

Developing a Communist Identity: the case of Naujawan Bharat Sabha

Shalini Sharma
Keele University

'Politically' the materialist conception is close to the people, to "common sense." It is closely linked to many beliefs and prejudices (witchcraft, spirits etc.). This can be seen in popular Catholicism.¹ This statement by Antonio Gramsci suggests that Marxism could be viewed as a new type of Catholicism. It was a philosophy of praxis and as such adaptable and mutable. This article tells the story of the first organised response to the colonial state by the radical left in Punjab which by and large conforms to Gramsci's notion of common sense. It is an account of how communism was refashioned to appeal to a Punjabi audience, to solve their particular woes.

If any person is to be remembered that person is 'Caral Marks' (Karl Marx). He is the first man in the world who looked upon the whole history of the world with a new eye, and told the poor people of the world – 'You are being looted. Recover yourselves. You can cure yourselves. You are suffering from hunger. If you arise, roar and play the lion today, all mean fellows will take to flight today. Class struggle means SHRENIJANG.'²

This paper tells the story of the first organised response to the colonial state by the radical left in Punjab. It is an account of how communism was fashioned to appeal to a Punjabi audience, to solve their particular woes.

In the 1920s, Punjab saw a number of expressions of communist and socialist politics even if their potential danger was hugely exaggerated by the colonial state. Ghulam Hussain, a lecturer, was arrested during the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case in 1924. The Russian Revolution and 'Bolshevism' had gained wide coverage in the English and vernacular press while Punjabi soldiers returning from the trenches of the First World War reported the rumours they had heard about the new form of government in the Soviet Union, as had Muhajirs who had travelled across that land in order to fight against the British in Turkey. But the first organised focus of left politics in Punjab came with the formation of the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* in 1926. Future leaders of the left movement in Punjab were all involved in its activities and it is also the most widely remembered of the radical groups in the twentieth century. Its leader, Bhagat Singh, was immortalised as a Punjabi hero, transcending the petty factions that competed for the mantle of communism in the province.

A glance at the histories of the organisation indicates how much it has served as a symbol of identity for a variety of groups. An internet search for Bhagat Singh brings up thousands of hits. He is described as *Jat* hero and a Sikh nationalist because he was born into a Jat Sikh family; he is claimed by the reformist Hindu sect, the Arya Samaj, because he was educated in a school they established; nationalist historians celebrate him a national martyr; and he is venerated as a communist hero by each of the three largest communist groups in India.³ The fact that he was cremated with petrol provoked outrage because he had been denied the dignity of a religious send-off despite his own passionate atheism. Some commentators even spoke of erecting a temple at the site of his cremation.⁴

The Sabha does not conform to a stereotypical left movement - one that strictly adheres to Marxist doctrine, concentrates on organising workers, and has a committed cadre. Indeed, the colonial authorities were more inclined to categorise it as a terrorist outfit. However it is this very non-conformity which allowed it to represent the various strands of radical politics in Punjab. The group defined itself as an alternative to Gandhi and his Congress representatives in Punjab. It was also vehemently hostile to the increasingly ubiquitous politics of communalism in the province. Its politics were an interesting reflection of the contradictions between idealism and practical politics in leftist movements, strongly rooted in a particularly Punjabi world vision. Indian communists may have prided themselves on their internationalist identity; indeed it was their deep anti-parochialism which set them apart from the nationalist mainstream. However in order to articulate a politics that was intelligible and feasible, it was crucial for communists to engage with the cultural milieu and regional specificities of the particular localities in which they operated. Thus their quest for an alliance with the international working class had to be translated into a local idiom. Even more ironically, the young radicals who formed the Sabha were not drawn from the working classes but were students who attempted to represent something much vaster than themselves. And however much they denounced communalism, part of their appeal in a deeply religious society came from their identification with tropes and mores of the traditional Punjabi world. Masculinity and a willingness to bear arms were striking examples of such traits.

This paper will argue that the Naujawan Bharat Sabha represented the strongest force of nationalism during 1926 to 1931. Theirs was a nationalism that rested on imagined constituencies of the 'masses' even though their prime support base was the large student population of urban Punjab.

What follows is an account of the group's political history, which focuses on its interaction with, and interpretation of, the idea of communism. It describes what attracted individuals to the idea and what they themselves emphasised in their own propaganda. In a sense, the experience of the Sabha mirrored the peculiarities of nationalism in India. The young communists saw themselves as Indian, Punjabi and radical. This paper examines the interplay of these identities and the attempts made to popularise them as one coherent political approach. It also attempts to clarify how the group learnt its politics, how it extended this

politicisation, and how this amalgam of understanding came to constitute what the majority of Punjabis knew as communism.

The essay has three different sections. The first will examine who these individuals were and where they located themselves, both politically and socially. It has been argued by some commentators on 'third world' communism that individuals from elite classes are drawn to radical rhetoric as a viable yet romantic solution to society's ills.⁵ This idea will be scrutinised with reference to Punjabi radicalism. The second will discuss the group's desired goals. Were these utopian ideas or based on the reality embodied in the state of Soviet Russia? The last section explores the methods the group used to propagate their views. This involves both an examination of the violent methods which have for long defined the narratives of the Sabha, and also the pedagogy that imbued their propaganda and style of political persuasion. Where did their predilection for violence come from? Was it a 'martial' trait inherited from their Punjabi ancestors or was it simply identified as a successful medium of political persuasion?

But first of all some background on the Sabha. It was established in March 1926 by a leading luminary of the Punjab political scene, Dr Satya Pal, to 'educate young men, especially the students of the Lahore colleges, in extremist politics.'⁶ Naujawan Bharat Sabha literally translates as the Indian Youth Association, although it was also known as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. Its roots lay in a terrorist outfit, the Hindustan Republican Army that had been founded in U.P. by the Benares based Bengali veteran Sachindra Sanyal in 1923 and Dacca's Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee. This group had links with old Ghadr Party members⁷ - Sanyal had been jailed after trying to organise Ghadr in 1915 - and a network of revolutionaries who had ended up in the Andaman Cellular Jail. It was decimated soon after the police foiled an attempted train raid by its members, and all members bar a few were rounded up and jailed. The sole survivor of that group to escape arrest was Chandrashekar Azad who joined the new Sabha and became its commander-in-chief in 1928. Most of the members of the new group were students and young men who had been active in various political movements such as the Khilafat movement, the Akali movement and the Non-Cooperation movement in Punjab. Sohan Singh Josh was one of these men. Once a deeply religious man, he was politicised during the Sikh Akali movement which shook the cities of Punjab from 1920 to 1925,⁸ emerging from jail as a confirmed communist. He became a leading activist in the Communist Party and the *Kirti-Kisan* (Workers and Peasants) Party⁹ in the late 1920s and was approached by Bhagat Singh to help build the support base of the Sabha. While Josh expressed doubts over the efficacy of terrorism as a political method, he agreed to help fund the Sabha using communist party funds and became the leader of the movement in Amritsar. He also used the *Kirti*, the newspaper of the *Kirti-Kisan* Party, to propagate the Sabha's message. Kedar Nath Sehgal and Abdul Majid were two other communists who were active in the Sabha, but from very different backgrounds. Sehgal had belonged to the Hindu reformist sect, the Arya Samaj, while Majid's communism developed from his travels as a Muhajir across Afghanistan to the Soviet Union, and then his

involvement in union activity in Punjab. Members of the Sabha also forged links with other radical groups in Punjab. Veterans of the Ghadr movement, a group of Punjabi émigrés who had attempted to spark a mutiny during the Great War, and Babar Akalis, an extremist offshoot of the Akali movement that had tried to transcend the non-violent nature of the Akalis by attempting assassinations and dacoits in the Punjabi countryside, would address speeches organised by the Sabha. By working through these pre-existing radical networks, the Sabha's students leaders were able to generate funds to print revolutionary pamphlets. The Naujawan Bharat Sabha was a platform where, for a brief moment, communists, socialists and nationalists attempted to forge a politics based on their idea of Marxism. These ideas were not only theoretically foreign to the political milieu in the 1920s, but also since 1917, tied to one particular country, the Soviet Union. Yet the Sabha tried to translate the concepts into the language of Punjabi culture and identity.

The Sabha drew upon the deep disillusionment of a generation with the Congress under Gandhi. Most were students. Many of the leading activists had been radicalised in their teens by the non-cooperation movement but had become disillusioned with Gandhi when he abruptly called off the agitation after the deaths at Chauri Chaura.¹⁰ That Gandhi's actions deeply affected a whole generation of youth is shown in many available personal testimonies.¹¹ The Amritsar massacre, in 13 April 1919, was a poignant turning point in lives of the radicals. Martial law legislation that forced men of Punjab to crawl on the streets and be detained without reason also formed the memory of humiliation these young radicals identified as their own.¹²

Although they were students in the urban centres of Punjab, their roots were rural. Either they had been sent to the towns to gain an education, or their families had already been uprooted from their land and were seeking alternative careers in the city. Bhagat Singh's father, Kishen Singh was an insurance clerk. His comrade and future biographer, Ram Chandra, was the son of a small businessman and moneylender; while Sukhdev, who was to hang beside Bhagat Singh, was the nephew of a grain merchant. Two inferences can be drawn from the close rural ties that linked the group membership. Firstly it explains the ease with which this student group established links with peasant organisations such as the *Kirti-Kisan* movement. Secondly, their recent alienation from the land could have led to a romanticisation of a village idyll.

It could be argued that these young men were less driven by caste practices or rituals because they were predominantly Jat, used to eating in communally mixed groups and aware of the necessity of developing a secular politics. Their biographies also suggest a strong influence of the Arya Samaj; many were educated at DAV schools or came from Arya families.¹³ It is difficult to infer the political predilections of individuals of the group directly from Vedanta scriptures and principles constituting the Arya Samaj, but one of the principles of the Arya Samaj, which fit the practices of the group, was an abandonment of caste hierarchy. Another was the veneration of celibacy which was thought to help in achieving superhuman strength. Another was the importance placed on education and learning from teachers, or gurus, who had sacrificed their own

family lives in order to educate. Lala Hans Raj, the first principal of the Lahore DAV school served for two years without pay. These principles were embodied in the specific system of learning institutionalised by the Arya Samaj in the Gurukula school opened in 1903. The Arya Samaj practices enmeshed with the boys' received cultural practices could in turn influence their own practice of politics. Thus the gurukul system of learning was echoed in the relationship between certain influential teachers and the Jat and high caste students of the group. This practice is discernible in Sikhism for while the ten gurus venerated within the Sikh religion, were all high-caste Khatri, the majority of Sikhs belonged to a Jat lineage.¹⁴ The structure of the Sabha, in which an elite core group, controlled the activity of 'junior' members, has some interesting parallels with the *guru-shishya* relationship prescribed by the gurukul system. Thus the boys were far removed from the stereotypical Jats made infamous by colonial texts such as *Punjab Castes*,¹⁵ which spoke of sturdy agriculturalists ill disposed towards the world of books and learning.

One tradition within the historiography of radical politics looks for its explanatory framework to the social and economic roots of a movement. Individual biographies are searched to ascertain where the tendency to cast aside traditional political norms and propagate immediate transformation emerged.¹⁶ Useful to a certain extent, such studies ignore the power of ideas, discourse and pedagogy when learning a political perspective. The intellectual context in which radicalism was formulated needs to be considered.

Many of the young radicals converged at the National College in Lahore established by Lajpat Rai in 1921. Several biographies have stressed the role played by Jaychandra Vidyalankar, a charismatic lecturer who delivered inspiring treatises on Indian history, the French revolution and independence movements across the world.¹⁷ He singled out a few individuals such as Bhagat Singh, making them feel special, the chosen few, who were being educated to mark their stamp on history.¹⁸

Other revolutionary 'celebrities' also visited the college and spoke to the students. One was Bhai Parmanand, a revolutionary terrorist who had helped to found the Ghadr Party in San Francisco and had spent 5 years in Cellular Jail in the Andamans. Another whose visit inspired much anxiety among the British police was the Bengali Subhas Bose, who 'remind [ed] the teachers that the French Revolution was brought about by those who had gone and preached among the masses.'¹⁹ K.D. Sastri '...referred to the achievements of Lenin, Zaghul Pasha, Kemal Pasha and Mussolini in their respective countries and asserted that if the youths of India were organized they could do likewise.'²⁰ B.N.Dutt spoke to students about the stir caused by their compatriots in Bengal in 1907 and 1914,²¹ while Shamsuddin Hassan's speeches dwelt on the youth movement of China which he was reported to suggest '...had been responsible for the awakening in that country.'²² Another speech of Bose, delivered to five thousand students, exhorted them to think as free men and not slaves.²³

Students were encouraged to learn the history of resistance, nation formation, Mazzini and Voltaire, so as to link their own endeavours with this

revolutionary tradition. The agenda was a clear dismissal of all notions of Indian exceptionalism:

Now, it is for young men and women of India to decide whether you will stand aside and watch the humiliations that are being piled upon your countrymen day and night or whether you will shake off the lethargy and spirit of inaction ... To be more frank it shall be necessary for you to organize in small secret groups ... and devote yourselves to the study of revolutionary literature, which should include historical revolutionary movements in the different countries of the world, eg. Italy, Ireland, Turkey, China and Russia. A study of their history shall reveal to you how the struggle for freedom was launched and carried on in those countries. Then and then alone it shall be possible to disabuse your mind of the mischievous notion that the position of India is unique in the history of the world... this is a part of the propaganda of lies that the British and their henchmen carry on to keep us away from a true realisation of our position.²⁴

Writings and speeches such as these encouraged the young radicals to extend their political horizons beyond the borders of Punjab and India. Their history, they read, was part of the history of revolution throughout the ages. The fact that many called their attention to events in China and Ireland, which had challenged predominantly white colonial authorities, also lent a further legitimacy to the culturally distant notion of communism. Yet at the same time they drew on more local histories and familiar myths of Punjabi tradition. After all, many Punjabis believed themselves to have a long tradition of fighting against alien aggressors. Students had much to learn of this tradition.

Another refrain in the Urdu and Punjabi speeches - but one that was particularly dangerously seditious from the point of view of the British authorities - was of shame at Indian participation in the Great War. One pamphlet told the 'youth': 'You are looked down upon by the world; yes, you are the beggars in the bazaar of liberty.'²⁵ Ever since the Mutiny the British GOI had done much to promote Punjabi recruitment in the army.²⁶ Now Majid and his comrades stressed that Punjabis were degraded in the war.²⁷ By fighting, Indians had colluded with colonialism and the enslavement of yet more lives by the west. To be complicit with this extended subjection, he insisted, was a source of deep shame set against the few material gains enjoyed by families of troops who had fought for the King.²⁸ Majid implored them to '...wipe off this old brand - a brand which was put on our foreheads and which people read wherever we go. For this reason we should not participate in any war in future and should not render any sort of assistance.'²⁹ Thus the war, for which 340,000 combatant troops had enlisted in Punjab, was transformed into the primary reason for humiliation in the eyes of the young radicals a decade later.

Learning from popular practices of religion, the writers of the radical newspaper the *Kirti* tried to create new martyrs for their new nation by drawing on religious tradition. They wrote of a direct correlation between a nation's

prosperity and its respect for martyrs.³⁰ Here they were drawing on the notion that every action has a reaction, central to tenets of popular Hinduism. They also reiterated the religious roots of their political vocabulary in speeches referring to the Babbar Akali Movement:

I have come here not to learn propaganda work from you people but to learn how the brethren of Doaba attain martyrdom... the martyrs who staked for liberty all they had with them, mounted the gallows and laid down their lives for the sake of the ideal they had placed before them... This occurs in our minds and our leaders say that it was the Babbar Akali movement which made the Gurdwara movement successful.³¹

Speakers like Josh thus drew from the audience's own tradition of Sikh martyrdom as well as their recent history of revivalism and Akali rebellion³² to create a common history between this successful campaign against the British and their own communist appeal. Even Marx was placed by Josh in this pantheon of sacrifice. Josh told his story thus:

'Karl Marx started this movement. He had been passing his life in securing bread for the poor people. The German Government offered to give him the higher posts several times but he refused to accept them and said that in order to provide happiness in the world it was necessary that some people should be in distress. Happiness cannot prevail over the world unless some persons become martyrs for the sufferings of the people.'³³

Marx, in this fictional biography, is presented as a renouncer in the Hindu tradition;³⁴ he was a martyr figure who had sacrificed worldly inducements for the sake of society as a whole. The young Punjabi men with degrees but no employment and a growing resentment of the heavy-handed administration of the Punjab School could liken themselves to this caricature of Marx.

A police note describing the 'Bhagat Singh Day' events held on 30th June 1929, to mark the arrests of Bhagat Singh and his comrades illustrates the many ways in which these leaders celebrated a 'Punjabi' tradition of martyrdom: '...[A] poem was read by Autar Singh 'Azad' of the Kirti office, in which he said that they had read accounts of the love stories of Ranjha, Hir, Sohni and Farhad, but now they have seen with their own eyes the deeds of the two young men who were cheerfully sacrificing their lives on the flame of the country.'³⁵

This referred to love stories whose heroes had transcended the social mores of traditional Punjab in order to gain happiness. On this occasion these radicals elevated the lives of individuals who had become as immortalised as romantic counterparts to be presented to the youth of Punjab as examples to be emulated.³⁶ A note by a colonial official captured the unity of romance and radicalism in a sarcastic report on an intercepted letter thus, 'It describes a dream in which a girl, who is supposed to be in love with Randir Singh, says to him, 'You are one of the big revolutionaries.' This is a minor point, but shows

that Vir Inder's friends would consider it the height of bliss to be called a revolutionary by the girl they love.³⁷

These notes also draw attention to another important but neglected aspect of youth radicalism in the Punjab, namely the changing position of women in Punjabi society at large, and more particularly their place in the radical movement. Yet the discourse of radicalism remained overwhelmingly masculine in this era. Speeches and pamphlets were filled with references to manhood, male pride and the shame of emasculation. India was the motherland her young men were being implored to protect. Indeed, the manly virtues of strength and chivalry were even contrasted to the apparently feminine wiles of Gandhi. A leaflet written by the Bengali Sanyal and found by Punjab police, asserted:

The object of this party is to secure the independence of India by men of armed revolution... So long as India does not get her freedom so long as foreigners remain in charge of her welfare, so long as there is a spark of manhood left in the youth of India, this Revolutionary Party will continue to exist, and Government will be forced to have recourse to repressive measures.³⁸

Majid summed up this point most emphatically. 'We are men, and we shall make ourselves men and shall take a man's right from you.'³⁹ Here lies another significant contrast with the political norms popularised by Gandhi during this period: the conception of sacrifice that was upheld by these young men was eminently masculine and the British were to be fought on their own terms.

So what constituted a martyr who would sacrifice their youth for the greater good within this discourse? One of the first editions of *Kirti* painted a portrait of an ideal rebel happy to die for his country, unflinching whatever the punishment, a strong and resilient hero:

The martyr is far higher than the standard of his time, and his views are far loftier than those of other people. The people who are tightly bound with the chains of conservative views cannot understand his lofty flights (of imagination) and independent views. (They), therefore, subject him to tortures and sufferings, rain condemnation on him and boycott him. When (the source of) all punishments short of death is exhausted – he ... sticks to his own inclination and remains firm and unshaken in his views like a mountain – then comes his turn for execution. Does he become upset on hearing of his death? Does he begin to cry? Does he make entreaties to save himself? Never. He rejoices, merry-makes, leaps and jumps and sings smilingly.⁴⁰

One reason why Bhagat Singh achieved iconic status was because, as a brilliant theoretician, an ardent nationalist and a committed bachelor, undistracted in his opposition to the British Raj, he fulfilled the *Qualities of a District Organiser* (*NJBS*):

He must have the tact and the ability to guide and handle the men of different temperaments.

He must have the capacity to grasp political, social and economic problems of the present day with special reference to his Motherland.

He must be able to grasp the spirit of the history of India, with special reference to the particular civilization which India has evolved.

He must have faith in the mission and the destiny of a free India, which is to bring harmony in the different spheres of human activities, both spiritual and material.

He must be courageous and self-sacrificing without which all his brilliant qualities will have no real value.⁴¹

But the most important trait was the last one. 'Each member must be ready to devote his whole time for the association and risk his life if necessary - obey completely - not belong to any other association - to be punished with expulsion or death.'⁴² Bhagat Singh was hanged with two of his comrades on 23 March 1931 at the age of 24. He had entered the pantheon of Punjabi martyrs.

In any prophecy, the particular futures that are sought suggest relief from contemporary ills. The public propaganda of the leftist groups in Punjab painted a picture in which Marxism would solve all prevailing mores of Punjabi society. Their Marxism asserted the need for independence from colonial rule and a complete break with religion and unequal social relations. Yet it was expressed in their own vernacular idiom and viewed through the lens of their own immediate concerns. In contrast with Congress ambivalence about a social transformation upon India's independence, the left's definition of Swaraj explicitly included social upheaval.

Examples from across the globe – in particular the Soviet Union - supported this generation's dreams that revolution was vital and possible during this period, and, indeed, the ideal of emancipation was not far from the sub-continent. The Soviets hosted many Punjabis disillusioned with their fight for the Caliph during the end of the World War in universities at Moscow and Tashkent. They provided training in the art of revolution in all South Asian languages. These students then returned to Punjab with stories of revolutionary Russia, which epitomised the possible future that they were keen to establish as an alternative to British rule.⁴³ Equally explosive were the annual political conferences in the province where visitors such as Subhash Bose and Nehru retold their own experiences of Russia to audiences of young students and *Kisans*.

This glorification of Russia has led critics of the left to accuse it of having an alien and non-indigenous nature. However their sweeping categorizations of this so called 'foreignness' miss the crucial aspect of exactly what the Punjabi radicals considered worthy or significant about the Russian Revolution. Speeches by the radicals depicting the Soviet Union always alluded to home-grown and even Punjab-centric concerns. Russia, for them, was the art of the possible - it stood for what they were fighting for. The revolutionaries often deliberately emphasised the shared decadence of India and pre-revolutionary

Russia: 'The country which requires the doctrines that are being preached by Russia at this time is India - where people do not get full meals both times. Russia was in the same degraded condition. It cured itself. Russians are enjoying themselves today.'⁴⁴

'Russia' for them represented an ideal state of affairs where social relations had been re-ordered according to socially just principles. 'Every person who works has a right to eat. He who does not work has no right to eat bread. If peasants cease to work, this society can be destroyed today. Peasants alone can re-establish the society. Russian brethren realised that they would not let injustice be done to themselves. They brought about a revolution.'⁴⁵ In 1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, in Amritsar, Josh continued to press his predominantly *kisan* audience to aspire to the same and commented 'You should foster the desire that you have to destroy this system and establish that under which all may eat their fill.'⁴⁶ He described a land where everyone participated in a collective decision-making process, where a well-nigh one hundred percent literacy rate had been achieved and where each individual citizen felt responsible for the progress of their state. He continued 'The people of Russia created a revolution... Lenin clubs exist at every place, where they discuss how to make progress.'⁴⁷

However, even as they extolled Russia's achievements, radicals like Majid took care not to create the impression of a revolutionary paradise. Majid told an audience that during his travels in the USSR, he had 'asked one of them what was their condition in Tsar's time and whether they received bread. He said, 'It is a fact that we could get more bread, but we were degraded politically and economically. We have to starve now. But now we work for ourselves while previously we used to the same work for a capitalist. Previously we were kicked out even for a trifle mistake. None can now raise a finger at us. We are quite free politically. This very freedom keeps us alive.'⁴⁸ Here was a state in which each citizen was free, an idea which had an appeal to an audience aware of their own subjection under a white Raj.

In order to counter British propaganda that Russian imperialism was spreading into India through fifth columnists such as the young communist parties - itself a continuation of a fear of Russian expansionism in colonial discourse that far preceded the Bolshevik revolution - Sabha speakers attempted to depict a far more benevolent Russia:

It was said by some that Russia would, if the opportunity arose, try to conquer India, but Russia only wanted to establish the rule of the workers and peasants and destroy imperialism, if, with this object in view war was declared by Russia on India, Indians would welcome it because it would not prove harmful to them.⁴⁹

The Russia presented to Punjabi audiences was friendly and egalitarian and an ally against imperialism. It was also perceived as a society that shared the same moral convictions as India. However much these portrayals may be untrue, the fact that the radicals believed this version of the Russian Revolution and attempted to spread it in the Punjabi press is noteworthy.

The young radicals recognised their status as doubly bad. Not only were the Punjabis ruled by capital, but by foreign capital. Thus their speeches questioned the right of the British to demand land revenue, the payment of which left cultivators in deep economic insecurity. The key point, which many scholars have disregarded, is that these men upheld Russia as a metaphor for emancipation from illegitimate imperial rule. Majid, for instance, told his audiences that in Russia the government aided peasants in distress. 'Why, because there it is their own government. They feel the trouble of their own brethren,' in contrast to British India where, 'the English men don't realise this. They say the 'black' may suffer, but the English, white soldiers and judges should not suffer.'⁵⁰ They also point to the injustice of village patrols, forced labour and the charging for canal water supplies under British rule, that would have no place in a communist swaraj. These were basic practical grievances which touched the immediate lives of the peasants being addressed.⁵¹ Self rule of the people by their own people was one attribute the radicals stressed above all others in their portrayals of Soviet Russia.

A central theme in these writings and speeches was a concern for social reform within the revolutionary agenda. Revolution was not a translation of Comintern directives; its meaning for them can only be fully understood by situating it inside the reforming ideas current in Punjab at the time. Their attacks against the usurper Baniyas who profited from moneylending drew upon reformist ideas of caste equality. 'We wish to create a condition so that he who earns money from money and does not do any work himself, may be treated as a *chuhra* (sweeper). Today we have come to spread the movement of Bread. At this moment the principle question is Bread. A number of religions teach Unity but the question of Equality can be solved by bread only.'⁵² Thus, in a communist future, the moneylender class would become the *chuhra*, or, in more contemporary language, the *dalit*. An economic rather than cultural solution was put forward as the remedy of the 'untouchable' plight. This is also an indication of the emerging political voice of the large constituency of Dalits in Punjab during this period.⁵³ Any radical notion of democracy would have to address the issue of caste.

The group tried to translate the emancipatory language of Marxism into an idiom of a new religion, in order to make it comprehensible to a population predominantly religious. 'There are three communities in the Punjab. But this great man (Marx) remarked that all such divisions in the world were wholly wrong and false, and that there were only two classes and two religions in the world, and nothing else. He pointed out that one was poverty and the other richness.'⁵⁴

Punjab saw a number of communal riots during this period.⁵⁵ Against this backdrop of growing communal conflict, being a Hindu or Muslim or Sikh had a political significance. It was in such a context that the Sabha espoused this new 'religion.' It encapsulated nationalist ideas of Indian citizenship and the importance of secularism. 'The first and the foremost thing we need at the time is that we should produce Indians and make Indians... We invite all young men ... to join our Sabha but their religion will be a personal thing and shall have

nothing to do with the Sabha.⁵⁶ Also canvassed was the notion of the constant dynamism of religious ideas and beliefs. An article in *Kirti* described the new 'ism' thus: '(Religion) is in no way a touchstone for distinguishing between an infidel and a religious man. After discarding the old Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism and Jainism the people should accept the new 'ism' called Communism. After giving up religions that divide men and cause bloodshed among them, people should now advance towards this new religion, which is giving the message of liberty, brotherhood and equality.'⁵⁷ The young cadres also wished to define themselves as distinct from politicians who used communities in order to gain power. 'We differ with the persons who have control over the Congress. They are capitalists and are involving the people in different sorts of quarrels for the sake of their interests.'⁵⁸ This sentiment fit the fiercely secular bent of the Sabha which had lost much support because it disallowed its members active participation in any 'communal' organisation such as their potential allies, the Khilafatists and the Muslim Student Union.

Another central theme in the writings and speeches of Josh et al, was 'true democracy.' The *Kirti* newspaper regularly denounced the Legislative Government in Punjab and presented its own interpretation of 'real' democracy and the future it had conceived for the Indian nation:

Communists wish to establish a real democracy, but we think that a real democracy cannot be attained under the capitalistic social system, nay, both these things are contradictory to each other. What equal right can a poor man have as compared with a rich man at present? The fact is that the Parliamentary Government is maintaining Government by capitalists alone under the pretext of public opinion, because the poor and the masses can have no control over society.⁵⁹

This 'real' democracy was not based upon the Westminster model, nor was it simply a replica of the Soviet system. Stories of the American new world had inspired these young radicals. Many young Punjabis who had made it their home, venerated the nation where liberty, rights and freedom were written into the constitution.⁶⁰ Some of these, namely the Ghadr, had left the United States, disillusioned that these rights were not extended to themselves because of their alien citizen status, but they still perceived the value of constitutional rights to the people of the United States. This critique decried the already existing institutions that the British had put in place in 1920:

Councils have been opened. It is stated that your representatives go there. But in reality they are the representatives of their stomachs. ... We should form a government of peasants and workers. Why should a third person profit by our income.. If he wants to gain profit, he should plough with us.⁶¹

Here it was the enforced governance by an imperial power that was abhorrent, rather than the unrepresentativeness 'inherent' in a bourgeois democracy. As an article in the *Kirti* articulated, 'There can be some justification if political

leaders ask people in Europe and America to act upon the systems devised by these capitalists, because those countries have constitutions relating to capitalist classes and also constitutional bodies of capitalists. But in a country like India where foreigners hold a sway such things amount to madness.’⁶²

Radical speeches also warned against nationalist politicians who claimed to belong to the masses: ‘Almost all the big leaders have proved traitors to the people... Popular leaders should belong to the poor classes and should be free from selfishness.’⁶³ Thus the emphasis was on a greater emancipation of the masses themselves. Here Majid was asking the audience to rethink accepted notions of deference and representation, calling into question the legitimacy of nationalist leaders and attempting to inculcate political responsibility in the audience itself. Radicalism was creating a particular variant of communism: a communism that answered the needs of the Punjabi peasantry and was aware of the dangers of communal politics, a communism that addressed caste inequality and above all represented political freedom from colonial oppression.

For the leaders of the Sabha, violence and terror were their chosen methods of achieving this real democracy. Disillusioned with the passivity of Gandhi and factionalism within the Congress and Akali parties in Punjab, they advocated the use of violence in order to ‘awaken’ the masses. These were methods learnt from Bengali comrades, but they also carried the legitimacy of tradition in the ‘land of martyrs and fighters’. As has been shown above, self sacrifice was a crucial quality demanded by the group. It would, they believed, encourage further sacrifice from inspired onlookers. Of course, there was an element of elitism in this emphasis. By extolling feats impossible for all but a chosen few to emulate, it encouraged the ‘masses’ to defer to charismatic spokesmen and not act for themselves. Each speech resonated with the same appeal: sacrifice your life for the greater good. ‘If you Indians want to get something conceded, the future is in your hands. You can liberate the country by making sacrifices. I am sure if the country will ever be liberated it will be liberated by sacrifice on the part of young men.’⁶⁴

What did violence mean to these individuals? Firstly, they stressed the need to launch a war of words against non-violence as non-violence was seen as a dangerous pacification of political agency. Punjab was a province where martial values had traditionally been extolled and thus carried considerable legitimacy. Even the Congress stalwart Lajpat Rai had argued for the right to bear arms: in 1915 he wrote, ‘The whole world is free to keep arms and use arms. Every civilized nation is interested in giving a military training to her boys and citizens and in teaching them the use of arms and other military tactics... but the Indians of India cannot keep arms... Why? Because they are a subject people.’⁶⁵

In that same year, 1915, thousands of Punjabis, the Ghadr, had returned to their nation aiming to cause mutinies and fight the British using German military aid. Many were arrested and hanged for these deeds. Many were also venerated, again, for their sacrifice and heroism. Stories of the Ghadr added inspiration to an already frustrated and impatient youth in the 1920s. Gandhi had called off Non-Cooperation because of the Chauri Chaura massacre, much to the disbelief of those he had helped to politicise, especially in Punjab. A

revolutionary poster found by the Punjab police in 1933 blamed the political debacles of the recent past on the inherent weakness of Gandhian non-violence. Calling for a Jehadi attitude amongst the contemporary youth, the pamphlet eulogised Nana Sahib and other 'heroes' of the Mutiny, claiming that India failed to attain Swaraj not because it lacked the force but because it lacked the ferocity of its enemies. It called upon its readers not to forget the lessons of the past and urged them to be ready for 'Jehad'. It asked them to 'come forward to die, while dying kill your enemies and kill well.'⁶⁶

The propaganda also attempted to make a distinction between individual terrorism and the need for a ready-armed response to colonial provocation. Individual acts of terrorism had also provoked a sentiment of resistance in the press and popular culture during the early part of the century in Bengal, from where the radicals of Punjab drew inspiration and training. Members of the revolutionary nationalist groups of Bengal such as Jugantar and Anushilan taught the Punjabi radicals the arts of bomb-making, strategic planning and the levels of secrecy required to maintain a terrorist outfit.⁶⁷ Violence was a method that appealed to young men frustrated by a politics of mendicancy of Congress moderates and the stop-start tactics of Gandhi. It identified the enemy and preached its elimination. Despite the more subtle interpretations of the left's uses of violence in this period in Punjab, it is undeniable that it was a simple response to what was perceived as the ills and humiliation suffered by the natives of Punjab. Whether centrally directed by party ideologues or spontaneous acts of terrorism, 'terrorist outrages' did indeed occur during this period in Punjab. Between 1928 and 1932, the Punjab government recorded no less than thirty-six 'outrages'. These included booby traps, tampered telegraph wires and armoury raids.⁶⁸ Groups such as the 'Bomb Party' threatened revenge for the alleged atrocities committed by Government, and threatened to murder the magistracy and the police.⁶⁹

However the strategy of violence signifies two recurring themes which persist in the politics of the left today. For members of the Sabha, violence was the only political method and mode of resistance appropriate for groups cast outside the sphere of acceptable, constitutional politics. They hoped that the examples of martyrs such as Bhagat Singh would encourage greater participation from boys wishing to be like their hero and involve themselves more fervently in the campaign to oust the British. That they were not wrong in this assumption is suggested by an informer, who warned of such a process taking place at a meeting in which 'Ram Kishen, President of the Sabha moved a resolution appreciating the 'self-sacrifice, sincerity and bravery' of the Assembly bomb throwers and exhorting the young men to learn a lesson from their virtues. The gentleman who seconded the resolution warned the government that the imprisonment of Bhagat Singh would not end the youth movement but would rather cause hundreds of other Bhagat Singhs to appear.'⁷⁰ This seems not unreasonable as even the Chief Secretary of the Government of Punjab noted that agitation 'rose to its greatest height' in the months preceding the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, suggesting that 'the inevitable result of the canonisation of these criminals was to arouse in the minds of many

young men a passionate desire to emulate their example and this desire provided the remnants of Bhagat Singh's party with an abundance of recruits.⁷¹

On a much more strategic level, such propaganda expressed the desire to militarise Punjabi men in order to effectively combat the British. This is clearly outlined in an article written in 1931:

In order to prepare for armed rebellion, vigorous struggle must be made against the theory of non-violence and the necessity has to be explained that Imperialist occupation cannot be removed without armed rebellion and that it is an essential and indispensable thing. This means that the workers and peasants should be armed. It means that work should be done in army (sic.) and that it should be made an ally and protector of the workers and peasants instead of the pillar of imperialism, and lastly it means that military training should be given to the labouring masses who, in future, will make a Red Army in India.⁷²

Here organised militancy was legitimate because of the success of the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union. References to the victorious Red Army accompanied appeals to Punjabi martial traditions. Both were preparatory measures rather than invocations for immediate violent retribution. This discourse also challenged the societal norms propped up by the colonial state and also politicians who were seen as collaborating with the administration. An alternative code of morality was being put forward here, in which a radical new conception of what was 'good' and 'decent' was being tentatively articulated. Here was another type of non-cooperation or non-collaboration more specifically relevant in the context of Punjab. Bhagat Singh himself was conscious of the contingency of violence as a method suited only to certain contexts: 'Use of force justifiable when resorted to as a matter of terrible necessity: non-violence as policy indispensable for all mass movements.'⁷³ It could thus be concluded that this period in the Punjab was seen as a time of terrible necessity, a time when the conventional means of politics needed to be violated, but also a time when the use of violence was being politically debated, championed and reworked in order to fit the specific needs of anti-imperialist politics in Punjab.

So at this level of propaganda, violence was a positive and essential component of an alternative political programme. The group's Marxism adopted violence and terrorist methods because of the Indian context in which a powerful movement revolving around non-violence seemed to have failed. These young men decided that Gandhi had failed because he advocated non-violence. They believed that an inherently violent state such as British India could only be successfully defeated by violence. Terrorism was a just strategy against terror.

This reworking of the 'moral economy' was also evident in name-calling of the 'capitalists', as Majid stressed:

Does the labourer want to strike unreasonably? No. Never. The labourer does want to get work and pass his life but the

capitalists... whose business is it to commit *dacoities* in the open daylight and not to do any work wish to employ the labourers and derive unlawful gain from their labour of wages. Unite together... and give such a blow on the face of the capitalist that his teeth may fall out. Take your bread from him. We workers are described as *dacoits* and *badmashes*, but none calls that capitalist a *dacoit* who indulges *badmashi* day and night and thinks out crooked and deceitful moves to swallow and exploit the labour of the workers. It is my belief that so long as this capitalistic system exists in the world, no evil can be obliterated from the world.

Capitalists were now the *badmaashes* (bad characters) and *dacoits* (armed robbers): 'This very capitalism is responsible for evil deeds.'⁷⁴ This critique of capitalism in the province saw it as a total and inescapable system, one that had distorted the nature of political engagement and ways of judging right from wrong.

Where did labour figure in the speeches and writing of the left in this period? The fact that representing labour was not inevitably the domain of the left was clearly illustrated during this period of Punjab's history. As the Royal Commission of Labour of 1928 showed, the colonial state, as well as social reformers, competed very effectively with the Sabha to be spokesmen for such organised labour as existed in this period. For the Sabha, workers were essential within their ideological make-up; workers were the necessary *raison d'être*. However it is significant that the major outrage for which Bhagat Singh was arrested and hanged was the bombing of the Indian Legislative Assembly on 8 April 1929, on the very day that the assembly was to pass two acts that directly affected labour; the Trades Disputes Bill, which would prevent strikes and the Public Safety Bill, which would prevent labour leaders from abroad entering India. So they were undoubtedly aware of issues concerning labour, but in a pedagogical and symbolic manner rather than a more conventional union-based politics. Perhaps this identification with the cause of workers was more fantastical than practical and part of the created identity of the young radical, but it led Bhagat Singh to his arrest and eventual death.

Another explicitly pedagogical strategy was the opening of a Workers' School in 1931.⁷⁵ Here, visiting lecturers taught various subjects designed to politicise a small group of Punjabis who in turn would spread the need for economic and political emancipation. Many Punjabi radicals had themselves learnt revolution at the University of Toilers in the East in Tashkent, and so this approach - it seemed to them - had great effectiveness. However, it also fit in with the Leninist idea of a strong effective cadre-based vanguard that would direct the public it represented to carry it to power. Ram Kishen wrote in *Milap* '...it is necessary to produce a party of trained *parcharaks* and *nazims* (preachers and teachers). For this purpose a few comrades met and decided that a centre be opened in Lahore for giving education and training of socialism to the people in labouring classes in particular. ...we also appeal to *Mazdoor*,

Kisan and Youth *Anjumans* to recommend young men who may be fit for admission in the 'home' and to send their names.⁷⁶

The different forms of strategy advocated by the body all fell under the aegis of pedagogy. Bombs were thrown to awaken the masses and speeches were made to impart truth. It was felt that the audience could change through the impact of words, as the students had themselves.

Conclusion

This essay has shown that in Punjab from 1926 to the early 1930s, a particular group deployed 'communism' in a variety of complex and shifting ways. First and foremost, they expressed their political identity as Indian and Punjabi in a colonial state. The radical Sabha was the most articulate vehicle of nationalism during this period of Punjab's history. It changed the contours of nationalist demands in the province and gave the nation its most celebrated martyr. It admired and held up Bolshevik Russia for emulation, but the goal of this discourse was to bring national emancipation and not Comintern rule. Its adamant secularism was a response to communal politics, not a borrowed dogma. It challenged Gandhi and his methods during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Both the youth of the Sabha and Gandhi fought for independence for India but their visions, means and self perceptions sharply differed. The Naujawan Bharat Sabha promoted a cult of masculinity, violence and spectacular action against the coloniser. Thus theirs was a communism at variance with the globally dominant Soviet example and a nationalism at variance with the dominant discourse of nationalism in India.

[**Acknowledgement:** I first presented this paper to the Punjab Research Group in October 2003. I would like to thank its members, especially Pritam Singh, and Simon Boughey, Joya Chatterji, and Samira Sheikh for their invaluable feedback]

Notes

¹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 396. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

² Speech by Josh made on 29/9/1928, Government of India (henceforth GOI), *Meerut Conspiracy Case Prosecution Exhibits*, (henceforth *MCCPE*), pp. 44-49. Teen Murti Memorial Library (henceforth TMML).

³ The three tendencies are the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

⁴ *Vir Bharat*, 26th March 1931.

⁵ Eg. See Robert A. Scalapino, 'Communism in Asia: Towards a Comparative Analysis' in *The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements*, ed. Robert A. Scalapino, (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965).

⁶ Home Political File (henceforth HPF), 130/30, National Archive of India (henceforth NAI).

⁷ Puri, H.P. *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation, Strategy*, (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983).

⁸ In 1920, 175 Sikhs formed the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee to gain control over the management and revenues of all Gurdwaras. The Akali Dal (Army of the Immortals) was the activist wing of this movement. See Fox, R.J., *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making*, (California: 1985).

⁹ In the late 1920s communist party activists formed a mass forum, The Workers and Peasant Party, in which they could legally operate.

¹⁰ Twenty two police men were burnt alive in a police station in *Chauri Chaura*, Gujarat, following Non-Cooperation agitation in 1922.

¹¹ See Shri Ram Bakshi, *Bhagat Singh: Patriot and Martyr* (New Delhi: 1990), Bipan Chandra, 'The Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920s,' in *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*, ed. Bipan Chandra, (London: Sangam, 1996), Comrade Ram Chandra, *Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (H.S.R.A)* (New Delhi: 1986), Manmathan Gupta, *Bhagat Singh and his Times* (New Delhi: 1977), Max Harcourt, 'Revolutionary Networks in North Indian Politics, 1907-1935' (D.Phil., Sussex, 1973-1974), Sohan Singh Josh, *My Meetings with Bhagat Singh and Other Early Revolutionaries* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1976), Kamlesh Mohan, *Militant Nationalism in the Punjab, 1919-1935* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), Yasapala, *Yashpal Looks Back: Selections from an Autobiography with a commentary by Corinne Friend* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1981).

¹² 'Martial Law Ordinance, 1919'. Ordinance Number 1 of 1919 issued on 14 April 1919.

¹³ See fn. 11 above.

¹⁴ See McLeod, H., *Sikhism*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997).

¹⁵ Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes, The Chapter in the Census Report of 1881 on 'The Races, Castes and Tribes of the Panjab*, pp.38-97.

¹⁶ Donald S Zagoria, 'Asian Tenancy Systems and the Communist Mobilization of the Peasantry,' in *Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia*, ed. J W Lewis, (California: Stanford University Press, 1974).

¹⁷ Gupta, *Bhagat Singh and his Times*, p.82.

¹⁸ A good description of the literature read by group members is given by Manmathan Gupta 'He insisted that we should read books which were against revolutionary ideas. So we read all types of books, especially books in which the tyranny of the British regime, the French regime and the Dutch regime were recounted. Then we read the history of revolutions.' Interview of Manmathan Gupta, 28/8/1974, S104, Cambridge South Asia Study Centre Archive.

¹⁹ Director of Intelligence Bureau (henceforth DIB) Weekly Report, 12/1/28, L/PJ/12/59, Oriental and India Office Collection, London (henceforth OIOC).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ DIB Weekly Report, 31/10/29, L/PJ/12/60 OIOC.

²⁴ DIB Weekly Report 7/11/29, L/PJ/12/396, OIOC.

²⁵ HPF 168/1930, NAI.

²⁶ Punjabi loyalism was seen as the bedrock of the empire. See Tan, Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society an Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, (London: Sage, 2005).

²⁷ Speech by Majid, 24/2/1928, *MCCPE*, 1929-1933, pp. 1-3, (TMML).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Copy of the speech delivered Josh, 16/12/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, GOI, *MCCPE*, pp.52-55. TMML.

³¹ Speech by Josh, 20/7/1928, at Mahalapur, GOI, Ibid., pp.28-36, TMML.

³² Sohan Singh Josh, *My Tryst with Secularism* (New Delhi: Patriot, 1991), p.19.

³³ Speech by Josh 18/8/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, *MCCPE*, pp.37-38, TMML.

³⁴ Louis Dumont has defined renunciation as a stage of life when a man can become dead to the social world and escape the interdependence that society demands. Dumont, L., *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p.184.

³⁵ HPF 130/30, NAI.

³⁶ HPF 266/29, NAI.

³⁷ HPF 375/25, NAI.

³⁸ DIB Weekly Report 7-1-25, L/PJ/12/220, OIOC.

³⁹ Copy of the speech by Majid on 29/9/1928 at Lyallpur *MCCPE*, pp.49-52, TMML.

⁴⁰ Kirti, (Gurumukhi), December 1926, *MCCPE*, TMML.

⁴¹ HPF 375/25, NAI.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ HPF 44/79/35, NAI.

⁴⁴ Speech by Josh on 5/8/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, *MCCPE*, pp.35-36, TMML.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Speech by Majid 18/8/1928, *MCCPE*, pp.39-42. TMML.

⁴⁹ DIB Weekly Report, 21/3/29, OIOC.

⁵⁰ Speech by Majid 13/5/1928, GOI, Ibid., pp. 17-18, TMML.

⁵¹ DIB Weekly Report 21/3/29. OIOC.

⁵² Speech by Josh made on 26/5/1928 in Jullunder, GOI, Ibid., pp.24-26, TMML.

⁵³ See Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religion as Social Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁵⁴ Speech by Josh on 29/9/1928, GOI, *MCCPE*, pp.44-49, TMML.

-
- ⁵⁵ *Indian Statutory Commission, Volume I Survey*, HMG Stationary Office, (London: 1930), pp.27-28.
- ⁵⁶ Speech by Majid made on 15/5/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, GOI, *Ibid.*, pp.18-20, TMML.
- ⁵⁷ *Kirti*, (Urdu), August 1928, GOI, *Ibid.*, p.84, TMML.
- ⁵⁸ Speech by Majid made on 15/5/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, GOI, *Ibid.*, pp.18-20, TMML.
- ⁵⁹ *Kirti*, (Urdu), August 1928, GOI, *MCCPE*, p.84, TMML.
- ⁶⁰ HPF 375/25, NAI.
- ⁶¹ Speech by Majid 13/5/1928, GOI, *MCCPE*, pp. 17-18, TMML.
- ⁶² *Kirti* (Gurmukhi) June 1928, GOI, *Ibid.*, p.9, TMML.
- ⁶³ Speech by Majid made on 15/5/1928 at Jallianwala Bagh, GOI, *Ibid.*, pp.18-20, TMML.
- ⁶⁴ Speech by Josh made on 24/2/1928 at Lahore, *MCCPE*, pp. 3-9, TMML.
- ⁶⁵ Lajpat Rai, *Lala Lajpat Rai: writings and speeches, 188-1928*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: 1966), Article written in 1915, p.56.
- ⁶⁶ DIB Bureau Weekly Report 18-5-33, L/PJ/12/392, 1933. OIOC.
- ⁶⁷ Harcourt, 'Revolutionary Networks in North Indian Politics, 1907-1935'.
- ⁶⁸ Fortnightly Report May 1932, HPF, 18/5/32, NAI.
- ⁶⁹ DIB Weekly Report 27-3-30, L/PJ/12/389, 1929/1930. OIOC.
- ⁷⁰ DIB Weekly Report 27/6/29 L/PJ/12/60, OIOC.
- ⁷¹ L/P&J/12/397, OIOC.
- ⁷² Extracts from *Mazdoor Kisan* (Amritsar), *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ Singh, *Why I am an Atheist*. Delhi: Shahid Bhagat Singh Research Committee, 1930. Reprint, nd.
- ⁷⁴ Speech made by Majid on 29/9/29 in Lyallpur, GOI, *MCCPE*, pp.49-52.
- ⁷⁵ HPF 31/III/1931, NAI.
- ⁷⁶ L/P&J/12/300, OIOC.