

## Punjab Communists: A Party Of -

# HOARY STANDARD-BEARERS

## They Carry Forward The Anti-Imperialist Heritage Of 50 Years

**T**HE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE PUNJAB IS THE living embodiment of all the mighty upheavals that together make up the revolutionary history of the Province during the last fifty years. Among its founders, leaders and active workers are men who have an honoured place in everyone of the anti-Imperialist struggles that have given the province its revolutionary tradition.

*No other Party can make this claim:*

**G**REAT AND STIRRING IS THE RECORD OF THE REVOLUTIONARY Punjab—the Ghadr movement, the Akali and Babar Akali movements, the Congress and Khilafat struggles, the heroic deeds of Bhagat Singh and his comrades—a record of men who carrying their lives in the palms of their hands, struck terror in the hearts of the enemies of the people and enriched the patriotic traditions of the Punjab.

*Inside the Party today are persons who carry these traditions in their very persons.*

In the early years of the present century tens of thousands of sturdy Sikh peasants went to America where they founded the famous Ghadr Party in 1913 and sent batch after batch of revolutionaries to India, men who by their epic valour and supreme self-sacrifice wrote one of the most stirring chapters of our national history. Their efforts to achieve freedom failed, but they created a tradition that never died and inspired countless youths in the following years.

### Mass Upheavals

After the First World War, the Punjab witnessed tremendous popular upheavals under the banner of the Congress and the Khilafat, the horrors of Jallianwalla Bagh, the Martial Law regime of O'Dyer, and the determined struggle waged by the people.

Under the impact of this great awakening, brought about by these events and in close co-operation with the National Congress, there arose the great Akali movement with the avowed aim of purging the Gurdwaras of corrupt pro-Imperialist elements and infusing new life among the Sikhs.

The ruthless terror by means of which the British Government tried to crush the Akalis lit the fire of revolutionary hatred in the hearts of young Sikhs and the result was the Babar Akali movement, a terrorist movement directed against the Government and its lackeys.

As a result of the general awakening brought about by the Congress and Khilafat movements, a band of Muslims, considering it a sin to live under the British Raj, became Hijrais and made their way into Afghanistan from where the most intrepid of them went to Russia.

In the years following the failure of the Non-Co-operation movement, when general reaction set in, Bhagat Singh and his comrades founded the Navjawan Bharat Sabha—a militant youth organisation—and the terrorist party, members of which won immortal fame by their heroism.

The launching of the Civil Disobedience movement by the Congress in 1930 drew into its orbit thousands of Punjabis and the Punjab again witnessed scenes reminiscent of the 1921 days.

### Revolutionary Brotherhood

From everyone of these upheavals, the finest elements have come into the Communist Party—all the founders of the Ghadr Party that escaped death sentence, the leaders of the Babar Akalis, the young heroes of the Congress and Akali movements of '21-'22, the comrades of Bhagat Singh, young students who roused by the 1930 movement gave up their studies and joined up, simple workers whom their own experience led into the political movement.

and 1930 that the Communists consolidated their ranks.

### How The Party Grew

Theirs was not a simple job. Even in India few provinces had regimes of such terror as the Punjab. Arrests, internments and detentions without trial, torture and beating-ups were, as a perusal of the lives of the candidates put up by the Party will show, the commonest phenomenon. Almost all the leading comrades who had been to the Soviet Union had to work underground with the police hot on their trail.

And the introduction of Provincial Autonomy meant no change. Police Raj continued to be supreme in the Punjab under the Unionist Ministry.

It was under such conditions that the Communists of the Punjab had to live and work.

During the years 1937 and 1939 they laid the foundation of a mass kisan movement.

They carried the Congress to every village in the Doaba, overcoming bitter opposition of anti-Congress forces. They establish-

ed hundreds of Congress Committees in areas where none had existed before.

In recognition of these services, Congressmen elected them Presidents and Secretaries of District Congress Committees in a number of districts.

They built trade unions in Amritsar, Okara, Lahore and other places.

They created a student movement the like of which the Punjab had never seen before.

When the Unionist Government introduced the new bandobust under which the peasants had to pay lakhs, in addition to their usual dues, the Communists organised the Satyagraha struggle at Lahore, in the course of which no less than 3,500 were jailed and repeated lathi-charges were made by the police. They led Satyagraha struggles in Kalsia and other States as well.

In this way, they united people from all classes and all sections—workers, peasants, students; Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs—for the common struggle for freedom.

Inside the Punjab Assembly

their representatives, who all joined the Congress, in co-operation with progressive Congress MLAs, tore away the mask from the face of the Unionist Ministry and revealed them as they really are—bootlickers of the police and the bureaucracy.

They paid a heavy price for all this. Their leaders were constantly in and out of prison and under restrictions.

### War Years: Party's Work

Then came the war and repression was intensified a hundred-fold. Every known Communist was in prison or in hiding. The countryside was combed for absconders and it was only the devotion and love of the people that saved them. They found shelter in every village and carried on their work.

The Communist Party was legalised in 1942 and a number of prominent leaders were released. But by no means all. Baba Rur Singh, Baba Sohan Singh and scores of others were released long after. And many, including leaders like Dhanwan- (Continued on Pages 2-3, Col. 5.)

# Baba Rur Singh - INDOMITABLE FIGHTER AT 76

**I**N the 1937 elections to the Punjab Provincial Assembly, an old man of sixty-six, a simple peasant, was persuaded by his comrades to contest a seat. He had neither money nor 'influential' contacts. Yet so great was the affection he inspired in the countryside that not even the biggest landlords dared to oppose him. He was elected unopposed from the Moga Sikh Constituency.

The candidate was Baba RUR SINGH, a man whose sterling character and life-long record of service have won him a position of unassailable strength.

He had to leave India when a young man of 25 to earn his livelihood. He worked as a labourer in Australia, New Zealand and other countries and finally reached America.

In America there was a large colony of Sikhs employed as farm workers and labourers. They had seen the difference between a free country and a slave country. They had felt the humiliations to which the people of a slave country are subjected, and inevitably there grew among them the urge to free their own land.

The result was the formation of the famous GHADR Party, a revolutionary organisation whose aim was to free India by armed revolt.

Rur Singh was one of the first members of the Party. The members of the Party collected arms and money and with them trained thousands of recruits.

The revolutionary struggle, however, had to be waged in India itself and so in 1914 a batch of Ghadr Party men started for their motherland. Rur Singh was in this batch.

Though they failed to attain their object, these and subsequent batches of Ghadrites wrote with their blood one of the most glorious chapters in the history of India. Many of them were hanged, many shot dead in the course of skirmishes with the police and military and others sentenced to long terms.

Baba Rur Singh was sentenced to



Candidate in the coming Punjab Assembly Elections,

transportation for life. For 14 years his life was an unbroken succession of struggles in the Andamans and in Indian prisons. He came out of prison only in 1932.

Long years of suffering had left their mark on his body, but his spirit was still indomitable. He did not seek rest. Though nearing sixty and in shattered health he joined his old comrades who now, under the influence of Socialist ideas were organising the kisan

of the Punjab. Soon Babaji came to be known as one of the foremost leaders of the kisan movement of the Punjab.

Not content with this and being fully conscious of the sufferings of the families of the political prisoners, he took upon himself the responsibilities of the work of the Desh Bhagat Pariwar Sahayak Committee (Committee for the relief of the families of political sufferers). His valuable work as

Secretary of this Committee won him universal respect.

No wonder that when pressed by his comrades, Babaji agreed to stand as a candidate for the Assembly, not even the biggest loyalists in the district dared to oppose him.

Baba Rur Singh was not one of those who forget, as soon as they are elected, their people and the promises made to them. Not only did he fight the Government inside the Legislature, but also stood shoulder to shoulder with the kisans in their struggles outside. The historic struggle of the kisans of Kalsia State, which stirred the whole of the Punjab, was led by him in person. After this he was elected President of the Punjab Kisan Sabha.

In 1939 he organised the morcha (Satyagraha) against the Chowkidari tax in his own village. Men and women flocked under his banner in hundreds.

In June 1940 Baba Rur Singh was arrested under the Defence of India Act and detained without trial. He has been released only recently after over five years in prison.

While in the Deoli Concentration Camp, he took a leading part in uniting the Kirtis and the Communists and in laying the basis for a United Communist movement in the Punjab.

At the time of the famous hunger-strike which ended Deoli as a Concentration Camp for political prisoners, Baba Rur Singh refused to listen to those who advised him in his state of ill-health not to join. He even wanted to refuse water and it was only the mandate of the Party that prevented this.

One by one almost all the detained MLAs were released but not Baba Rur Singh. Even when his wife was on her death bed, the Punjab Government refused to let him out.

It was only on October 30 last after every other Punjab MLA had come out of prison and his wife had died that Babaji was released.

He is in the field again, moving from village to village, inspiring the kisans, by his very presence carrying the message of freedom into their homes.

Sohan Singh Josh

FEW MEN COMMAND SUCH UNIVERSAL RESPECT

CONTESTING the Provincial Assembly Elections of 1957, a Communist candidate, SOHAN SINGH JOSHI...

Arrived in 1953 he was in prison for a year.

On his release he became the leader of the Akali movement in Punjab...

When in 1950, Sohan Singh's work life was one of struggle...

His working associates who know the name of Josh and also through...

By now he had become one of the top leaders of the younger generation...

He was also an active member of the Hindustani Mahajana Sabha...

Josh was also an active member of the Hindustani Mahajana Sabha...

In 1952 Josh was arrested in the Bhamburda Conspiracy Case...

Released in November 1952 Josh showed little interest in politics...

An effective parliamentarian, a resource speaker, a man whose integrity and honesty of purpose...

He headed in Punjab with a false passport but was arrested as a leader...

He returned to the Punjab and reorganized the Kirti Party...

On his return to India he was arrested in his village for three years...

In 1950 he joined the Congress and was one of the chief leaders of the great Akali movement.

★ WHO'S WHO Among Them

Arrested again in 1940 he was kept in detention in the Punjab...

Back among his people, this white-shirted revolutionary leader...

Chanchal Singh Chhabra

Veteran Of Akali And Peasant Battles

At the head of a Jatha of 120 marched a young man during the days of the Akali movement...

The movement was the result of the growth of patriotic feeling...

As a Congressman, Chanchal Singh Chhabra waged determined struggle...

At the age of seventy this veteran fighter retains the vigour and faith...

Sohan Singh Gaudindal

Vigorous Fighter At 70

At the age of seventy this veteran fighter retains the vigour and faith...

Muzam Singh

One Of Bravest Of Babar Akalis

THE word Babar means lion and there was a time when the heroic exploits of the BABAR AKALIS...

It was dangerous for him to return to India for the British Government...

He headed in Punjab with a false passport but was arrested as a leader...

He returned to the Punjab and reorganized the Kirti Party...

On his return to India he was arrested in his village for three years...

There was a lot of excitement at the end of the last war...

He was arrested and sentenced to transportation for life...

Fazl Habi Qurban

Against Imperialist Tyranny Since Youth

IN the days of the moon upheavals that followed the end of the last war...

The Afghan Government, however, disappointed them...

Qurban was arrested again after the outbreak of the war...

At the age of twelve JAGAT RAM had to take a job in a factory at Amritsar...

Jagat Ram

Workers' Leader Of 16 Years' Standing

At the age of twelve JAGAT RAM had to take a job in a factory at Amritsar...

Nidhan Singh

Founder Member Of Bhadr Party

IN 1917 a number of Sikhs in America were arrested by the U.S. Government...

When he was released, he joined the Ghadr Party...

He went to the Soviet Union and what he saw there during the days when the October revolution...

They carried on an intensive campaign for national unity on the basis of Congress-League and Bhadr...

They carried on an intensive campaign for national unity on the basis of Congress-League and Bhadr...

They went to the Soviet Union then in the throes of the civil war...

The welcome Qurban and his associates received in the land of the victorious soviet revolution...

Mirza Md. Ibrahim

In Freedom-Struggle Since Boyhood

IN 1921 a group of about fifty village boys prepared an armed black-flag and white-red flag...

Known as the Akali movement, it drew into its ranks the great Ghadrwan from the hands of the Government...

Marked by the British Government, the Akali movement...

Returning to India, he participated in the Akali movement...

Somedar Singh

Even a cursory mention of the events of his attachment...

His military studies over, he went to America where he re-joined the Ghadr Party...

Karam Singh Cheema

A Founder Of Kirti Kisan Party

BORN in a peasant family in the Doaba, KARAM SINGH CHEEMA went to America in 1907...

On his return to India he was arrested in his village for three years...

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Teja Singh Swatantra

HERO OF AKALI STRUGGLES

FEW among the revolutionaries of the Punjab, many of whom have fought political battles in India as well as abroad...

His political life began in 1921-22. In those days, under the impact of the general national awakening...

In 1922, he was in Kabul where he had gone to organize the Hindu Community...

Marked by the British Government, the Akali movement...

Returning to India, he participated in the Akali movement...

Even a cursory mention of the events of his attachment...

His military studies over, he went to America where he re-joined the Ghadr Party...

Eighteen months after his return to India, during which period...

Released in 1947 he is today again in the midst of his people...

This Teja Singh Swatantra from his political life...

On his return to India he was arrested in his village for three years...

In 1920 he joined the Congress and was one of the chief leaders of the great Akali movement.



SARDAR SOHAN SINGH JOSHI

HOARY STANDARD-BEARERS

(Continued from Page 1.) Teja Singh Swatantra, who has not been released to this day...

They were arrested in the Punjab and were kept in detention...

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In the 1930s, when he was in prison...

Released in 1947 he is today again in the midst of his people...

This Teja Singh Swatantra from his political life...

# SOME OF THE PUNJAB COMMUNIST CANDIDATES



Baba Karam Singh Cheema

Baba Hazara Singh

Bibi Raghbir Kaur

Baba Nidhan Singh

Mirza Mohd. Ibrahim

(Continued from Page 3.)  
fighting nature. He took to trade unionism under the influence of the Communists with whom he had come in contact and was soon elected to the Central Executive Committee of the Railway Workers' Union.

But mere Trade Union work did not satisfy him. He wanted to participate in the political battle for freedom. He found his way into the ranks of the Communists.

When war broke out, during the days of illegality and severe repression against the Communist Party he was one of those who kept things going—helping in the production of literature and its distribution, maintaining contacts. His place was raided, and he was arrested but he managed to escape and work underground till the legalisation of the Party.

A rank and file worker himself, he is known and loved by his colleagues who have more than once shown what confidence they have in him.

## Bibi Raghbir Kaur

### Beloved Leader Of Sikh Kisan Women

THERE has been no struggle since 1930 in which this brave Sikh kisan woman has not taken a leading part. During these fifteen years she has been to jail no less than six times, besides suffering internments and gag orders. She has come to be known as *Mai Bhago* (a brave Sikh woman of Guru Govind Singh's days) and was elected to the Provincial Assembly by an overwhelming majority in 1937.

Her husband, a poor kisan of Sheikhpura, who became a lorry driver to earn his living, was drawn into the Akali movement and later into the Satyagraha struggle of 1930. He was imprisoned and when his wife saw him, he said to her, "Gandhi has sounded the bugle of freedom, you must respond."

The impression of these words

on Bibi Raghbir Kaur was deep and lasting. She courted imprisonment and wrote to her husband from Amritsar prison, "You will be happy to learn that I have come to the shrine of freedom."

She has stuck to the path she chose then. After her release she was arrested again for defiance of orders under Section 144. She was released only at the time of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Her husband Sardar Bhagwan Singh in the meantime had met Feroze Din Mansur, the Communist leader, in the Lahore Jail and was greatly influenced by Socialist ideas. His talks influenced his wife also and both came over to Socialism.

In 1931 Sardar Bhagwan Singh was sentenced to two and a half years in connection with a strike. Bibi Raghbir Kaur who was ill and under restrictive orders took his place and was also sentenced to two and a half years. She was released in 1934.

It was at this time that many of those who had gone to the Soviet Union were returning to India. They had to work underground. Bibi took an active part in the underground press, distributing illegal newspapers and helping the work in other ways. The police arrested her but failed to get anything out of her. She was, however, interned for a year.

When the elections to the Provincial Assembly came, she had already won the affection of both men and women by her steadfast courage and service. The Unionists who set up the Lady Doctor Kartar Kaur thought that whatever the women might think of Bibi Raghbir Kaur, when it came to elections, they would not vote for a simple kisan woman. The result shocked them. Bibi was elected by a majority of over 5,000 votes.

Bibi Raghbir Kaur's speeches in the Assembly on police repression, on the conditions in prisons and on the demands of the kisans and the oppressed women were a terror to the Unionists. Also outside the Assembly she continued her work of organising the kisan women. In the 1940 Satyagraha she was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. After her release she was jailed again for a speech

for eight months and afterwards gagged. The gag order was removed only in September 1945.

Once again she is carrying to the kisan women the message of the Red Flag. One of themselves, she evokes in them a pride and love that has to be seen to be believed.

## Full List Punjab Communist Candidates

Below is the full list of Communist candidates in the forthcoming elections (Feb. '46) to the Punjab Legislative Assembly showing their constituencies. In this supplement we have given short accounts of the life and work of thirteen of them. Look out for the life sketches of the rest in a subsequent issue.

1. M. HARI SINGH, (Kangra and Northern Hills—Sikh).
2. DASAUNDRA SINGH, (Hoshiarpur South—Sikh).
3. DR. BHAG SINGH, (Hoshiarpur West—General).
4. TH. VARIAM SINGH, (Hoshiarpur East—General).
5. B. KARAM SINGH, (Jullundur East—Sikh).
6. HAZARA SINGH BABAR, (Jullundur West—Sikh).
7. M. GAJJAN SINGH, (Ludhiana East—Sikh).
8. GURDIAL SINGH-RAJOANA, (Ludhiana West—Sikh).
9. BABA RUP SINGH, (Ferozapore East—Sikh).
10. BHAROO, (Ferozapore West—Sikh).
11. BABA NIDHAN SINGH, (Ferozapore South—Sikh).
12. TEHL SINGH, (Lahore West—Sikh).
13. SOHAN SINGH JOSHI, (Amritsar North—Sikh).
14. ACEHAR SINGH CHINNA, (Amritsar Central—Sikh).
15. SANT SINGH GANDIWINO, (Amritsar South—Sikh).
16. BIBI RAGHUBIR KAUR, (Amritsar-Women—Sikh).
17. TEJA SINGH SWATANTRA, (Gurdaspur North—Sikh).
18. CHANAY SINGH, (Batala-Gurdaspur—Sikh).
19. RAM SINGH DUTT, (Gurdaspur—General).
20. CHANCHAL SINGH CHABHA, (Lyalpur West—Sikh).
21. JAGIT SINGH LYALLPURI, (Lyalpur East—Sikh).
22. PRITHVI SINGH, (Ambala-Simla—General).
23. MIRZA IBRAHEEM, (Railway Union).
24. JAGAT RAM DUTT, (General Labour).
25. FAZAL ILAHI QUREAN, (North Mines—General Lab).
26. MOHABAT SINGH, (Gujranwala-Shahdola—Sikh).

## Sardar Prithvi Singh

### Legendary Name Even In Gujerat and Tamilnad

SARDAR PRITHVI SINGH is the Communist candidate from the rural Hindu Constituency of Ambala and Simla. Born in a poor Rajput family in the Punjab, he became a legendary figure even in the villages of Tamilnad and Gujerat by his heroic anti-Imperialist struggles, escapes from police custody, three months' hunger-strike in the Andamans and as an accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

The sketch of his political life includes the most revolutionary and adventurous chapters of our national movement. In 1911, at the age of 17 Prithvi Singh left the country for Hong Kong in search of a living and to gain experience in revolutionary movements. There he was much impressed by the Chinese revolutionary movement.

In 1912 he proceeded to California and worked in a potato field. There his zeal for the freedom of the country impressed the leaders of the Ghadr Party and they put him in charge of the Ghadr Party press.

But this fiery youth was destined for something more. He was selected by the Ghadr Party as one of the hundred Indian youths to start an armed uprising in India. The batch sailed for India and effected a landing but the police arrested Prithvi Singh and his comrades. Later on, he was awarded 10 years' imprisonment.

In 1915 the Government tried him again in the famous Lahore Conspiracy Case and sentenced him to death. The people agitated for him and his death sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

In the Andamans Prithvi Singh started the historic hunger-strike

for three months as a protest against the inhuman treatment meted out to the politicals there. After six years he was transferred to India from the Andamans. On his way to Rajamundry Prison Prithvi Singh made one of the most daring escapes ever recorded in the history of the revolutionary movement of our land by jumping from the running train. The police however flooded the whole area with their watchmen and ultimately arrested Prithvi Singh.

But Prithvi Singh was not to be balked so easily. While being transferred from Rajamundry to some other prison with a heavy police escort and himself in chains, he gambled with his life, again jumped from the running train and escaped. The villagers of Andhra gave shelter to this brave son of India.

From 1923 to 1930, for seven years, Prithvi Singh remained and worked underground. During this period he organised volunteer corps and physical culture groups in Bombay and Gujerat to infuse revolutionary fire into the Indian youth.

At the Karachi Congress session he met Baba Gurumukh Singh and at his instance went to the Soviet Union in 1933. While proceeding to the Soviet Union he was arrested in Afghanistan. Passing some time in jail there, he afterwards reached the Soviet Union, where he saw the Workers' and Peasants' State, and had his first experience of Socialism in real life. He came back to India and worked underground for a few years.

In 1938 he surrendered to the Government under instructions from Gandhiji and was kept in jail till September 1939. After his release he lived with Gandhiji in his Ashram but soon got disillusioned with Gandhiji's ideology and politics and broke away from him. What he had seen in the Soviet Union and of the policy and work of the Indian Communists was decisive in his whole revolutionary experience. He joined the Communist Party and has been working ever since as one of its most devoted members.

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