WAVELL’S STUPID SIKHS : Poor Sikh Leaders at Partition i.e 1947

Without any qualm it can be accepted that the Sikhs are one of the most enterprising and mobile nations with myriad qualities. They have excelled in the realms of agriculture, army, education, medicine, engineering, business and industry. B.S.Goraya in an in-depth study of the partition process has focused on leaders who were at the helm of Sikh affairs at that crucial turn in history. The writer has tangible evidence to corroborate blatant naivety of the Sikh leaders and dissembles political handling of grim issues by them using very harsh but justified adjectives.

1947 was the year when vultures had devoured with great relish a rare meal, the human flesh. Bearing brawny human bones in their lusty jaws, dogs roamed freely in the land of five rivers. Punjabi blood deluged the gutters of Lahore and Amritsar. This year of madness witnessed the largest ever migration in human history. The magnitude of the massacre and its brutality can be judged from the fact that the modesty of over 2 lac Punjabi women was defiled.

We have' enjoyed the fruits of freedom for half a century now. On their part the Sikhs have excessively paid the price for 'freedom'. The Sikhs lost nearly 2 lacs community members and were deprived of their large estates, farms, spacious havelis and even hearths. And yet after independence they were lost in the noisy slogans of 'Punjabi-Suba Zindabad'. The world at large failed to grasp what the Sikhs were doing.

A close " study of activities of the Sikh politics i from 1940 to 1947 exposes the self-contradictory approach of the Sikh leaders who lacked political skill, statesmanship and diplomacy. None of the accepted Sikh leader was a politician in the real sense of the word. Master Tara Singh, who ruled over the Sikh mind from 1925 to his death in 1967 had later confessed that he was not a politician but a religious leader. lt is a hard fact that he was no match for Mahatma Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru and Patel.

Due to their undiplomatic and tactless moves the Sikh leaders made enemies every where. They made the National Congress suspicious of them as time and again they branded it a fanatic Hindu party. At times they excelled even Jinnah and other Muslim leaguers in their criticism of the Congress. While at the same time the Akalis pledged an un-qualified dedication to its policies and programmes. The Akalis once went to the extent of saying that the Congress was like the eleventh Guru for them.

The Akali antagonism towards Muslims and British is too well known which hardly needs any elaboration.

By the commencement of World War II, it had become clear that the Indian independence was in the offing and only a formal date was to be announced. It is a well known fact that the British in the latter years of their rule had demonstrated their mellifluous and benevolent attitude towards the Sikhs keeping in view the Sikh role in the British war effort. On various occasions the English leaders and Officers viz, Cripps, Moon, Short etc. had advised the Sikh leaders to initiate dialogues between the Congress as well as League, secure maximum leverage in the bargain and finally align with the party which promised them of maximum, minority provisions. The Sikhs however ignored the advice. In fact, The Sikh leader at the centre Baldev Singh, spitted on the British hint of a Sikh state. While at the same time they offered Sikh, youth for recruitment in the military during war.

Many a resolution in favour of a Sikh state (Khalistan) were passed and surprisingly in this effort even Congressite Sikhs were associated. In fact, these moves by the Sikhs were to neutralise the Muslim demand for Pakistan. Nevertheless they failed to convince or take into confidence the Punjabi Hindus and the Congress.

ln the pre Partition era the Sikh political parties or groups of some prominence were (a) Khalsa National Party, the political wing of Chief Khalsa Dewan, founded by Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. It virtually vanished with the death of Majithia in 1941, (b) The pro Congress Central Akali Dal of Baba Kharag Singh (1867-1963), (c) The Sikhs in the Congress like Partap Singh Kairon, Swarn Singh etc. (d) Communists like Teja Singh Swatantar and Sohan singh Josh, and (e) the most important party of the Sikhs the Shromani Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh. lts other important leaders were Giani Kartar Singh, Baldev Singh, lshar Singh Majhail, Udham Singh Nagoke etc.

Master Tara Singh who dominated the Sikh politics at that time, fully understood the pulse, of the Akali leaders and workers and was their best manager.

Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution in Lahore on March 23,'1940 which meant that the whole of undivided Punjab was to be a part of Pakistan. Had Pakistan been finally formed in accordance with the Lahore Resolution, the Muslims would have enjoyed a slender majority only (i.e 53%, Hindus 30% and the Sikhs 14%) as far as the Punjab was concerned.

While the Congress initially did not take the resolution seriously the Sikhs were 'shocked' by it. Master said that the resolution meant 'striking of a civil war' and "to realise it the Muslims will have to cross an ocean of Sikh blood" etc.

It appears that the Sikhs did not give a serious thought to such developments and their outcries were more emotional in nature than any strategic diplomatic move. Master accused Congress of having bowed before the Muslim obstinacy (zid) He further declared that in matters relating to Pakistan and other communal issues the Sikhs would henceforth decide for themselves.

The Congressite Sikhs dubbed the Akalis approach as communal and anti-national. They felt Akali's strong opposition to communal award and Pakistan was ridiculous, The Akalis reacted sharply to the Congress reaction and cautioned the Sikhs not to rely on any one's sword but to improve their own strength so that no one i.e. Congress can betray them later.

The Congress further insisted that the 'Pakistan' whatever it may mean, could not be worse than the foreign domination and the Pakistan was the 'price of freedom' they will perhaps have to pay.

On March 22 1942 Cripps Mission arrived in India. The Sikh delegation comprising of Baldev Singh, Master Tara Singh, Joginder Singh, Ujjal Singh and Mohan Singh met Cripps and demanded preservation of Indian unity and integrity. They also demanded creation of a new province called 'Azad Puniab' comprising of Jalandhar and Ambala divisions plus three districts of Lahore, Gurdaspur and Amritsar by taking out Muslim majority Divisions. Azad Punjab they said would have 63% Non-muslims and 37% Muslims. While the remaining part of the Punjab would have 77% Muslims and 23% Non-muslims. The demand was later ridiculed by the Hindus and other Sikh parties. The Hindus alleged that it was a demand tor Khalistan under the misleading name of 'Azad Punjab'.

The fantastic feature of the proposed 'Azad Punjab' was that it bisected the Sikh community into 2 parts. The Azad Punjab area covered 61% of the Sikh population while the 39% were to be left in the West Punjab at the mercy of the Muslims. It is ridiculous that the Azad Punjab demand included areas with scant Sikh .population like Gurgaon (O.O7% Sikhs), Rohtak (0.15%), Karnal (2%), Kangra (0.53%) while it excluded Shekhupura with '18.8%, Lyalpur (18:82%), Syalkot (11 .71%), Gujranwala (10.87%) and Rawaipindi having (8.17%), Sikhs.

The Akalis thus themselves sowed the seed of vivisection of their own community. Surprisingly, Azad Punjab was the idea of Giani Kartar. Singh who was known as the 'Brain of the Sikhs', and was second in,' command ,in Akali Dal and after independence defected to Congress. According to some sources the 'Azad Punjab' scheme was conceived by S. Ujjal Singh the Ex-governor.

The Akalis agitated for Azad Punjab for about 2-3 years and latter abandoned the demand. Though Master wrote a book on Azad Puniab, challenging its opponents and Hindus to prove how the demand went against them.

Master who was highly biased against the Mohammedans, was not prepared for a dialogue with, them and gave false statements after the Partition was over causing much loss to mankind. At one point, he blamed Hindus, "Punjabi Hindus turned down a good proposal of Jinnah. About 25% of Punjabi Hindu and some Sikh leaders were in Birla House while Jinnah was at his Aurangzeb Road bungalow, Delhi. Raja Maheshwar Dyal met us and would take our messages to Jinnah.

Through these messages we reached at an accord with Jinnah. The understanding arrived at was that the areas with more than 65% Muslim population would form a Part of Pakistan. According to this proposal, our boundary would have gone beyond river Ravi, though it did not reach Chenab. We were to get Lahore, Syalkot, Gujranwala, most Part of Shekhupura and some parts of Lyallpur and Montgomery too.'

"After it was verbally agreed, it was then decided to reduce it into writing. Thereafter Ganesh Datt along with another gentleman joined us and turned down the proposal immediately. It was lost not because of Jinnah but because of our own side.'

As a matter of fact Master was merely shifting the blame as he himself was not prepared for a dialogue with Muslim leaders and had lost several opportunities. On one occasion in 1947, Master was persuaded by Sikh Student Federation to have talk with Jinnah at 11 am in some bungalow in Lahore. Master however reached at 10 am and before the arrival of Jinnah he left the bungalow through a back door.

Harcharan Singh Bajwa, an Akali who later defected to Congress after ‘freedom’ claimed that it was he who persuaded Master not to have talks with Jinnah and as such he helped to avert the formation of Khalistan. Late Kapoor Singh the sacked l.C.S. officer narrates one more incidence of a meeting of Sikh leaders at Lahore where a letter listing the conditions for Khalistan within Pakistan was drafted lor consideration by Jinnah. The Sikh leaders decided that such an important letter should not be sent by Post and rather some responsible person should go to Delhi to deliver the letter. Choice fell on Dr. Gopal Singh, who instead of taking the letter to Jinnah went straight away to Nehru and handed over that letter to him. Nehru, in the sixties once hinted about that letter alleging that Master had been hobnobbing with the League before the dawn of independence. It is possible that as a reward for the patriotism shown by late Gopal Singh he was all his life kept comfortable by way of assignments as (1) nomination for Rajya Sabha (b) Ambassador (3) Member Minority Commission (4) Chairman Minority Commission (5)Governor etc.

ln this way Jinnah was humiliated on many such occasions.

ln his ailicle in the Indian Express of Nov. 12, 1981 , H.S. Mallick (lCS), the Ex-Prime minister of Patiala estate recalled how a meeting of Maharaja Patiala, Master and Giani Kartar Singh with Jinnah was held at the residence of his brother Teja Singh in New Delhi. He recalled how Jinnah was more than generous and agreed to our virtually impossible conditions. There after Mallick writes : "l went and saw Mr. U.M. Sen and said, "My dear friend, I have never asked you to do anything for me. But today I have a request to make, a very important request. I then told him about the meeting with Jinnah. The next day, the Statesman carried the headline in bold letter ' THE SIKHS WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ACCEPT PAKISTAN'. That was our answer to Jinnah. We could have Khalistan if we wanted as that was what Jinnah really hinted at, because he new fully well that we could never agree to live in Pakistan. That was the price he was offering us to agree to the formation of Pakistan.

Mallick says that 'We issued the press statement to avoid any false propaganda that might be created to give a false colour to Sikh leaders."

Akali Dal as we have seen was a very confused lot. The Pak demand had caught momentum. ToP Akali leaders were in the grip of Baldev Singh -the son of an industrialist and was regularly remitting, some sort of remunerations to the Sikh leaders. He also gave liberal donations to Akali Dal. In turn Baldev Singh was in the grip of Congress leaders like Patel and Nehru. As such indirectly the Congress controlled Akali Dal through Baldev. Top Akali leaders were put to embarrassment when ever they had to pass any resolutions against the Congress under the pressure of their own cadres. This was the reason why several resolutions passed under the pressure of masses were not later persuaded or implemented.

Master, too in those days said that the Sikhs do not identify with the Congress though in so far as the Congress favoured India's freedom they were in sympathy with it.

An all party Sikh conference was held in Amritsar in Aug. 1944 which passed a resolution for the establishment of Khalistan and authorised Master to appoint a committee to go into its detailed implications.

Master did not deliberately pursue the minutes of this all party conference and the committee issue was consigned to some cold storage. (This is a clear cut examples of Master’s betrayal of Sikh aspirations.) The Akali workers and leaders had perhaps no courage or mind to question Master-for his willful non-compliance. In the same Amritsar Conference Master declared that the Sikhs were a nation and should not be made slaves of Pakistan or Hindustan. Giani also gave a very hard speech and said that no appeal should be made to the Sikhs in the name of India.

The Shromani Gurudwara Prabandak Committee on March 9, 1946 passed a resolution for Khalistan urging the Sikh masses to strive and agitate for its accomplishment. It said that the Sikhs are fully qualified as a nation. 'It regretted that a certain disinformation campaign has been launched declaring the Sikhs as a branch of the tree called Hindgism. Interestingly even Partap Singh Kairon was also a member of SGPC when this resolution was passed.

The Akalis also submitted a memorandum to the Sapru Committee demanding creation of Khalistan if the Pakistan was to be conceded. Signatories to this demand included Master, Giani, Swarn Singh, Prince Jodh Singh, Ujjal Singh and lshar Singh Majhail.

The above goal was later officially adopted through a resolution on March 22, 1946 by the Executive Committee of the Akali Dal which stated, "The entity of the Sikhs is being threatened on account of the persistent demand of Pakistan on the one hand and of the danger of absorption by the Hindus on the other, the committee demands for the preservation and protection of the religious, cultural, and economic and political rights of the Sikh nation, the creation of a Sikh state which would include a substantial majority -of the Sikh population and their sacred shrines and historical gurudwaras with provision for the transfer and exchange of population and property".

Speaking from Sikh platforms, Master criticised Muslims and Hindus alike. He frequently said, "Association with Muslims was like contracting Cholera disease where the death is quick while with Hindus its T.B, where the death is relatively slow' (History shows, he preferred Cyanide of partition instead, massacring about 2 lack Sikhs instantly plus contracting of T.B. as he claimed). Master did not trust anyone and would say how could Sikhs have anything common with the Muslims who killed four sons of the Guru. About Hindus, he would say they are bent upon absorbing the Sikhs.

Kapoor Singh, once told him that inspite of the killing of his family, Guru Gobind Singh was ready for a dialogue with Aurangzeb while Master was evading it. He said, it is with Muslims that the Sikhism flourishes because whenever there is a collision between Islam and Hinduism, Sikhism gains.

ln the light of the above developments in April 1946, Nehru accused Master of "sitting at one and the same time, on 15 stools". Master retorted that he did not need a permit from Nehru to see Jinnah or anybody else and that he intended to secure independent position for the Sikhs.

According to Durlabh Singh, thereafter processions of Sikh and Muslim students were organized raising slogans for Pakistan and Khalistan but "death to Congress". Congress leaders were condemned from the Gurdwara platforms.

Similar ups and downs had been going on in the Akalis relations with the Congress. In 1940, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Master' You have nothing in common with the Congress. You believe in the rule of sword, the Congress does not.'

Earlier the same Master had pledged for the unity of India when he attended the Akhand Hindustan Conference at Ludhiana on Nov. 2, '1941. Similar Hindu and Sikhs conferences organised by Hindu Mahasabha were held in Lahore and Amritsar. H.S. Dilgir (now a pro-India writer) believes such conferences were aimed to keep the Sikhs away from the idea of the Khalistan and support to Pakistan.

The Akalis were busy in passing resolutions after resolutions. Sometimes for Azad Punjab, Sikh State, Sikhistan, Unity and Integrity of India and condemning Pakistan etc. Such resolutions were passed atleast on June 7 1949, Aug. 15 1943, Jan.23 1944, March '18 1944, April 23 1944, Aug.6 1944 and Aug. 20 1944. On every occasion they would Pass a fresh resolution in favour of Sikh state in complete disregard of the earlier ones. More often than not their resolutions were contradictory. Central Akali Dal (CAD) of Baba Kharag Slngh was also quite active. The CAD though pursued independent policy but was more inclined to Congress than the Akali Dal. They took a concealed stand and vehemently opposed the Azad Punjab demand in which they envisaged the division of the Sikhs.

An All Party Sikh conference was held on Sept. 24, 1944 which voiced their deep concern over the possible formation of Muslim Govt in Lahore. The following day Gandhi- Jinnah talks were held at the residence of Gandhi and the Sikhs courted arrest against such talks. The bankrupcy of their wit again demonstrated.

In the Oct. 14, 1944 Lahore Conference of Akali Dal the main slogan was "Beware of Russian Agents" Master said in his speech that the Sikhs were facing danger f rom (1) Communists (2) The English' (3) Gandhi (4) Jinnah. Interestingly the Communists in those days supported the Pakistan demand and advocated Khalistan. Booklets in support of Khalistan were also published by the Communists like G. Adhikari. In complete disregard of allt he resolutions that his party had passed, Master warned the concerned parties, "We have not yet finally decided for Khalistan and as such our doors are still open for discussions.

On Nov. 24, 1944 Jinnah said in Delhi, "Pakistan is now a reality and no power of the world can stop it. Advising the Sikhs he said, 'Why don't you demand Khalistan instead of opposing Pakistan.'

Surely Pakistan had by then become a mass movement. The Hindu press gave it maximum publicity. The British Govt did little to discourage it, rather they advertently promoted it as they lost little in its realisation. The Congress had already acquiesced to it through the famous Rajaji Formula. Despite all this the Sikhs had not awakened to the situation.

ThE Akali Conference of Jan. 8, 1945 resolved that the Sikhs had always been with the Congress and will ever remain with it. Exactly in these days only the Congress issued a whP to, its Sikh member Mangal Singh that he will not ask any question pertaining to the Sikhs in the Central Assembly.

No doubt committed to the Sikh cause Master was not prepared for any settlement over which the Hindus had even a slight hitch. The Student Federation people would therefore call him'the Hindu Putra'.

On July 15, 1945, he said, "l will oppose the Pakistan even if ,l have to face civil war. If Jinnah wants Pakistan he will have to concede Khalistan in the Punjab. "H.S. Dilgir (the self styled national professor ol Sikhism) complains that Master did not demand Khalistan and was bent upon pleasing the Congress Hindus. Says Dilgir, "The army of the lions was lead by donkeys as their generals.'

On Augusl 24, 1945 Sardar Patel reiterated the Congress pledge of 1929 that the free India will not accept any such constitution which. is not acceptable to the Sikhs.

ln a Sikh conference of Oct, 2, 1944 the cry over Khalistan was once again raised as, "Gandhi was bent upon betraying the Sikhs". Speaking at Peshawar on Jan 2, 1944, Master said, "We want independence and honourable existence; The Hindus are determined I to keep both Sikhs and Muslims under I their thumb and to keep the Sikhs in t confusion. "Dr. Gurmit Singh a noted Sikh historian has remarked that in spite of all these statements which contradicted his actions, Master faithfully toed the Congress approach. Master though at times would announce at Sikh meetings that there is going to be Hindu Raj after the British .Raj yet he did little to secure the Sikh position. He preferred Hindu Raj to British Raj but said that under no circumstances could he tolerate the 'Muslim Raj' whatever amount of minority protection clauses they promised. He was favourably disposed towards Hindus till his first arrest in free India at Narela in 1948.

C. Rajagopalachari revealed in 1964 that he had duly cautioned Master in the year 1946 that they (Sikhs) would not get anything at the hands of the Congress after the independence was achieved and whatever the Sikh objectives they should get through negotiations with the League and the British. As noted earlier similar advice from the English leader like Cripps, Moon, Short, Wavell etc. had been ignored by them.

Later in the elections of winter of 1945-46 the Muslim League came out to be the largest party with 74 seats out of l75 while the Congress secured 51 , Akalis 23 and the Unionist Party the ruling party was marginalized with only 21 seats while in the outgoing Assembly their strength was 90. Ignoring the verdict and the wishes of masses the Akalis and, Congress preferred an unholy alliance with the Unionist Party and supported it to form the Govt at Lahore. The situation was identical with the present day forming of Govt by Janta Dal with ine support of parties with different hues and colours while BJP the majority party has been prevented from forming the Govt. The League took the issue to streets warning the Muslim masses how their verdict was not being honoured by the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Muslim mind felt agitated, aggrieved and discriminated against. And the spate of murders what the world later witnessed was the result of hatred generated by the League workers and leaders.

The Leaguers later got a tremendous pressure mounted on the Unionist people that the Premier Mr. Khijar Hyat Tiwana had to resign despite the committed support from Congress and the Akalis to his Govt. It is said it was Tiwana's mother who persuaded him to resign as where ever she went, she found people hurling abuses on the Unionist leaders, branding them as traitors.

At the fall of the Unionist Govt. the League was next to be invited by the Governor to form government at Lahore. On the evening ol March 3, 1947 itself the Sikhs and Hindus gathered in a large number. In this conference Master was accepted as their common leader. Provocative speeches were delivered. A sword as usual in his hand, Master thundered:-

"Aye Sikhs and Hindus get ready for sacrifices. Our motherland demands blood. Get ready for it. Bravo if we can get independence from the English what worth are these 'Muslims? The Muslims had snatched rule from the Hindus which the Sikhs snatched in turn. Now again we will rule. I hereby sound the bugle (of war) Finish the Muslim League;'

Next day, a joint procession of Hindus and Sikh students was taken out in Lahore and on the same day a - Hindu-Sikh conference was held at Amritsar. Provocative speeches of the Sikh leaders ignited the spark of senseless murders everywhere. Muslim murderous thugs moved with biggest drama.

Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab took a notice of the prevailing law and order situation and refused to invite Muslim League party to form the Govt. Master came out a victorious man while the losers were the Punjabi masses who became thirsty for each others blood.

Analysts believe, it was the biggest blunder by Master. Had the League formed govt. they would have then taken the responsibility to maintain law and order rather than disrupt it as they really did. If the league was in Power, the Muslim sympathy with them would have eroded to some extent and the Punjab would not have seen the massacre it did.

The British were attempting through all possible feelers to persuade Sikh leaders to demand Khalistan. A graphic account of such moves is given by Kapoor Singh. One such hint came through Shivdev Singh Oberai, member of the Privy Council who sent his son from London to Punjab to convey to the Sikh leaders.

A similar feeler was sent through Sir Jogendra Singh the member of Central Assembly during the days of arrival of Cabinet Mission. Jogendra invited Akali leaders to Delhi who in turn scolded Jogendra.

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala who was to participate in the 2nd Round Table Conference, confided with some Sikhs that if he was authorised, he could talk to the Britishers on behalf of the Sikhs and would surely return with something big for the Sikhs.

Stung by the snake of jealousy, Master the Akali leader refused to authorise the Maharaja to talk on behalf of the Sikhs and as such one more opportunity was lost. The British had not deliberately invited Master to London.

On a similar important occassion, when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was almost prepared to embrace Sikhism along with his 6 crore Dalit followers he was prevented by Master's men. Several analysts and people close to Master concluded that the Master did it because had Ambedkar joined Sikhism, there was a danger to Master's leadership.

After independence with the change of masters the leaders changed their colours. Every leader was trying to project himself as the saviour of Indian integrity. In this category fell Swarn Singh, Gopal Singh Dardi, Giani Kartar Singh, Kairon and Nagoke. Master who had by then attained the dubious role by his contradictory stands claims "IT WAS HE WHO PREVENTED ESTABLISHMENT OF KHALISTAN OR ELSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A REALITY' Besides he admitted in his autobiography that some British officers were hell bent to hammer out some compromise between the Sikhs and the Muslims for establishment of Khalistan within Pakistan, which he thwarted.

' After the death of Sardar Patel, Nehru dropped Baldev Singh from the Defence portfolio of his Cabinet. Baldev fell sick and after some days he issued a press statement "The Hindus have betrayed me", He confessed before other Sikh leaders that he deserved the torture on bed he was undergoing. "On three occasions", confessed Baldev, "l have prevented the independence of the Sikhs and formation ol Sikh state, I have thrown the Sikhs chained before the cruel Hindus- God forgive me".

Reacting to the Baldev's accusations Kairon the then CM reacted, "lt ls a sick statement from a sick man". Such confessions from Baldev raised many a Sikh eyebrow to speculate as to what were those three secret occasions. At least one missing link has since been discovered.

Jinnah, Nehru and Baldev were invited for discussions to London in Dec. 1946 to 'remove the prevailing deadlock. After the talks were over and the leaders were to return to India, Baldev was secretly asked by British to stay on so that something for the Sikhs was also done. Baldev passed on this secret message to Nehru.

Nehru a born statesmen did not leave UK until he ensured that Baldev was ahead of him in embarking the plane for Delhi. While leaving London Baldev spoke to press:- "The Sikhs have no separate demand from the English. We will settle with Congress. We only want that the British leave India."

This statement was a surprise for everyone as it was a bygone conclusion that the British were leaving India as soon as possible. It ls alleged that the statement Baldev made before the press was prepared by Nehru himself.

Kapoor Singh says, he has been able to know as to what was the British proposal which they were to make to Baldev. He writes, "If the Sikhs are not prepared for any agreement with the Muslims, the English were ready to concede the area from Nankana Sahib, to Panipat and the British would also see to its security for 10 years. In turn the Khalistan Govt. would have to depute 25000 Sikh soldiers for the British colonies. After 10 years, the agreement with the Sikhs will be reviewed. The British were ready to give Khalistan, a passage upto Arabian Sea and in this way, Khalistan would have served as a buffer state between Pakistan and Hindustan and insured peace in the region.

Kapoor Singh admits that a similar feeler was given to him in Feb. 1947 when he was working at Lahore Secretariat and that he passed it to the Sikh leaders but MasterTara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh laughed at it.

Kapoor narrated yet another incidence when Cabinet Mission was in Delhi and the Sikhs had gone to meet it. Sir Cripps asked Baldev, "Sardar Sahib, what to do for the Sikhs. The English are deeply inclined to do something for them.'

Baldev Singh,."lf Pakistan is to be conceded, Khalistan be also formed". (Even by that time he had not realized what a reality Pakistan had been). Sir Pethic Lawrence, "There is no objection to it but where to form it. See the map is hanging before you, demarcate the area where you want it'

Baldev Singh - (Silence).

Sir Cripps then took the pointer stick in his hands and moved it in a circular way from Panipat to Nankana Sahib. '

Baldev Singh - "No... No..., my nation aspires for a rule upto Jhelum. We wlll not accept this small area."

Referring to this episode Dr. Kirpal Slngh, an authority on the Partition history who had earlier justified the stand ol Akalis writes in his recent book that it was the best offer the Sikhs could get.

Kapoor Singh recalls an incldent when Rafa Gazanlar Ali once asked him, what do the Slkhs think ? Witty they are indifferent to the possible losses and gains and have merely become puppets ln the hands of Hindus and are bent upon to take bath in the blood of their Muslim neighbours?', Kapoor Singh says that the history will ever demand an explanation from these leaders.

Sir Fazl-e-Hussian the ex- Premier of Punjab wrote in the year of 1925 in a book which was for private circulation but somehow fell in the hands of a Sikh:-

"Hindus consider political matters and their implications years ahead. The Musalman tries to tackle them just in time. But the Sikhs never think of them unless the time is actually passed and the matter well settled."

Jinnah once remarked, lt is difficult to understand the position of the Sikhs by logic or justice - Ah, the Sikh leadership' When Kapoor Singh protested at these remarks of Jinnah, he said, "young man, sentiments and emotions are not the same thing as political insight. Consider my remarks dispassionately and if you can do something, do it. When you grow mature, you will mark my words. ' Cautioning the Sikhs on some other occasion, Jinnah said, "Sardar Sahib, you have seen Hindus as your co- slaves. You are yet to see them as your rulers."

Meher Chand Mahajan the former Chief Justice of India wrote in his 'Stern Reckoning" 'The Maharaja of Patiala as an Indian patriot scornfully rejected Jinnah's offer of Sikh State at the sacrifice of his own state throne and power." About the same Maharaja of Patiala, Sir Yadvendra Singh Lord Wavell the Viceroy of India recorded. I could only say that the Sikhs if they play their cards well, could exercise an influence in Punjab far beyond their numbers. But they do not usually play well.'

Lord Attlee the then PM of UK also opined in his book "As it Happened " that the Sikhs were led by incapable men and as such could not get anything for their nation. Campbell Johnson in his "Mission with Mountbatten" writes the Sikh leaders could not explain what they wanted and were only crying that the Pakistan be not formed. Leonard Mosley writes in his "Last Days of British Raj" that here in Delhi the wind pipe of the Sikh body was being slit and the Sikhs were busy twisting their moustaches and waving their swords in air." Penderell Moon in his 'Divide and Quit' wrote that the Sikh leaders were bent upon crossing the limits of stupidity and whenever some matter was revealed to them they would pay no attention.

Wavell writes, "he talked about to group the Sikhs States to do something of the problem of the Sikhs generally but nothing came out of it ' ln the end, Wavell wrote that Maharaja Patiala was stupid.

ln the 2nd week of July 1947, Giani Kartar Singh met Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab, by that time the 'wisdom' of the Sikh leaders had started bearing fruits; migration of people had commenced and killings started. Giani burst into tears before the Governor and asked Jenkins to do something to save the Sikhs. Jenkins later wrote "at the same time, I thought that the Sikhs had only themselves to blame for their present position. The Giani himself had insisted on partition and Baldev Singh had accepted the plan.'

The fact is, Akalis have never thought that there would be such a massacre and wide scale migration, They never asked for a state with the area proportionate to the Sikh population. They had always nurtured a guilt that the Sikhs did not enjoy absolute majority in any district.

Migrations and massacres could not make the Master realise his follies and he woke up only when he was arrested in 1948 at Narela in the free India. A tough leader who would not confess and would rather change his stand quite often. Once Khushwat Singh, the renowned journalist, asked, him, why the Master gave a new agitation programme to the Sikhs, every now and then. Master replied that he wants to really keep his people engaged, so that they do not create some big problems. However, where the devil of death was near his cot, his conscious pricked him and he wrote,

"Oh my Tenth Lord Dashmesh I have not been able to fulfill the pledge, I took at the baptismal ceremony. At death, repenting I am at your door. Oh lord, forgive me and help the Sikhs in this event of crises”.

Referring to the Punjab politics Lord Wavell wrote in his memoirs, “The trouble in getting any settlement is that both the Congress and Muslim League are controlled from outside, from Delhi and Bombay; while the Sikhs who are in a position to negotiate on the spot are disunited and poorly led; Master Tara Singh is stupid and emotional.