the transferred charge of the Golden Temple and Akal Takht, the attached Gurdwaras of Tarn Taran and Baba Atal also automatically under came the charge of Sikhs.

At that time Sikhs had no central organization, although some Sikh Jathas had been formed. For the Gurdwaras reform Sikhs wanted to establish a central organization. So accordingly it was now decided that the Sikhs should have a representative body of their own to manage all the Sikh Gurdwara. At that time Jathedar of Akal Takht came to the forefront for this, and a hukamnama was issued from the Akal Takht summoning a general assembly of the Sikhs to meet on 15th Nov., 1920, in the Golden Temple for the purpose of electing a representative committee of the Panth to control the Golden Temple and all other Gurdwaras. Invitations were sent by the Jathedar of Akal Takht to the four

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Takhts, the Gurdwaras, Schools, Colleges, the Sikhs in the Army and other Sikhs organizations to send their representatives to meet in a conference.\textsuperscript{435} The meeting was held on 15th and 16th of Nov., 1920, which was attended by over 10,000 Sikh representatives from all over the country.\textsuperscript{436} As a result, a committee of one hundred seventy five members was formed to control all the temples of the Sikhs whether in the Punjab or elsewhere. The 36 members of the committee appointed by the Government were also included in this committee and named it as ‘The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee’ i.e. the S.G.P.C.\textsuperscript{437} The inaugural meeting of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee came off at the Akal Takht on Dec. 12, 1920. The committee thus formed elected Sunder Singh Majithia as its first president; Harbans Singh Attari was elected as vice president and Sunder Singh Ramgarhia as Secretary.\textsuperscript{438}

The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was registered on 30th April 1921.\textsuperscript{439} After some time Sunder Singh

\textsuperscript{435} Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morchain Da Itihas}, pp. 46.
\textsuperscript{436} Narain Singh Jhabber, \textit{Akali Morche ate Jhabbar}, Manjeet Printing & Publishing Company, Patiala, 1959, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{439} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 102.
Majithia resigned from the S.G.P.C. and was included in the Punjab politics. A new election of S.G.P.C. was held in July 1921. The new committee elected Sardar Kharak Singh as its President (a professed non-cooperator and a close associate of the Congress, the Central Sikh League and other Nationalist organizations in the country). Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was vice President and Sardar Bahadur Sardar Mehtab Singh was its secretary. A strong executive committee was also elected. A working committee of 7 members and local committees for the management of Golden Temple and Nankana Sahib were also formed. In spite of these hundreds of local Gurdwara committees affiliated to the central committee and these begun working in different localities.

To achieve the objects of the S.G.P.C., on Dec. 14, 1920, it was decided that the movement should organize and name the organization as Shiromani Akali Dal to work for the reforms in the Gurdwaras, under the direction of the S.G.P.C. Because S.G.P.C. was a religious body of the Sikhs. As the time passed, the Akali Dal

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440 For a detailed account see Baba Kharak Singh Abhinandan Granth, Quoted in Mohinder Singh, The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect, p. 97.
442 Prominent members of the Executive Committee were : Teja Singh Samsundri, Amar Singh and Jasant Singh Jhabball, Sardar Dan Singh Vachhoa, Master Tara Singh, Teja Singh of Chuharkhana, Bhagat Jaswant Singh of Rawalpindi, Sarmukh Singh Jhabbal, Bawa Harkisan Singh, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri Centre of the Akalis, etc. For further details about the members a see confidential memorandum quoted in Mohinder Singh, The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect, p. 97.
started to take interest in the Political Problem of the Sikhs as well, and later on it turned out to be their main political party. The word Akalis, were prepared to risk their all for the protection of their places of religion.\textsuperscript{443} In the early days there was no organized system for the enrolment of the Akali volunteers to help of the Gurdwaras. When the Gurdwara reform movement began its momentum a regular system of recruitment of the Akali volunteers was started. Then Akali Jathas had come into existence to carry on reform in their respective areas. During that time a central organization of the Akalis was established, which named as the Shiromani Akali Dal.\textsuperscript{444} Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar was appointed as the first president of the Shiromani Akali Dal.\textsuperscript{445} It was this party which sent \textit{jathas} to the different Gurdwaras and captured them and handed them over to the Shriomani Prabhandhak Committee for management. With the establishment of S.G.P.C. and Shiromani Akali Dal (S.A.D.), Gurdwara Reform Movement became powerful movement and a serious source of tension for the British Government.

When the one side of S.G.P.C. and S.A.D. was establishing itself during this time the other side of reformers was struggling at

\begin{footnotes}
\item[444] Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morechain Da Itihas}, p. 51.
\end{footnotes}
Gurdwara Panja Sahib\textsuperscript{446}. In the autumn of 1920 a committee of inquiry was formed to investigate into the complaints that were constantly made against its mahant. It was proved that the Mahant was of loose character.\textsuperscript{447} When the Gurdwara reform movement was becoming powerful, the Mahant began to terrify with his power. When a Sikh Bhai Amir Singh objected to sacred food (Karah Parshad) being prepared by a smoker then Mahant's Brother took out a pistol and shot him in the thigh, this incident infuriated the whole Sikhs. Mahant Mitha Singh died in Nov. 1920. After the death of priest, the Sikh assembled in Amritsar and they send a Jatha of 25 Akalis under the leadership of Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabber to Panja Sahib to take it under the control of the Sikhs. The Jatha reached Panja Sahib on 18 Nov., 1920.\textsuperscript{448} Next day the Jatha performed Kirtan in the temple. During the Kirtan performing, the Mahant Sant Singh stood up and declared in an excited speech that the had got no concern with the temple. The situation grew critical.\textsuperscript{449} The assembled Sikhs charged him and declared him as a \textit{Tankahhia}, who was not to be allowed to enter

\textsuperscript{446} Gurdwara Panja Sahib at Hassan Abdal was established by the Sikhs in the memory of Guru Nanak Dev. In 1906 Mahant Mitha Singh was priest of the Gurdwara, who got the Gurdwara land transferred to his own name. The Sikhs was complaining against the priest for his immoral character.

\textsuperscript{447} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arhat Akali Lehar}, p. 103.


\textsuperscript{449} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, pp. 176-77.
the Shrine till he went to the Akal Takht to beg pardon for his acts.\textsuperscript{450} The Panja Sahib Gurdwara thus passed into the control of the Sikhs. On the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, a big meeting assembled at Panja Sahib and a management committee of neighboring district's representative formed to look after it. Under the committee the Gurdwara had improved a great deal.

The Akalis took the charge of other local Gurdwara like Chomala Sahib, Lahore, Khara Sauda, Tham Sahib in village Jhambir Kalan, Lahore district, Kar Sahib Chola Sahib Village Bhaini in Ludhiana District, Shekhupura Gurdwara and Khadur Sahib in Amritsar district were under the control of S.G.P.C.\textsuperscript{451} Under pressure of Sikh opinion, backed frequently by demonstrations of strength, the priests began to yield control over the Gurdwara properties to the elected committees and agreed to become paid granthis. Others were compelled to do so when the cases pending in the courts had been decided in favour of the Akalis.\textsuperscript{452}

During the early days of 1921, struggle was started by the Akalis against the priest of Gurdwara Tarn Taran, because the Mahants of Gurdwara Tarn Taran became more independent. They

\textsuperscript{450} Narian Singh Jhabbar, \textit{Akali Morche Ate Jhabbar}, pp. 79-80.
\textsuperscript{452} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, p. 25.
divided the whole income among themselves. They introduced to the management a neglect able person. They came drunk to the temple many times. They openly called the temple their shops. No women's honor was safe in the temple. Towards the end of 1920 Bhai Lachhman Singh came with the girls of his school to pay his respect at Tarn Taran but he and the girls of his school were not allowed to enter the Gurdwara to sing Shabads. On 11 Jan., 1921, the sewak Jatha of Tarn Taran advised the priests to perform kirtan (Asa-di-War) in the temple. But priests beat the Jatha with lathis. The news of misbehaviour of the priests towards the visitors began to reach daily at the Akal Takht Amritsar. On 24th Jan., a woman visitor, before a general meeting of the Sikhs at Akal Takht stood up and to relate the sufferings her family had undergone at the hands of the priests of Tarn-Taran. Her speech created a great sensation, arousing the assembled Akalis to immediately march towards Tarn-Taran to purify the place. Next day a jatha of 40 Akalis reached there, under the leadership of Bhai Teja Singh Bhhuchar. The Jatha reached the temple at about 8.00 a.m, when morning service was going on. Other side approximately

70 priests prepared to attack the Akalis. But the latter kept quiet and with the efforts of older priests a clash was avoided through compromise. For the peacefully settlement a small meeting assembled at 4.00 p.m. In this meeting participated the representatives of Sikhs, Priests and some prominent persons of Tarn Taran city. During this time priests decided to prepare themselves for an attack. In meeting five conditions were laid before the priests for acceptance by the Sikhs. The priests even announced their decision to accept the proposals and asked the Akalis to bring a fair copy of the document to be signed by them. When the Akalis were waiting for the document to be signed then it was around 9.00 pm that the dead drunk priests attacked upon the peaceful Akalis. Some Sikhs who were inside the Gurdwara were seriously wounded. The holy place was soon smeared with the blood of the wounded Akalis. The whole attack lasted only for a few minutes, and in all about 17 Jatha men were wounded. When the other Sikhs entered the temple, they saw the holy place full of blood. The priests had already fled. The wounded were carried by Sikh Sangat to the hospital. On receiving this news the Tehsildar and the Police Inspector came at about 10.00 pm, and went to see

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457 Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 108.
what happened. On 26th Jan. the Sikh washed and cleaned the blood stained temple. The temple having thus came into hands of the Sikhs. It was the first time bloodshed in the cause of Gurdwara struggle. After some days Bhai Hazara Singh Aldinpur and Bhai Hukam Singh died to their injuries.

For the inquiry of this event a committee was appointed by the Congress. Dr. Kitchlew and Lala Girdhari Lal were prominent members of the Congress committee. According to them priests publicly confessed their serious crime and they handed over a written apology and placed themselves at the mercy of the Panth. They requested to the Akalis not to sue them in court. After it a provisional managing committee formed under the presidency of S. Balwant Singh Subedar, to control and manage the Gurdwara, pending the appointment of a regular committee by the S.G.P.C. But other side sued by the priests on the Akalis. The district magistrate ordered a case to be started and police took up the investigation. On 9 July, 1921 the judge rejected the petition of the priests. Other cases were running, after a time of several months. In Oct. 1921 charges were framed against 16 priests and 17 Akalis.

459 Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 205.
460 Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 110.
461 Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 110; Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 56.
On 9th Jan., 1922, 15 Mahants were sentenced each to 3 years rigorous imprisonment and fine 50 Rs per man out of the Akalis ten, while the rest were sentenced each to one year's rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 50.\textsuperscript{463}

Nankana Sahib Tragedy was the most important tragedy of the Gurdwara reform movement, which infuriated the whole Indian people against the priests of Gurdwara and the Government.\textsuperscript{464} In the beginning of 20th century, the Gurdwara of Nankana Sahib was being managed by Mahant Sadhu Ram, who was leading irreligious, luxury and licentious life.\textsuperscript{465} The priest was a notorious drunkard and adulterer. After his death, Kisam Das became successor of him, but Kisan Das was also no better. He organized a dancing party on his nephew's marriage and invited dancing girls in the party.\textsuperscript{466} At the time of Gurdwara reform movement, the Gurdwara was being managed by Udasi Mahant, Narain Das, who was the successor of Kisan Das. He lived in the Gurdwara with a mistress.\textsuperscript{467} He had by her two boys and two girls for whom he

\textsuperscript{463} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 211.

\textsuperscript{464} Nankana Sahib, birth place of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, originally called Talwandi. It is most important position among the Sikh places of religious worship. During the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh a large Jagir (land) attached to Nankana Sahib for the built of big kitchen and free distribution of food to the visitors. With the opening of the canal the value and income of land increased enormously and the priests of Gurdwara became corrupt and immoral. For further details see Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 113.


\textsuperscript{466} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 113.

build two houses, one in Ram Gali at Lahore another at Nankana Sahib. In Aug. 1917, he invited dancing girls to the Janam Asthan and permitted perform singing even in the sacred place. This behavior had widely infuriated the whole Sikh community and criticized by the various newspapers.

After these tragedies, early in Oct. 1920, a big diwan held at Dharowal to discuss the pitiable condition of Nankana Sahib Gurdwara. A resolution was passed and called upon the Mahant to reform. But instead of doing anything to remove the grievances of the Sikhs mahant began to recruit a strong force to resist the Gurdwara Reform Movement. He recruited about 400 criminal and desperate men daily from the kots to guard the Gurdwara and engaged several notorious cut throats like Ranjha, Rehana etc. Narain Das collected his friends and Baba Kartar Singh Bedi and decided to arrange a meeting of Mahants at Nankana Sahib which was attended by approximately 60 Mahants. In this meeting a

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469 The various resolutions passed by the Singh Sabhas against the priest and asking the Government to take many steps against the priest to prevent such action in future. But these resolutions failed to deter the Mahant. In spite of this in 1918 a retired E.A.C of Sind came to visit the Gurdwara Nankana Sahib with his daughter. In the evening, his daughter of 13 years was raped by a priest, when the service of Rahras was going on. He asked to Mahant to take action against him but Mahant ignored his request. In the same year six women of the Jaranwala (Lyallpur) came to Gurdwara to make offering on the full moon day. All of these women were raped at night. For a detailed account see, Giani Partap Singh, *Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar*, p. 113 and Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 221.
committee was formed against the S.G.P.C. and decided that the Mahants should not recognise the S.G.P.C. Narain Das was nominated as its president and Mahant Basant Das as the Secretary. It committee decided to start a newspaper Sant Sewak. On the other side, the 23rd of Jan. 1921 and again on the 6th Feb. meetings of the S.G.P.C. were held at which resolution was passed that the whole Panth should gather in a diwan at Nankana Sahib on 4th, 5th, and 6th March 1921 and to impress upon the Mahant the need for reform himself. When Mahant came to know the Sikhs decisions he tried to show some signs of negotiation with the Sikhs. He met Kartar Singh Jhabbar and agreed to the appointment of a committee of Management on certain condition. The Mahant was invited to attend some Akali meetings to be held by the Akalis to make some compromise with him but he failed to attend the meetings. But at the same time he started making further proportions for a confrontation. When the plans of the Mahant seen to have been known to the Akali

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473 After the formed committee against the Akalis they started preparation at large scale to crush the Akalis. After it Narain Das, approached the Maharaja of Patiala for his help but he refused. Mahant approached the commissioner of Lahore, the Commissioner told him that the matter being religious, Government did not want to interfere. See in detail, Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, pp. 223-24 and Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, p. 62.
475 He engaged 28 pathans on Rs. 20 a month each, with ration and armed them with lathis. His nephews also brought a large number of stout men from Manjha. Several desperadoes from Bhai Pheru also came to help the Mahant. For a detail Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 226.
leadership then under the leadership of Kartar Singh Jahhbar and Lachhman Singh Dharowal Akalis decided to go to Nankana before the planned scheme of 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} January, and thus falling into the trap laid by the Mahant.\footnote{Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Ithias.*, p. 64.} But some prominent Akalis like Sardar Harchand Singh, Teja Singh Samundri, Master Tara Singh, Dalip Singh, Jaswant Singh Jhabal and Master stopped to send the Jathas to Nankana Sahib. They decided to enforce the earlier decision of the Akalis leadership not to send the Jathas to Nankana Sahib.\footnote{Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect*, p. 33.} After having informed Jathedar Katar Singh and Dalip Singh, proceeded to Sunderkot to inform Bhai Lachhman Singh not to start for Nankana as planned. But Lachhman Singh in the meanwhile had started late in the evening of the 19\textsuperscript{th} February with his Jatha for Nankana Sahib. On the morning of 21 Feb. the Jatha reached near the Gurdwara Nankana Sahib. Here they met a messenger of Bhai Dalip Singh and received a message containing the S.G.P.C.'s instructions not to proceed to the Gurdwara. Bhai Lachhman Singh agreed but he was persuaded by Bhai Tehal Singh, one of the Jatha, to go at least for *darshan*. After it Jatha went to Gurdwara only for *darshan* of Gurdwara. In the early morning hour of February 20, 1921 when the Jatha entered the main gate of Gurdwara the gate of Gurdwara closed at the Signal
The Sikhs raised the usual religious shout of Sat Sri Akal. Bhai Lachhman Singh Sat before Guru Granth Sahib and the Jatha began to Singh morning hymns. In a few minutes Narain Das’s Gundas and Badmashes attacked the Jatha with Swords, hatchets and fire arms. According to contemporary accounts, Mahant Narain Das was himself supervising the whole show and urging his men to spare no long haired Sikh in the whole vicinity. One Sardar Dalip Singh of Sargodha was believed to have some relatives at Nankana Sahib. He was the prominent person of area and knew to Mahant very well. He went to Gurdwara and tried to convince the Mahant that Lachhman Singh had came to the Gurdwara only for darshan and should not be molested. On reaching Gurdwara, with folded hands Bhai Dalip Singh implored the Mahant to desist. Cease! O Cease! Let this carnage Cease! But the Mahant replied who was drunk: "Are you not a Sikh? Bang went his pistol and the saintly Sikh fell dead on the ground". After wounding and killing all the members of Jatha the Mahant and his men collected the dead bodies and burnt with Kerosene oil. Some of them were even burnt alive. By the time the police and local Sikhs came on the scene, 130 men had been consumed by the

478 Statement of Jhanda Singh, One of the Four Survivors of the Jatha, quoted in The Tribune, 10 July, 1921; Proceedings Home Political, No. 942/1922 (N.A.I.).
479 The Tribune, 1 March, 1922; The Civil and Military Gazette, 7 August, 1921.
flames.\textsuperscript{481} Only a boy of 12 years, who had taken refuge under Guru Granth Sahib, was spared. The news of the outrage spread like wildfire. Sardar Uttam Singh wired the terrible news to the Governor, the Commissioner the Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent of Police and different Sikhs centres.\textsuperscript{482} Bands of Akalis from distant towns began to converge on Nankana. The Deputy Commissioner Currie reached Nankana Sahib at 12:30 p.m. he could do nothing without the assistance of Police and saw the bodies of Sikhs burning with his own eyes.\textsuperscript{483} In the evening the commissioner of Lahore division Mr. C.M. King, with a military force consisting of 100 Europeans and 100 Indian Soldiers and D.I.G. of Police reached Nankana Sahib by a special Train. Mahant Narain Das with two of his henchmen and 26 Pathans, was arrested and sent to Lahore.\textsuperscript{484} The Gurdwara was put under the protection of the military guard. Several Sikh leaders and Sikh Sardars from Amritsar and other places reached Nankana Sahib. A large number of Sikhs tried to reach by train but they were refused tickets for Nankana Sahib. However, a large number of Sikhs reached Nankana Sahib. Kartar Singh Jhabbar along with his Akali

\textsuperscript{482} Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 238.
\textsuperscript{483} Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, pp. 70-71.
\textsuperscript{484} Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, pp. 238-39; Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 71.
Jatha was stationed at Khara Sauda when he heard of the tragedy. Through his initiative a strong force of about 2200 Akalis was soon ready to march to Nankana Sahib and take possession of the Gurdwara from Military.\textsuperscript{485} The Jatha was stopped by the police force at the order of Deputy Commissioner. But the Jatha ignored the order of police and it was to march on till they reached Gurdwara. Finally, on the evening of the 21st the Commissioner yielded to a strong pressure put up by the Sikh leaders. After some time the police and the military were withdrawn from the Gurdwara, its management being handed over to the Khalsa Panth. Sardar Harbans Singh of Atari was appointed the president and Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia as the Vice President of the first Parbandhak Committee of Seven Members of the Gurdwara.\textsuperscript{486}

The Nankana Sahib tragedy infuriated the whole Sikh panth, the Sikhs of whole country who vehemently condemned the action of Mahant. Resolutions were passed everywhere, demanding the death penalty for the Mahant and his associates.\textsuperscript{487} The newspapers criticized the Mahant’s attack. National Leaders visited the scene of the tragedy and expressed sympathy for the Akalis. On 3rd March, 1921 Mahatma Gandhi and some other leaders’ viz.,

\textsuperscript{485} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{486} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 241.
\textsuperscript{487} \textit{The Akali}, 24 February, 1921; \textit{The Sikhs} 24 February, 1921; M.K., Gandhi, \textit{The Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi}, Vol. XIX, pp. 397-98.
Maulana Shaukat Ali, L. Duni Chand, Dr. Kitchlew, Malik Lal Khan, S. Harchand Singh and S. Prem Singh Sodbans visited in a big Shahidi Diwan. This held at Nankana and delivered lectures.\footnote{Ruchi Ram Sahni, \textit{Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines}, p. 81.} The Mahatma Gandhi made a brief speech in Hindustani in the course of which he said that the news of Nankana was so staggering that they would not believe it without confirmation.\footnote{M.K.,Gandhi,\textit{The Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi}, Vol. XIX, p. 401.} The police carried on its enquiry and, inspite of the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, to seek no justice from Government the Sikh committee continued to give assistance, and it was appreciated in the beginning. But after some time the Sikhs, therefore, dissociated them from the enquiry and took no interest in the case. On Oct. 12, 1921, the Session Judge sentenced the Mahant and seven other to death, eight to transportation for life, sixteen Pathans to seven years rigorous imprisonment, and acquitted the remaining sixteen.\footnote{Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, pp. 124-25.} But the judges of the High Court delivered their judgement on March 3, 1922, held that in view of his failure to secure protection from Government the Mahant was fully justified in taking steps for his own protection by Pathans and other men as guards.\footnote{Gandhi,\textit{Proceedings Home Political, No. 179/II/1922} (N.A.I.)}
On this logic his sentence of death was reduced to one of transportation of life. Only three were sentenced of death, i.e. against Hari Nath, Ranjha and Rihana were maintained. Who had been sentenced to transportation of life, only two got their sentences confirmed other was acquitted. This decision created a great resentment among the Sikh people.\textsuperscript{492} After the tragedy of Nankana Sahib atmosphere of the days following Jalianwala came again to pervade the Punjab. Resolutions of non cooperation with the Government were passed by several organizations of the province.\textsuperscript{493} The great resentment spread among the Sikhs against the Government and priests. Group of radical Sikhs came for front and they organized themselves into a band of violents known as Babbar Akalis. Supporters of the Govt. like members of the Chief Khalsa Diwan were declared as \textit{Jholichuks} (todies) by the Sikhs. After Nankana tragedy and indirect responsibility of the local Government made the higher authorities in Delhi and London think that there was an urgent need to change the earlier policy of non-interference in the religious affairs. After this tragedy Government adopted a new policy of (i) weakening of growing Akali agitation with promises of suitable legislation and (ii) suppressing the

\textsuperscript{492} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{493} \textit{The Times}, March 11, 1921.
extremists in the Akali leadership under the pretext of maintaining law and order. Which resulted in direct confrontation between the Sikh masses, Akali leadership, the Indian National Congress and other nationalist's forces in country on one side and bureaucracy, supported by the Mahants and other vested interests on the other side.

The Nankana massacre was followed by a period of much unrest. Numerous Sikh shrines were seized in rapid succession. After the Nankana Sahib, Sikhs took charge of many Gurdwaras. On 23rd Feb. the Gurdwara at Lubani in Lahore district was captured. On 25th Feb. a Gurdwara at Her-in-Barki police station jurisdiction of Lahore district was seized by a member of Amritsar Akali Dal. On Feb. 26 the local Akalis took possession of the Sirki Das dharamshala in Gujranwala city and Bagicha dharamshala with a similar object in view but uncounted considerable opposition from the Hindus and were compiled to abandon this project. On 28th Feb. another shrine at Eminabad in the Gujranwala district was seized. Other Sach Khand Gurdwara of Sheikhupura district and Baba Bater Singh's dharamshala Jhabbal Kalam on 5th March, Tham Sahibji at Jhambar in Lahore district was seized on the 7th March.

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March, Mall Sahib Gurdwara at Kanganpur in Lahore district and Permsati *dharamshala* at Kamalia in Montgomery district, Ram Das Gurdwara in Amritsar district on the 12th March was seized by the Sikhs.\textsuperscript{496} According to the C.I.D. reports, the objects underlying the captured of Gurdwaras were not really always their reform but economic gain.\textsuperscript{497} But from the whole study it is clear that in the seizure of Gurdwaras Sikhs were inspired with the object of the model for clean and regulated regions life before the Sikh community.

After it occurred the clash between the Sikhs and the Government on the question of holding of keys of treasury of the Golden Temple Amritsar.\textsuperscript{498} After the resign of Sunder Singh Majithia, S. Kharak Singh was appointed the president of S.G.P.C. The S.G.P.C. held a meeting on 29th Oct. 1921. In this meeting resolution passed and asked to Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia to hand over the keys to Sardar Kharak Singh.\textsuperscript{499} After the resolution, on 7 Nov. Lala Amar Nath (E.A.C) extra Assistant and

\textsuperscript{496} S.C. Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Punjab (1905-1929)*, pp. 154-55.
\textsuperscript{497} *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 459-II, 1922 (N.A.I.).
\textsuperscript{498} The Golden Temple, the Akal Takht and adjoining Gurdwara had passed into the control of the Akalis in Oct. 1920. Sarbrah Sunder Singh Ramgarhia who was appointed by the Government, was holding the office of Secretary of the new committee of management appointed by the S.G.P.C.. He continued in possession of the keys of the temple treasury. The Sikhs felt Government control over the Gurdwara because Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was appointed by the Government.
\textsuperscript{499} Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, p. 108.
Commissioner accompanied by a police party sent to Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia by the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to collect the keys of the Temple. Sunder Singh Ramgarhia surrendered a bunch of 53 keys to him and obtained a formal receipt.\textsuperscript{500} The Government stated that Government refused to accept the S.G.P.C. as a representative body of the Sikhs and took the keys in its own control.\textsuperscript{501} The action of Government criticized in various meetings and newspapers. The Akali expressed its resentment in the following manner. On the one hand, the keys of the temple have been taken away and on the other the bureaucracy has crossed all limits in telling lies.\textsuperscript{502} During that time the Government appointed Bahadur Singh Ghwind as a Manager of Golden Temple. A hurried meeting of the S.G.P.C. was called at the Akal Takhat, where on 12th November it was resolved not to allow Captain Bahadur Singh, new appointed manager, to interfere in the management in any way.\textsuperscript{503} Sikhs started protesting against the keys affair.\textsuperscript{504} According to C.I.D. report, by the instructions of the Akali leadership, orders were issued from the Akal Takht to the

\textsuperscript{500} Proceedings Home Political, No. 459-II, 1922 (N.A.I.).
\textsuperscript{501} Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{502} The Akali, 20 November, 1921.
\textsuperscript{503} Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 348; The Civil and Military Gazette, 22 November, 1921.
\textsuperscript{504} Protest meetings were held at Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujar Khan and other place, and resolutions were passed condemning the Government's action. See for detail, Proceedings Home Political, No. 459/1921-1922 (N.A.I.)
Sikh soldiers to give up British service and some of them had agreed to abide.\textsuperscript{505} On the other side the Deputy Commissioner assembled frequent meetings at his house to explain Government's position. He adopted another method of propaganda against the Sikhs. He went round to different villages and held meetings, in which he misrepresented the position of Sikhs.\textsuperscript{506} The Sikhs decided to assemble counter meetings at the same place to contradict the misstatements of the Government officials. News propagated by the Deputy Commissioner said that a meeting held at Ajnala district Amritsar on the 26th Nov. The Sikhs countered it was and was announced by the District Gurdwara Committee that a religions Diwan was assembled by the Akalis on same date and same place.\textsuperscript{507} On the 24th Nov. Punjab Government issued an order to prohibited meetings in Lahore, Amritsar, Sheikhupura districts etc. under the Sedition meetings act.

On 26th November there was held a meeting at Ajnala and the Government's position about the key affair, explained by the Deputy Commissioner. In the meeting S. Dan Singh Vachoa and S. Jaswant Singh asked the permission of Deputy Commissioner for

\textsuperscript{505} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{506} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 349.  
the exploitation of Sikh's position. But the Deputy Commissioner refused them. After it the Sikhs assembled their own diwan. The Deputy Commissioner reached at the place of diwan and ordered the police to assist S. Dan Singh, S. Jaswant Singh, Pandit Dina Nath, S. Teja Singh Samundri and S. Harnam Singh Zaildar, in holding not the meeting. On 26 Nov. 1921 on the plea that they were discussing a 'political question' which had been prohibited under seditions meetings Act.\textsuperscript{508} When the news of arrests reached Amritsar, the session of S.G.P.C. was being held at Akal Takht. After knew news of arrests of leaders the member of S.G.P.C. decided to adjourn the meeting and went to Ajnala to continue the proceedings of Diwan. Under the leadership of Sardar Kharak Singh, President of S.G.P.C. approximately 50 Sikhs reached Ajnala and held a diwan. The authorities declared the diwan illegal and immediately arrested its prominent members like, Sardar Kharak Singh, President of S.G.P.C, S. Mehtab Singh Bar-at-law, Secretary, Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, Manager of the Akali, Bhag Singh and Gurcharan Singh, Pleadars and Hari Singh of Jullundur.\textsuperscript{509} But this action of Police made the agitation more violent.\textsuperscript{510} The

\textsuperscript{508} The Akali, 29 November, 1921; The Civil and Military Gazette, 4 December, 1921; Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 117; Giani Partarp Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arhat Akali Lehar, pp. 134-35.

\textsuperscript{509} Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 117; Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 351.

\textsuperscript{510} The S.G.P.C. by a resolution called upon the Sikhs to hold religious diwan every where to explain the facts about the key's affair. A few days latter, S.G.P.C. advised the Sikhs to observe hartal and
Congress and the Khilafat Committee supported the Sikhs. On 27th Nov. a meeting was assembled by the Sikhs at Akal Takht and decided to elect a committee of Sikhs for the protest. Sh. Amar Singh of Jhabal as President, Captain Ram Singh as Vice President and Bhai Tara Singh, B.A. as Secretary of the Committee.\(^{511}\) After it meetings were held at Ajnala, in front of the Akal Takht and in Guru-ka-Bagh, where the leaders delivered lectures on the key affair and to protest against the high handed action of the Government. Speaker of meetings were arrested by the police. During that time Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal, acting President of S.G.P.C., Master Tara Singh, Jaswant Singh, S. Surmukh Singh, Dr. Gurbakhish Singh, Bhai Tara Singh and Bhai Kartar Singh were arrested.\(^{512}\) After it soon the agitation was spreading fast to the rural areas of the Sikh districts of Punjab. The Government was in a dilemma and thought to solve the questions of the keys. Other side Sikhs passed a resolution on 6 Dec. 1921 that the no Sikh should agree to any arrangement about the resolution of the keys unless and until all the Sikhs arrested in connection with the keys affairs is released unconditionally.\(^{513}\) Finally, the Government had

\(^{511}\) Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 117.

\(^{512}\) The Akali, 2 December, 1921; Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 136.

to withdraw before them. On 17 January 1922, the Sikh leaders were released unconditionally from the jails and on 19th January a diwan was held at Amritsar. In which the keys were handed over to Baba Kharak Singh, President of S.G.P.C. by the district Magistrate, and a gazetted officer of the Punjab Government.514 When Mahatma Gandhi got this news, he sent a message to Baba Kharak Singh of congratulations, that the Sikhs had won the first decisive battle of India’s freedom against the Government.515

After the tragedies of Nankana Sahib and key’s affair Government adopted a new policy to crush the Gurdwara reform movement because the movement progressed very well day by day. Retired Army persons were recruiting in movement in wide level, and propagating the way of sacrifices for the freedom of Gurdwaras. One side while it was promising support in settling the Gurdwaras and the kirpan question, other side, at the same time it was issuing orders to its officers in all the 13 districts on 6 March to break up the Akali bands who were declared to be disturbing the public tranquility in the Central Punjab.516 Military force were posted in the central districts in order to support the police in dispersing the

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516 Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morchian Da Itihas, p. 140.
Akalis and effecting their asserts. Lists were prepared of all the black turbaned Sikhs and their leaders were marked out for arrest or harassment by the police. Akalis were arrested at Amritsar, Sialkot, Lyallpur, Bughiana, Sarhali, Sukar Chak Verka, Fatehgarh, Marhana, Chabba, Ghawind, Hudiara and Hundreds of other places, mostly from religious diwans. After this action Government thought that the movement had been crushed but other side the whole Sikh Community was expressing its feelings of hatred for foreign rule through its struggle for the reform of Gurdwaras is borne out by the statements of other Akalis leaders.

After the Nankana tragedy, serious conflict between the Akalis and British Government was at Guru-Ka-Bagh. There were two Gurdwaras one sacred to Guru Arjan Dev ji and the other to Guru Teg Bahadur ji, it was a famous place of the Sikh religious worship situated at a distance of thirteen miles from Amritsar in the Ajnala Tehsil. That time an Udasi Sadhu was appointed to take care of the Gurdwara by the Sikh Sangat. After him, his

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517 The Gurdwara of Guru Arjan Dev ji was setup in the honor of the Guru's visit by Baba Ghuka, after whom its name was changed to Ghukewali. After Ghuka, his descendents continued incharge of the place, then it was Guru-Ka-Raur, when Guru Teg Bahadur Ji came here, then it was again changed into Guru-Ka-Bagh as a garden was planted on the bare, infertile land and its whole outlook was made beautiful. See for more details, Proceedings Home Political, No. 914/KW/1922 (N.A.I.); G.A. Sundraram, Guru-Ka-Bagh, Satyagrah Madras, 1923, p. IX; Khushwant Singh, History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, p. 203 and Giani Partap Singh, Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar, p. 156.

descendents continued as the care taker of the Gurdwara. Mahant Sunder Das was incharge of the Gurdwara. He was an immoral, profligate character and used to indulge in illicit relations. It is alleged that he has been leading an immoral life and kept mistresses.518 At the objection of the Sikh Sangat, on 31 Jan. 1921, some Sikhs under the leadership of Sardar Dan Singh Wichhoa sent to Guru-Ka-Bagh by the S.G.P.C., with a view to Persuading the Mahant to mend his way. The Mahant agreed to do so and he decided to marry one of his own mistresses and also agreed to work under the supervision of the former body of eleven members appointed by the S.G.P.C..519 On Feb. 8, 1921, Mahant Sunder Das and his mistress Isro took amrit at the Akal Takht and changed name Sunder Das to Joginder Singh and Isro to Gian Kaur. According to the sikh rites they were married to each others on the same day.520

But after the Nankana Sahib tragedy, when large numbers of Akalis began to be, arrested all over the province, by the

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518 According to an eye witness, the Mahant was keeping two mistresses; Isro and Jagdei, and had illegitimate relations with other women of bad reputation, evidence of Zaildar Harnam Singh, _Akali Te Pardeshi_, 30 October, 1922.
519 Evidence of Bhaat Jaswant Singh in the case crowns NSB Mehtab Singh and others; _The Civil and Military Gazettee_, 9 September, 1922.
131 Teja Singh, _Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening_, p. 397; Sohan Singh Josh, _Akali Morchian Da Itihas_, p. 157; Ruchi Ram Sahni, _Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines_, p. 117.
Government Sunder Das, like other Mahants encouraged him. He ignored the agreement and began to show a stiff and characterless attitude once again he indulged in the old ways of life. On noticing the change in Mahant's attitude, the S.G.P.C. was obliged to take charge of the Gurdwara in his own hands on 23 Aug., 1921 and Guru-ka-Langar, was started permanently. After it the Mahant therefore, had to re-enter into a compromise with the Sikhs. In Feb. 1922, he agreed to abide by the decision of three arbitrators, Sardar Teja Singh, Sumundri, Sardar Gurcharn Singh, and Sardar Bal Singh about his maintenance. The Mahant was offered the following terms under the new compromise. (i) a Salary of Rs. 120 per month and (ii) a house at Amritsar. Both the terms he accepted. But as a result of the repressive policy of the Government towards the Gurdwara reform movement he went back again on his words.

On August 10, 1922, Mahant Sunder Das lodged a complaint with the Government, that the Sikhs were stealing his property, i.e. Kikar from the land attached to the Gurdwara. It is vary surprising to know that a dry Kikar tree was described as 'Property' to enable the Mahant to file a complaint with the local police.

523 Proceedings Home Political, No. 914/1922 (N.A.I).
Moreover, even since the occupation of the Gurdwara by the Sikhs, wood from the land attached to it had been used for the community kitchen and Mahant had not previously raised any objection. Five Sikhs Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Santa Singh, Bhai Labh Singh, Bhai Labh Singh Mate Nangal and the other one arrested and hurriedly convicted of theft and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 50 each.\footnote{Proceedings Home Political, No. 914/1922 (N.A.I); Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 159.} According to Giani Partap Singh, Josh, Sohan Singh and Teja Singh the Akalis were arrested on the basis of the confidential diary of Bedi Brij Lal, under orders from Mr. Dunnett the Deputy Commissioner, not on the complaint of Mahant.\footnote{Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 399; Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morchian Da Itihas}, p. 157; Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, p. 159.}

The arrest and conviction of the Sewadars spread like wild fire throughout the countryside. The S.G.P.C. took up the challenge. The Government action was considered on interference in their religion as the Kikar fire wood was being taken for \textit{Guru-Ka-Bagh langar}. To protest against the official high handedness and to assert their right to chop wood for the \textit{Guru-Ka-langer}, the Jathas of five Akalis each started marching towards the Guru-Ka-Bagh.\footnote{Proceedings Home Political, No. 914/KW/1922 (N.A.I); Josh, Sohan Singh, \textit{Akali Morchian Da Itihas}, p. 158.} Other side the Sikh leaders held a meeting at Guru-Ka-Bagh on 22
August in contravention of the order under seditions meeting act. The police dispersed the meeting and arrested the leaders including Mehtab Singh and Master Tara Singh.527 This was a challenge to the committee and its authority and a signal for a serious clash between the Sikhs and the Government.

After it the Sikhs jatha moved in large numbers towards Guru-Ka-Bagh. The Jathas first took an oath at Akal Takht to remain non-violent, and then proceeded towards Guru-Ka-Bagh.528 A large scale arrest of the Sikhs commenced and by 24th Aug., 180 arrested had been made and on the 25th the total reached 210.529 When the arrests and long sentences could not overawe the Sikhs and according to official estimates, the number, of Sikhs had swelled to 4000 by 28th August. After it the Government gave up the policy of arrest and adopted a new policy. The Government began to use lathis to disperse the Sikhs.530 On the very first day of his arrival 100 Sikhs were severely beaten up, their hair pulled and they were thrown into ditches.

From that time onward, the policy of beating the Sikhs in Guru-Ka-Bagh was followed most vigorously. The Sikhs, too, began

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528 *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 949/1922 (N.A.I).
529 Ibid.
530 *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 949/1922 (N.A.I).
to pour in from all directions of the Province at Guru-Ka-Bagh. Police pickets were placed upon the roads leading to Guru-Ka-Bagh to turn back parties as they arrived, and arrangements were also made to stop Jathas travelling to Amritsar by rail or roads. In spite of these restrictions, every day at the Akal Takht, a Jatha of the Sikhs took a solemn vow to go for Sacrifice, and under all circumstances to remain nonviolent in word and deed. Another Jatha, of a Smaller Size, would go everyday from the Gurdwara of Guru-Ka-Bagh to assert their right of chopping wood for the Guru's Kitchen. These Jathas were beaten mercilessly with lathis, Jack-boots, and fists. By an order of Mr. J.M. Dunnet, the District Magistrate of Amritsar, the Akali gatherings at Guru-Ka-Bagh were declared unlawful assemblies. The Administration had got her work, as dragging the Prostrating and injuring Sikhs by their sacred hairs and throw them into muddy ditches or leave them in the fields. The Sikhs with their heads bending forward were singing, "Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru Ji, Satnam, Satnam, Satnam Ji". The beatings were mostly directed at the Joints, heads backs and private parts, so that the Sikhs might be soon disabled or made unconscious. No Sikh, who went forward to suffer,

531 Teja Singh, Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening, p. 40.
flinch from a blow when it was struck. The inhuman beating, kicking, dragging, ducking and throwing into the fields went on as usual on every Sikh Jatha. There was no act, no look of defiance. This was the usual practice day after day.

According to Sh. Teja Singh, "out of about 1300 persons, more or less, who received beating, 269 cases of injuries above the trunk have been reported by Col. Gulab Singh, the medical officer, incharge of the hospitals, 300 cases of injuries on the frontal part of the body and 60 cases of injuries of testicles. There were 79 cases of brain injuries, 19 cases of injuries to premium and to teeth. There were 158 Contused wounds, 40 cases of urine trouble, 8 of incised wounds, 2 of Punctured wounds, 9 of fractures and 2 of dislocations, an alarming total of 953 cases."\(^{534}\)

The various newspapers criticized the brutal policy of the Government, in India and England. The Indian National Congress appointed a committee of enquiry, which landed the Sikhs and censured the police for the atrocities by it.\(^{535}\) After it every day some 100 men offered themselves for arrest. The number of Sikhs arrested in connection with the Guru-Ka-Bagh, dispute swelled on the rate of same 1000 to fortnight. The events produced a profound


\(^{535}\) After 13th September, when the Governor paid a visit to Amritsar and impressed deeply with what he had heart from Mr. C.F. Andrews, the beating of Jathas was stopped and arrests began again. For further detail see, Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, p.172.
effect on all Sikhs and non-Sikh people. On two different day's two military pensioners Jathas each consisting of 100 military pensioners went out to court arrest. They were arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment. On one day the Nirmala Sadhus contributed 27 of their number to join the Jatha of that day.\textsuperscript{536} Besides those arrested at Guru-Ka-Bagh, scores of people were being arrested in the same connection in other parts of the country, so that by 17th Nov. the total number of arrests made amounted to 5605.\textsuperscript{537}

Finally, with the efforts of Government on 17 Nov., Sir Ganga Ram, C.I.E., a retired engineer took the land of Gurdawara of Guru-Ka-Bagh on lease from the Mahant and wrote to the Government that he did not require the protection of the police. He decided to allow the Sikhs to cut firewood from the garden. In the result, the Sikhs were allowed to cut wood for the Guru-Ka-Langar from the 18th Nov., 1922 onwards.\textsuperscript{538} The arrests ceased on the same day and 170 men, who were on trial, were released. After sometime in April 22, 1923 Government issued a proclamation in which all prisoners were realized.\textsuperscript{539}

\textsuperscript{536} G.A. Sundram, \textit{Guru-Ka-Bagh Satyagraha}, pp. XI-XII.
\textsuperscript{537} Teja Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening}, p. 436.
\textsuperscript{538} G.A. Sundram, \textit{Guru-Ka-Bagh Satyagraha}, p. XII.
\textsuperscript{539} Giani Partap Singh, \textit{Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat Akali Lehar}, pp. 275-278
The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha followed soon after the Guru-Ka-Bagh tragedy. The Maharaja of Nabha's dispute was with the Maharaja of Patiala, not with the Govt. of India. Conflicts between the Maharaja Nabha and his Prime Minister, Nar Singh Rao, sympathies with the nationalist and Akali movements were main causes of his abdication. He always sided with the nationalists as a member of the Council of viceroy. He rendered good service in the agitation over the wall of Gurdwara Rikab Ganj.

The British Government appointed Justice Stewart of the Allahabad High Court to inquire into the matter of Nabha-Patiala dispute. According to the official version of the circumstances leading his abdication. On 21 April 1923, submitted proposals to the Government of India to suspend his control over the administration of the state temporarily. On the morning of July 8, Colonel Minchin the A.G.G. (agent of Governor General) and C.M.G.(Chief Magistrate of Government) Ogilive, I.C.S. who was to act as an administration for two months, arrived at Nabha accompanied by troops and armored cars, he took control of Nabha.

administration and sent the Maharaja to Dehra Dun under military escort.\textsuperscript{541}

The forced abdication of the 'Akali' Maharaja of Nabha gave great impetus to the Akali movement. The S.G.P.C., the Akali and the nationalist leadership reacted sharply. The Sikh press continued to feel exercised over the victual deposition of the Maharaja of Nabha. The Akali dated 13 Aug., 1923 wrote: ‘The charges levelled against him are serious and it is necessary to rebut them, for silence will be taken to mean that they are well-founded.’\textsuperscript{542} Because Maharaja of Nabha had sympathies with the Akalis and Sikhs. The S.G.P.C. pledged full support to the Maharaja. On the 5th Aug., the S.G.P.C. unanimously passed resolutions criticizing the action of the Government and describing it as 'a side attack' on the Akali movement. The Sikhs went to observe the 9th of September 1923, as 'Nabha day'.\textsuperscript{543} The Sikhs of Nabha state organized Akhand Paths on the occasion. On such Akhand Path was at Gurdwara Gangsar in Jaito. The Nabha police, in their bid to arrest the Akalis, including the one reading the holy Granth Sahib, are alleged to have disrupted the Akhand Path. This

\textsuperscript{542} \textit{The Akali}, 13 August, 1923.
\textsuperscript{543} Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morchian Da Itihas}, p.271
incident greatly hurt the Sikhs' sentiments and a new morcha was launched.\textsuperscript{544} The S.G.P.C. decided to send daily Jathas to Jaito from the Akal-Takhat at Amritsar. In the starting Jathas of 25 members walked to Jaito every day. They were severely beaten and many of them were imprisoned. According to a contemporary, 'within a period of seven months this happened with no less than 5,000 Akalis pilgrims'.\textsuperscript{545} The main aims of the Jathas were to resume the interrupted \textit{Akhand Path} at Gangsar Jaito and to Suffer, in meek and humble spirit, all hardships and tortures inflicted by the proud officials, for the sake of establishing among the Sikhs birth-right for free congregation worship in all Sikh Gurdwaras.\textsuperscript{546} By an order dated 12 Oct., 1923, the Government of Punjab declared S.G.P.C. and S.A.D as unlawful bodies and 59 Akali leaders were arrested.\textsuperscript{547} The atrocities perpetrated on the Akali at Jaito evoked wide-spread sympathy. The Indian National Congress declared its full support to the Akali movement. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, K. Santhanam and A.T. Gidwani, who were members of the All India Congress Committee, joined the Akali Jatha. When they arrived at Nabha station, Pt. Nehru and his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{544} \textit{Proceedings Punjab State Archives}, No. 70 (Nabha Recrads), Patiala.
\item \textsuperscript{545} Ruchi Ram Sahni, \textit{Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines}, p.223
\item \textsuperscript{546} \textit{S.G.P.C. Communiqué} No 94, no dated; Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, p.74
\item \textsuperscript{547} Khushwant Singh, \textit{History of the Sikhs}, Vol. II, p. 209
\end{itemize}
Companions were arrested and sent to Nabha Jail. After it the S.G.P.C. decided to send a bigger Shahidi Jatha of 500 Akalis at Jaito on 21 Feb. 1924 to coincide with the third anniversary of Nankana tragedy.

After making preliminary arrangements, the S.G.P.C. decided to dispatch the Jatha on 9 Feb., 1924. Before its departure a Public meeting attended by about 30,000 people was addressed by Dr. Saif-Ud-Din Kitehlow and Pandit Dina Nath. The Jatha was exhorted by the Jathedar of Akal Takhat 'to remain perfectly non-violent in thought, word and deed'. When the Jatha entered the Nabha territory, it was challenged by the authorities and asked not to move ahead. But the Jatha did not observe the above order and continued to march. Mr. Wilson Johnston, gave the signal to open fire. Firing was opened on it for two minutes, causing 300 causalities including about 90 killed. According to the official report only 14 were killed and 34 wounded. The shooting aroused sympathy for the Akali cause throughout India and action was condemned by people at protest meetings, Passing resolutions and sending telegrams to the Secretary of State for India. Akali-te-

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551 *Proceedings Home Political*, No.180, 1924 (N.A.I.)
Pradesi and other Pro-Akali Papers held the Government of India responsible for the incident and demanded the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the facts. But the Government paid no heed to these protests. On the other side this incident did not discourage the Sikhs. Finally the administration of Nabha allowed bands of Pilgrims to proceed for religious worship to the Gangsor Gurdwara under the few conditions and Bhai Jodh Singh arranged with Mr. Wilson Johnston, the administrator of Nabha, for the completion of the Akhand Paths at Jaito. The first Jatha, consisting among others the Udasi and Nirmala Sadhus, left Akal Takhat under the leadership of Bhai Jodh Singh and arrived at Jaito on 21 July 1925. Another Jatha arrived from Delhi the same day. On July 27, 1925, more Jathas reached Jaito after being released from the Nabha bears and other jails. The deadlock finally ended with the Akalis completing their 101 Akhand Paths on 6 Aug., 1925. The Akalis won another battle.

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553. *Akali-te-Pradesi*, 25 February, 1924
554. They began to pour down in great numbers not only from the Punjab but also from other parts of the Country and even from the lands over-seas. In all seventeen jathas of 500 in the each were sent. After the first jatha, the others were only imprisoned and not fired at apart from the practical difficulties of accommodating the increasing number of Akali prisoners, there were equally important political considerations which compelled the Punjab Government to find a solution to the Jaito Problem. For a detailed account see, *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 67, 1924 (N.A.I.)
555. *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 120/III/1925 (N.A.I)
556. *Proceedings Home Political*, No. 112/IV/1926 (N.A.I.)
During the time of Jaito Marcha, a second front was opened at Bhai Pheru in Lahore, where the Mahant had resiled from an earlier agreement with the Akalis and charged them for trespass.\footnote{About the end of the 1922, the Mahant was persuaded to hand over the control of the Gurdwara and its property to the S.G.P.C. who in return guaranteed him a monthly salary 400 Rs. and certain other amenities. In first week of Dec., 1923 the Mahant broke the agreement on Dec. 4,1923, a room in an upper storey of the building attached to the shrine, which had been occupied by the Mahant was damaged by certain Akalis who removed a quantity of grain from it. The Mahant complained against the Akalis and make a claim at the property of Gurdwara. For further details see, \textit{Proceedings Home Political}, No. 15/I/1924 (N.A.I.) and Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morchian Da Itihas}, p.389} On the 2nd January 1924 the senior superintendent of police and the S.D.M. visited the spot, and arrested the Akalis. The total number arrested was 34.\footnote{Sohan Singh Josh, \textit{Akali Morchian Da Itihas}, p. 390.} The Sikhs launched a morcha. Troops of 25 Akalis began to present themselves for arrest every day at Bhai Pheru. Everyday Jathas appeared on the scene and demonstrated. The police took prompt action and made large scale arrests and gave long imprisonment. Up to first week of July 1925, 6157 Sikhs were arrested, out of which 2619 were sent to prison\footnote{\textit{Proceedings Home Political}, No. 15/I/1924 (N.A.I.)}. After it S.G.P.C. withdraw the decision and the morcha was ended.

When the movement was at peak attempts were made to solve the problem of management and control of the Gurdwaras and the shrines in various parts of the country in many times. The S.G.P.C. urged the Government to legalize the control of the committee over the Gurdwaras and the Sikh shrines. The Government's policy with
regard to legislative measures for the control of the Sikh shrines began by starting the Gurdwara Bill presented by the Government but under the some conditions the Sikhs did not accept it. As a result there was the postponement of Gurdwara Bill. Finally, when the British officers had filled all the Jails with Akali agitators, the movement were preceding unabated with no end in sight they had no recourse but to reopen negotiations with the Akalis. At the same time the Akalis, though apparently unaffected, were approaching the limit of their resources and were facing financial and other difficulties, they responded willingly to the official offer to negotiate. Under these circumstances in March 1924, General Sir William Birdwood Commander-in-chief, Northern Command, opened negotiations with the Akali leaders. General Birdwood entered into negotiations between the Akalis and Punjab Government with the help of Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Narain Singh\textsuperscript{560}. But he could not get success in it. But his efforts bore fruit later, when Sir Malcolm Hailey became Lieutenant Governor in May 1924. Hailey was a skilful operator. He kept up police repression against Akali passive resisters and at the same time opened negotiations with moderate elements among the Sikhs. He instructed the district level officials to organize Sudhar Committees in every district

\textsuperscript{560} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, p. 139.
containing Sikhs. He encouraged the officially sponsored Sudhar Committees to unite in promoting a Gurdwara Bill and to deprive the Akalis and their supporters of main objective in continuing the agitation.\textsuperscript{561}

Under these circumstances the Gurdwara Bill was presented, the detailed provisions of which had been discussed both with the Akali leaders in the Lahore fort Jail and the Government officials in Lahore and Delhi, before its introduction in the Punjab Legislative Council on 7 May 1925.\textsuperscript{562} The new measure was referred to a select committee which submitted its report on 20 June 1925.\textsuperscript{563} After a great deal of discussion between the Government and the Sikhs consequently the Sikh Gurdwara Bill was introduced in the Punjab Legislative Council, and passed and came into force on the 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1925.\textsuperscript{564} The Sikh Gurdwara Act placed the entire control and management of all historical Sikh shrines under the elected body, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee. The S.G.P.C. became apex power and an autonomous body of the Sikhs in 1925. Akalis had won their bitter struggle against the Mahants and the Government over control of their shrines. Throughout the Sikhs struggle for Gurdwara Reform, the Akalis

\textsuperscript{561} Latter dated 30 August, 1924, from Hailey to Sir Alexander Muddiman, Quoted in Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, p. 142. \\
\textsuperscript{562} Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect}, p. 143. \\
\textsuperscript{564} Proceedings Home Political, No. 120/III, 1925 (N.A.I)
remained non-violent despite the atrocities perpetrated on them by the Government and the Mahant. In the whole agitation it is estimated the 30,000 Sikhs had gone to jail and about rupees 15 lakh had been collected as fine from the people. About 400 lives were lost and the number of the wounded was about 2,000.\textsuperscript{565}

\textsuperscript{565} Khushwant Singh, \textit{History of the Sikhs, Vol. II}, p. 213