

CHAPTER - III

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDEAS OF BHAGAT SINGH

1. CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION
2. BHAGAT SINGH'S IDEAS ON CONTEMPORARY SITUATION
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON LANGUAGE
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON CASTE, UNTOUCHABILITY, RELIGION AND COMMUNALISM
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON PEASANTS, WORKERS, TRADE UNIONS
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON THE NATURE OF BRITISH RULE AND IMPERIAL EXPLOITATION
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON REFORMS, ADULT FRANCHISE, AUTHORITY, EDUCATION
  - BHAGAT SINGH ON CONGRESS, GANDHI AND NON VIOLENT METHOD

### CHAPTER - III

#### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDEAS OF BHAGAT SINGH

Social and political ideas of Bhagat Singh were developed in the context of growing political consciousness in the minds of the people. During 8 years of his active political career he expressed his ideas on many important social and political issues. There is no doubt that he was a child of his period, but he thought on more advanced lines than most of his contemporaries. In the present chapter social and political ideas of Bhagat Singh are discussed. They clearly show the shaping of the revolutionary ideas of Sardar Bhagat Singh.

#### CHANGES IN THE INDIAN POLITICAL SITUATION :

Post Ist World War period was of tremendous significance in the awakening of the masses. October Revolution of 1917 in Russia proved to be responsible to the greater extent for the development of mass anti-imperialist struggle. It was during this period the power of mass action was increasingly realised.

The sufferings of the masses had increased. The commercial classes, peasants, workers all were dissatisfied with the alien rule. The Montague Chelmsford Reforms appeared to be inadequate. All the lavish promises of self government made by imperialists produced the proverbial mouse in the end. " And whatever illusions were left about British good faith was soon torn to shreds by the introduction of the Rowlatt Report".<sup>1</sup>

With the beginning of year 1919 India stood at the cross roads. In 1919 Gandhi took the historic decision to start a Satyagraha movement in protest against the Rowlatt bills. It became a potent weapon in the armoury of Indian nationalist in their struggle against British rule.

Then on 13rd April, 1919 there came the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar. " This massacre proved to be a decisive turning point in the Indian attitude towards Britain and in the history of the freedom movement".<sup>2</sup> The Rowlatt bill and the Jallianwala episode transformed even Gandhi. Ultimately these events gave birth to the Satyagraha movement of 1919. Gandhi in 1920 promised to the people " Swaraj within a year ". There was great enthusiasm. But the sudden suspension of the movement proved to be fatal blow to national movement. It ended abruptly when it was suspended after

incident of violence at Chauri Choura. " For half a decade after the blow of a Bardoli the national movement fell to a low ebb. The Indian National Congress was in a state of deep crisis. Its popularity with the masses was rapidly declining. The monster of communalism was rearing its ugly head in this depression of the national movement".<sup>3</sup>

Thus when the mass civil disobedience movement was dropped there was widespread disappointment, a sense of disillusionment. Now the question began to be asked about the efficacy of Satyagraha. At this stage a new lead was given by Swarajists like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. They formed the party within congress known as ' Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party '. They followed the policy of non-cooperation in the council instead of boycotting the legislature. But ultimately the Swarajists themselves were disillusioned with imperialists. Thus nationalists were once again forced to turn aside from their hopes of co-operation and to look towards the masses for support.

But now the conditions have changed and have become more complicated than before. Now the Indian masses have started the struggle not only against foreign rule, but against the native exploiters also. The emergence of the industrial working class gave impetus to the new wave of struggle in the

middle of this decade. A new tendency of better organised strikes, which lasted for longer period of time, began to be observed.

Another important development of this period was the rise of the workers and peasants parties which began to appear in a number of provinces from 1926 onwards. During 1926-28 the Communists helped to organise four workers' and peasants' parties in Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and United provinces. The idea of organizing the workers and peasant party originated with M.N. Roy as early as 1923. The formation of 'Peasants' International gave boost to this idea. The Bombay Workers' and Peasants' party led a number of big economic and political demonstrations of the working class.

The British rulers regarded the emerging communist movement as a real danger, and decided to crush it at its initial stage only. So the Kanpure Bolshevik conspiracy case was staged against communist leaders in 1924.<sup>4</sup> As Prof. Sumit Sarkar has pointed out "Despite repeated allegations of British officials and some later scholars that the whole movement was no more than foreign conspiracy organised from Moscow, Indian communism really sprang, from roots within the national movement itself, as disillusioned revolutionaries, Non-cooperators,

Khilafatists, and labour and peasant activists sought new roads to political and social emancipation<sup>5</sup>.

Thus the influences of the socialist ideology propagated by communists and the general restiveness of the rising generation in the middle and late 1920s began to penetrate the youth and left sections of Indian nationalists. It started to give birth to many students and youth organizations which criticised both swarajits and no changers and demanded 'Purna Swaraj'. These youth organizations emphasized the need to combine nationalism with social justice. Subhas Bose and Nehru emerged as leaders of the left wing youth.

The Madras Congress at the end of 1927 showed the advance of the new leftist tendencies. A resolution for complete independence as the aim of the national movement was passed. The decision to boycott the Simmon Commission was also taken at this Congress. In fact a new tide of mass anti-imperialist struggle arose in 1928 With the coming of the Simmon Commission. It was greeted with balck flags, hartals and big demonstrations everywhere in the country. Labour participation in the agitation strengthened the mass movement in 1928-1929.

But the moderate leadership of the Congress in 1928 focused attention not on promoting a mass anti-imperialist campaign, but on convening ' All parties Conference '. They accepted the principle of adult-franchise but they were not prepared to accept democratic and secular principles in their totality. While accepting the younger generation's demand for ' Purna Swaraj ', they interpreted it to mean Dominion status.

In 1928-29 there came a wave of militant and better organised factory and railway workers' strikes. Now workers or Trade Unions began to make revolutionary political as well as economic demands. The Bombay Textile Workers strike continued for six months which was led by left revolutionary leaders. Under the growing pressure of political awakening among youths, workers and peasants, the Calcutta Congress declared that if the government did not accept the Nehru Report by the end of 1929, the Congress would give a call for a new civil disobedience campaign. Gandhi re-emerged as the leader of the Congress after six years of retirement. Finally on the 31st December, 1929 Congress accepted the demand for ' Purna Swaraj '.

The Lahore session resolved to launch a civil disobedience campaign. But Gandhi was still reluctant to launch a civil disobedience campaign. On January, 30, he made an offer of 11 points in return for which civil disobedience would be called off. This action came as a ' surprising development even to Jawaharlal Nehru. For Gandhi peasantry was a ' highly inflammable material '. But at the same time he fully realised the necessity of drawing the peasant masses in his non-violent civil disobedient movement for its success.

It was the broad background of changed political situation in 1920s from which Bhagat Singh emerged as revolutionary leader and thinker.

#### BHAGAT SINGH'S IDEAS ON CONTEMPORARY SITUATION :

Bhagat Singh expressed his ideas on many issues like extreme non-violent method of Gandhi, peasants, workers, trade unions, language, caste, religion and communalism, law, authority, punishment etc.

---



THE PROBLEMS THAT DIVIDED THE INDIAN PEOPLE :

LANGUAGE :

In 1924 heated debate was going on in Punjab regarding the script of the Punjabi language. Bhagat Singh had written an article on this issue at the age of 16 expressing his view in this regard. He maintained that every nation needed literature of high quality for its own upliftment, and the language was the primary need of literature. He desired that we should adopt one language, one script, one literature, one ideal and one nation, but the adoption of a single language should precede other things. By doing so we would be able to communicate and understand each other. Indian people should communicate in Hindi rather than in an alien language like English.

He pointed out correctly that supporters of Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi all were supporting their languages on communal basis. So he said ' Instead of making language a communal question we should adopt a wide perspective.<sup>5</sup> He suggested that Shikhs should not hesitate to accept Nagari script instead of Gurumukhi script. He wrote "the most important question before us at this juncture is to make India a united nation. It is necessary to have one language for a unified nation, but this can not be done all at once. For this we have to go step by step. If we cannot adopt

DR. BALASOHB KHOSLA LIBRARY  
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR



one language for the whole of India at the movement we should at least adopt one script".<sup>6</sup> He held that we should not embrace the language on the basis of religions convictions. He had warned against treating the problem of language as the problem of religion and making it communal problem. Thus he had realised that it is harmful from the point of national unity. The problem of language had nothing to do with religion. ' The question can be attended to by renouncing religions consideration'.<sup>7</sup>

CASTE SYSTEM AND ABOLITION OF UNTOUCHABILITY, RELIGION AND COMMUNALISM :

Bhagat Singh had adopted scientific and rational approach to every problems, he opposed all social divisions like untouchability, caste, creed etc.

The problem of untouchability had come to forefront during those days. It has moved even Gandhi and forced him to realise the gravity of the problem as national problem. Mr. Jinha in his presidential address of Kakinada Congress (May 1923) suggested that untouchables (Schedule Caste) could be kept under the patronage of Muslim and Hindu religious missionary organizations. When this issue was being discussed in the country, he had written a article named " The question of untouchable "

In this article he argued that it was a strange question that in our country having the population of 30 crores we still treated the 6 crore people as untouchables. He was ashamed to see that they were denied drinking water, the entry in worship places and other public utility places in the 20th century.<sup>8</sup> He criticises half-hearted social reformers like Malaviya who after receiving a garland from Mehtar felt himself impure and considered it necessary to take bath with wearing clothes. He appealed to think that when we worship animas why should we treat man as animal and deny him humanly rights.<sup>9</sup> He held that it was strange thing that while claiming ourselves to be spiritualists we could not give equal rights to our own country men. "In such a situation" Bhagat Singh said "how can we ask for greater political rights (from alien rulers) when we ourselves deny elementary rights of human beings to untouchables".<sup>10</sup> Then "we have no right to claim more political rights from bureaucracy." Here he even warned that if Hindu society continued to refuse to give elementary human rights and humanly treatment to their fellow country men then they would definitely enter into other religions like Muslim and Christian. And then we will have no right to complain against Muslims and Christians.<sup>11</sup>

Bhagat Singh further pointed out that even the problem of untouchability was getting communalised. All communities are trying to increase the members of their community by snatching untouchables towards their religions.<sup>12</sup>

Now he came to the real solution of the problem. The answer was not short and simple. He held " we should remember the fact that all men were born equal. They were equal even with regard to the division of labour in the society. It was all wrong thing to force anybody to do certain low esteemed work on the basis of birth or caste."<sup>13</sup>

Here Bhagat Singh even pointed out that our ancestors feared the revolt by drowntrodden, low caste people, and hence they advanced the theory of re-birth, pre-born life theory of incarnation to pacify them. He pointed out that by doing so they had committed a great sin. "All the humanity in man is destroyed. The sense of self confidence and self-reliance is also destroyed. Along with it we have created one more problem. We have created hatred towards all essential and important work in the minds of the people. As in U.P. we have started treating weavers (Kahars) as untouchables. All this had resulted in the hindrances in the very process of development"<sup>14</sup>

While referring to the change of uncleanliness among untouchables he wrote " It is clear that they are poor. Find out the solution for poverty. Poor people of high castes are also no less unclean than of low castes".<sup>15</sup>

In his view what was really needed was that these untouchables or lower caste people should get organised themselves. To demand equal rights along with Muslims - they being equal in numbers - was a indication of great hope to him.

So finally he suggested them "to get organised independently and stand on their own feet and to challenge the entire society. Don't look towards others for help and don't be the at the feet of others."<sup>16</sup> He had also warned them to be cautious of the deceitful moves of bureaucracy and government. In the manifesto of Naujawan Bharat Sabha also it was declared " Our real battle is against our own disabilities which are exploited by the enemy and some of our own people for their selfish motives".<sup>17</sup>

Bhagat Singh reminded them to understand clearly that Bureaucracy did not want to help them really but on the contrary it wanted to use untouchables for its interest. He even intivated them to join revolt against the present system and pointed out that slow going reforms were not going to make much difference. He wrote " It is the capitalistic bureaucracy which is the real cause of your poverty. So you should understand its strategies and avoid it. You are really downtrodden, be organised. You are not going to loose any thing but to loose

the chains of slavery. Be ready and revolt against the existing system. You are the base and real force of the country". He further pointed out "O' the sleeping lion revolt against social system and let the social revolution lead to political and economic revolution".<sup>18</sup>

#### RELIGION AND COMMUNALISM :

Bhagat Singh had decided to discard religion from his individual life on the grounds of scientific and rational thinking. Moreover he seemed to have understood the harmful and divisive role played by religion in social and national life. It seemed that he and his comrades of Sabha hold the view that religious superstitions and bigotry were a great hinderance in our progress, and we must do away with them.<sup>19</sup> Having developed a secular outlook he had opposed the use of religion in political life. He emphasised that whoever believed in progress and well being of the country should oppose the increasing tendency of mixing religion with politics.

In the manifesto of Naujawan Bharat Sabha, it was pointed that "Man ought to be attached more importance than the animals and yet here in India, they break each other's heads in the name of sacred animals."<sup>20</sup> "And it is all because

our vision is circumscribed by some narrow and wrong things." Manifesto further maintained " The conservativeness and orthodoxy of the Hindus, extra-territorialism and fanaticism of Mohammedans and narrow mindedness of all the communities in general are always exploited by the foreign enemy."<sup>21</sup>

Bhagat Singh and his associates believed that the real cause behind all communal riots was economic and their proper remedy was change and improvement in the economic conditions of the country. But this was not possible so far as alien government existed. They had learnt from Russian experience that it was necessary to arouse class consciousness among the people of different castes and communities to stop them fighting against each other. They thought it necessary, therefore, to make the poor peasants, workers, artisans realise that their real enemy was capitalist and foreign government. <sup>22</sup>

Against the spread of caste and communal feelings Bhagat Singh advocated the class approach and argued that these feelings had economic basis and the real answer against it was creating class consciousness in the minds of the people. The communalism was a handiwork of imperial powers and their stooges. He maintained that due to its weakness the Congress party and Gandhi would not be in a position to solve the problem.

BHAGAT SINGH ON PEASANTS AND WORKERS TRADE UNION :

Bhagat Singh in his leaflet explaining the reasons for Saunders murder had warned the bureacracy not to ' injure the feelings of a downtrodden and oppressed '.<sup>23</sup> Bhagat Singh had fully realised the importance of Labours and peasants as the real and potent force of struggle against aline rule.

He had expressed his happiness over the awakening of peasantry and labours during the first non-cooperation movement which had given the real force to the national movement. He has stated that these forces will definitely influence the future course of great movement. In his opinion really peasants and workers were the people to whom freedom was needed most. They wanted bread and the problem of bread could <sup>not</sup> be solved until the complete freedom was given. They could not wait for ' Round Table Conference ' or any other conference of this type. He had shown his sympathies with the workers who were on strike at different places. He had even expressed his desire that both peasants and labours should get organised and fight for their rights. <sup>24</sup>



It was not decidental that Bhagat Singh and Dutta decided to throw bomb in the Central Assembly. When the wasthrusting upon people new repressive measures like those the public safety and Trade Disputes Bills - which were introduce to be used to curtain the activities of communists and the trade union rights of the workers they decided to oppose it. He criticised the wholesale arrests' of the leaders of the labour movement and said " The indiscriminate arrests of labour leaders working in the open filed clearly indicate whither the wind blows. Bhagat Singh reacted quite sharply to this news of bills and declared that somethings should be done. In a statement read in the Session Court on 6th June, 1929, Bhagat Singh said " The starving and struggling millions were deprived of their primary rights and the sole means of improving their economic welfare. None who has felt like us for the dumb-driven drudges of labourers could possibly witness this spectacle with equanimity. None whose heart bleeds for them who have given their life blood in silence to the building up of economic structure, could repress the cry which this ruthless blow had wrong out of our hearts. We droped the bomb on the floor of the Assembly Chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart rending agony. Our sole purpose was " to make the deaf hear " and to give the hidless a timely warning".<sup>25</sup>

In the same court Bhagat Singh said " Producers or labourers, in spite of being the most necessary element of society, are robbed by their exploiters of their labour and deprived of their elementary rights. The peasant who grows corn for all, starves with his family; the weaver who supplied the world market with textile fabrics, has not enough to cover his own and his children's bodies; masons, smiths and carpenters who raise magnificent places, live like pariahs in the slums. The capitalists and exploiters, the parasites of society, squander millions on their whims. These terrible inequalities and forced disparity of chances are bound to lead to chaos. <sup>26</sup>

In the same statement he said " Labour is the real sustainer of society. The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of the workers.<sup>27</sup> In his view the only weapon in our hand for overthrowing the imperialists was toiling masses and nothing else. He had suggested that party workers should get associated with workers, bring them in labour movement from trade unions and prepare them for proletarian revolution.

THE NATURE OF BRITISH RULE, PARLIAMENT AND IMPERIALIST  
EXPLOITATION :

Bhagat Singh in a leaflet explaining the reasons for Saunder's murder said that the British authority in India was ' the most tyrannical government of governments in the world '

and they felt it necessary to abolish the man as a representative of that cruel institution.<sup>28</sup>

In a statement read in the Session Court he said ' Our practical protest was against the institution, which since its birth, has eminently helped to display not only its worthlessness but its far reaching power for mischief. The more we have pondered, the more deeply we have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to world India's humiliation and helplessness, and it symbolises the overriding domination of an irresponsible and autocratic rule.'<sup>29</sup> He further referred to the fact that the national demands pressed by people's representatives only 'found the waste paper basket as its final destination '. He maintained "Soleman resolutions passed by the House have been contemptuously trampled underfoot on the floor of the so called Indian Parliament. Resolutions regarding the repeal of the repressive and arbitrary measures have been treated with sublime contempt, and the government measures and proposals, rejected as unacceptable by the elected members of the legislature have been restored by a mere stroke of the pen "<sup>30</sup> In his opinion there was no justification for the existence of such institution which was in fact ' Organised with the hard earned money of sweating millions of India, was only a hollow show '. He even criticised the mentality of Indian leaders who helped government and its institutions in its work of above mentioned nature.

He pointed<sup>that</sup> the Course of the debate only served to confirm our conviction that the labouring millions of India had nothing to expect from an institution that stood as menacing monument to the strangling of the exploiters and the serfdom of the helpless labourers ".<sup>31</sup> While referring the exploitation by government he said that let the aline bureaucratic exploiters do what they wished but he wanted to bring them 'before the public eye in their naked form '.

He clearly stated that the government machinery was just a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to further and safeguard its interests. He vehemently criticised the exploitative nature of the government and stood for its abolition. He accepted that there existed a state of war between the British national and the Indian nation and claimed to be war prisoner for actually participating in that war. He further wrote " Let us declare that the state of war does exist and shall exist so long as the Indian toiling masses and their natural resources are being expldided by a handful of parasites. They may be purely British capitalists or mixed British and India, or even purely Indian. They may be carrying on their insidious explditation through mixed or even purely Indian bureaucratic apparatus. All these things make no difference. No matter if your government tries and succeeds in winning over

the leaders of the upper strata of the Indian society through petty concessions and compromises and thereby causes temporary demoralization in the main body of the forces."<sup>32</sup>

Referring to the continuous war between Britain and India he said that in very near future the final battle would be fought and the settlement arrived at. He declared 'The days of capitalist and imperialist exploitation are numbered. The war neither began with us nor is it going to end with our lives. It is inevitable consequence of the historic events and the existing environment.'<sup>33</sup> Thus the correct understanding of the process of the history and inherent contradiction of the system (British rule) is well shown by Bhagat Singh. He asked : 'Can ordinances and safety Bills snuff out the flames of freedom in India?'

In one of his articles named as 'Yuvak' published in 1925 he wrote that the Indian youth should like American youth declare, "We believe that when a Government becomes a destructive of the natural rights of man, it is the man's duty to destroy that government".<sup>34</sup>

He realised that imperialism could not be overthrown except by force. He stood for complete independence and a revolutionary overthrow of the existing government. As

Randive points out his study of Lenin led him to " Understood that India's struggle for freedom was part of the international working class struggle for socialism."<sup>35</sup> Thus he was a man with a broad international outlook who wanted to liberate not only India but the entire humanity from the clutches of imperialist domination.

AUTHORITY, LAW, ORDER, JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT :

In a statement of the unde fended accused explaining why they had proposed not to participate in the proceedings he had dealt with topics like authority, Law, Justics and punishment. He decalred that he believed in " Man being the source of all authority, no individual or government can be entitled to any authority unless and until it is directly derived from the people." In his opinion British government<sup>was</sup> an utter negation of these principles. It<sup>was</sup> organised to exploit the oppressed nations and based on brute force. "All such governments including British government are not better than an ' organised gang of robbers ' with all powerful means. And in the name of ' Law and order ', they crush all those who dare to expose or oppose them. "

He further wrote " We believe that imperialism is nothing but a vast conspiracy organised with predatory motives. Imperialism is the last stage of development of insidious exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation. The

imperialists with a view to further their practical designs, not only commit judicial murders through their law courts but also organise general massacres, devastations and other horrible crimes like war. They feel no hesitation in shooting down innocent and unarmed people who refuse to yield to their depredatory demands or to acquiesce in their ruinous and abominable designs. Under the garb of custodians of 'law and order', they break the peace, create disorder, kill people and commit all conceivable crimes<sup>36</sup>.

He held that freedom was undeniable birth right of all people. Every man had the inalienable right of enjoying the fruits of his labour and every nation was indisputably the master of its resources. If any government deprived them of these primary rights then it was the right and duty of the people to destroy that government. British government was negation of these principles, its very existence is not justifiable. So every extent made or method used to destroy this government was morally justified.

He maintained that the end of law was not to restrict or restraint on freedom but to preserve and enlarge it. The laws should be made for the common good and should rest ultimately on the consent and the authority of the people. No

one including legislators should be considered above law. He further argued " The sanctity of law can be maintained only so long as it is the expression of the will of these people. When it becomes a mere instrument in the hands of an oppressing class, it loses its sanctity and significance. As soon as the law ceases to correspond to the popular social needs, it becomes the means for preparation of injustice and tyranny. The maintaining of such a law is nothing but a hypocritical assertion of a special interest against the common interest."<sup>37</sup>

Then he showed how the British law courts were part and parcel of the machinery of exploitation. The present laws of the government were meant for furthering the interests of the alien rulers, against the interests of the Indian people. Therefore, they were not morally binding and Indians should defy and disobey these laws ".

In an article " Why I am an Atheist " and ' Introduction to Dreamland ' Bhagat Singh has referred to the problem of crime and punishment. In his opinion crime was the most serious social problem which needed a very tactful treatment. There were three important theories of punishment. These were retributive, deterrent and reformative. He suggested that, instead of retributive



' the reformatory theory should form the basis of punishment.'<sup>38</sup>  
 This theory is essential for human progress. Jails should be reformatories and not veritable hells. He even said ' The greatest sin in this world is to be poor. Poverty is a sin, it is punishment.'<sup>39</sup> Then asked ' how far would you appreciate a criminologist, jurist or a legislator who proposes such measures of punishment which shall inevitably force men to commit more offences ?' He also expressed some ideas on education.

REFORMS, ADULT FRANCHISE AND AUTHORITY, EDUCATION, etc.

In his ' Message to young political Workers ' he had discussed the problem of Reforms. In the beginning itself he made it clear that reforms should be considered as our immediate object always keeping the ultimate object clearly. We should be always ' candid and business like ' while analysing the present situation.

He said inspite of much hue and cry regarding India's participation and share in Indian government very limited powers have been given to them. The Viceroy's Council formed by Minto Morley Reforms possessed only consultation rights. During the war period, when the support and help from India was most needed, promises about self government were made

and some reforms were effected. Here limited legislative powers have been entrusted to the Assembly but they were subject to the good will of the Viceroy.

But in 1928 the British government was promising some reforms. Bhagat Singh held that revolutionary parties should adopt <sup>the</sup> following attitude towards the reforms.<sup>40</sup>

- 1) Extent of responsibility transferred on the shoulders of the Indians.
- 2) Form of the Government institutions that are going to be introduced and the extent of the right of participation given to the masses.
- 3) Future prospects and the safeguards.

Further explaining these he wrote " the extent of responsibility given to our people can be judged by the control our representatives will have on the executive. Up till now, the executive was never made responsible to the Legislative Assembly and the Viceroy had the veto power. This made all the efforts of the elected members futile. Viceroy very often used his extraordinary powers to shamelessly trample the decision of representatives under foot. Hence the method of executive

formation is important. We should see whether the executive is to be elected by the members of popular assembly or is it imposed from above as before and whether it is responsible to the house or not."

As regards second criteria he pointed out "we can judge it through the scope of franchise. Universal suffrage should be introduced and properly qualifications should be completely abolished. Both male and female adults should be given the right to vote. At present we can simply see how far the franchise has been extended. It is very limited."

Regarding the form of government he discarded the upper house as much a ' bourgeois superstition or trap and stood for the unicameral government while mentioning provincial autonomy he wrote ' The Governor imposed from above, equipped with extraordinary powers, shall prove to be no less than a despot". He said that it was better to call it the " provincial tyranny " instead of " autonomy ". For him it was the strange type of democratisation of the state institution.

And above all he reminded the people that "the analysis of these things is mainly meant to form a clear idea about our situation. It is not meant to rejoice over the achievement. Compromise never means surrender, but a step forward. "

He had supported the idea of free education and appreciated the work done by Russia in this regard.<sup>41</sup> He emphasised the need to educate the masses and to create a favourable atmosphere for future transformation. Thus he also understood the importance of political education of masses. Therefore, he said "In the Struggle we can best train and educate them." Here it seems that he is quite aware of the role played by capitalist government. Therefore, he said "All the capitalist governments are not only not going to help any such effort, but on the contrary, suppress it mercilessly!"<sup>42</sup>

Bhagat Singh clearly pointed out the evil effects of the British imperial rule and made it clear that without a true national revolution the basic reforms in education, agriculture, industries and suffrage could not be initiated. But the divisions in the people in the name of religion, caste, language and race were engineered by the alien government. He warned the people against this and asked them to adopt secular and rational approach.

BHAGAT SINGH ON CONGRESS, GANDHI AND NON-VIOLENT METHOD :

Bhagat Singh and his associates had thought seriously about the movement run by Congress, its leaders their aims and objectives and methods etc.

In fact much awakening was generated in the country when the first non-cooperation movement was launched by Congress under the leadership of Gandhi. But it was cooled down with its untimely and unwisely withdrawal after Chauri Chaura incident. All the enthusiasm and awakening was diffused. This made the young revolutionaries the bitter critics of the Congress and its leadership. Bhagat Singh and his associates had understood the existing reality accurately and after analysing it he had expressed his views on this issue.

Bhagat Singh referring to the movement led by the Congress wrote " This is a struggle dependent upon the middle class shopkeepers and a few capitalists. Both these, and particularly the latter, can never dare to risk its property or possession in any struggle. The real revolutionary armies are in the villages and in factories, the peasantry and the labourers. But our bourgeois leaders do not and cannot dare to tackle them. The sleeping lion once awakened from its

slumber shall become irresistible even after the achievement of what our leaders aim at. After his first experience with the Ahmedabad labourers in 1920 Mahatma Gandhi declared : " We must not tamper with the labourers. It is dangerous to make political use of the factory proletariat . Since then, they never dared to approach them. There remains the peasantry. The Bardoli resolution of 1922 clearly defines the horror the leaders felt when they saw the gigantic peasant class rising to shake off not only the domination of an alien nation but also the yoke of the landlords. It is here that our leaders prefer a surrender to the British than to the peasantry".<sup>43</sup>

Further he had pointed out that except Jawaharlal Nehru there was not a single other leader in the Congress who had tried to organise the peasants and workers. No body wanted to run that risk. This was so because they did not want to effect complete change. Because " Through economic and administrative pressure they hoped to get a few more concessions for the Indian capitalists." <sup>44</sup>

In spite of his criticism of the Congress he fully understood the part played by the Congress in creating awakening among the ignorant masses a keen desire for freedom.<sup>45</sup> Even he expected great things of it in the future. For him

the mere act of defining Swaraj as complete independence, this technical change in the Congress constitution, could hardly be called a new era. He said " It will be a great day indeed when the Congress will decide upon a countrywide programme of mass action, based on well recognised revolutionary principles. Till then the unfurling of the flag of Independence is a mockery".<sup>46</sup>

While criticising the Congress regarding its approach towards different reforms he said that the British government threw those reforms before the constitutionalist agitators to lure them away from right path. Further he said that it was the bribe paid to them for their support to the government in its policy of crushing and uprooting the revolutionaries.<sup>47</sup>

In a pamphlet ' The Philosophy of the bomb ' commenting over its resolution of acceptance of complete Independence they desire and said " This year it has accepted the ideal which the revolutionaries have preached and lived up to more than a quarter of a century. Let us hope the next year will see it endorse their method also".<sup>48</sup>

GANDHI AND NON-VIOLENT METHOD :

Bhagat Singh frankly accepted that inspite of its limitations of narrow vision Gandhism tried to come nearer to revolutionary ideology at least to some extent. It was so because it rested upon the mass activity. But these activities were not meant for masses. By bringing the workers in the national movement he had put them on the road to proletarian revolution. It was different thing that they had been shamelessly used with selfish interests for their political programme ". 49

Gandhi after Bardoli warned that he would not accept Swaraj at the cost of the sacred principles of Satyagraha and non-violence.<sup>50</sup> Thus Gandhi made non-violence a thing of principle. He struck to his doctrinaire approach regarding non-violence as the only proper and effective weapon for struggle. Revolutionary terrorists opposed Gandhi's method and they advocated their different method - the revolutionary terrorism\_which was to be essentially violent in nature.

They declared\* It has become a fashion these days to indulge in wild and meaningless talk of non-violence. We would be ungrateful to him if we do not salute him for the



immense awakening that has been brought about by his non-cooperation movement in the country. But to us the Mahatma it an impossible visionary. Non-violence may be a noble ideal, but it is a thing of the morrow. We can, situated as we are, never hope to win our freedom by mere non-violence. We believe in non-violence, not as an end itself but as a means to a noble end. "51

He declared that terrorising the people was never their object and they did not believe that terrorism alone would bring independence. He asked " The British government exists, because the Britisher have been successful in terrorising the whole of India. How are we to meet this official terrorism ? Only counter terrorism on the part of revolutionaries can checkmate effectively this bureaucratic bylling". 52

Bhagat Singh believed that destruction was a necessary pre condition for construction. It was essential at least to some extent when they wanted to end the exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation.

Bhagat Singh and Dutt in their statement said that they had 'marked the end of an era of Utopian non-violence of whose futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond the shadow of doubt.' Further explaining the meaning of Utopian non-violence they said "Force when aggressively applied is 'violence' and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable, but when it is used in the furtherance of a legitimate cause, it has its moral justification. The elimination of force at all costs is Utopian." <sup>53</sup>

Bhagat Singh and his associates stated that they stood for winning independence by all the forces physical as moral at their command. While some stood for only moral force which was not sufficient in present context. Terrorism had been born as a necessary and an inevitable phase in the country. And it will develop into revolution. They have even bitterly asked Gandhi 'how many enemies of India he has been able to turn into friends? How many O'Dwyers, Readings and Irwins had he been able to convert into friends of India through the practice of non-violence?' <sup>54</sup>

While refuting to the changes made in cult of bomb they advocated that they have definite philosophy of bomb. In an answer to Gandhi's contention that violence impedes the march of progress they opposed the view and referred

to Russia to show that it progresses through an armed revolution. Further they charged that the non-cooperation movement failed due to Gandhi's adherence of non-violence. They said " We will even go further and state that it was mainly the mania for non-violence and Gandhi's compromising mentality that brought about the disruption of the forces that had come together at the call of mass action."<sup>55</sup> They pointed out that it failed in South Africa, it failed to bring ' Swaraj within a year ' to Indian masses and it failed for the Bardoli peasants. Up-to this time it has been belssed with one result - Failure. They said that in fact Satyagraha as preached by Gandhi is a form of agitation a protest, leading up invariably, as has already been seen, to a compromise.<sup>56</sup> Therefore they declared that it was useless to a nation striving for national independence to completely commit itself to non-violence.

Bhagat Singh in his letter to young political workers clearly pointed out " We should not have any illusions regarding the possibilities, failures and achievement of the movement led by Congress. It would be proper to call it Gandhism. It hesitates to take the definate stand on the issue of independence but tries to be party in the power. It is trying to interpret ' Complete Independence ' in a strange way. Its method is different which is completely useless from the point of massess. It feels ashamed to dash with the realities of the

situation. Its leaders are confined to their narrow interests and for the furtherance of its own interests they are sticking to obstinancy of the bourgeoisie.<sup>57</sup>

Thus Bhagat Singh was not happy with the Congress party, Mahatma Gandhi and his theory of Satyagraha because he held that non-violence was a result of compromising methods of Gandhi and non-violence could not succeed all the time and at all the places.

Social and political ideas of Bhagat Singh clearly showed that he did not share his ideas with the contemporary nationalists and terrorists. He made many ideological advances in the field of social reforms language, religion, farmers and workers. He realised that the problem of peasants labourers and education could not be solved by maintaining colonial and capitalist economic structure. He also realised that the problem of national integration and unity could not be solved by wrongly understanding the issues of language, religion and caste. They should not be understood in a narrow religious or parochial perspective, but should be viewed from the class perspective. He had viewed national revolution in a colonial society through new perspective.

REFERENCES

1. Choudhari, Sukhabir : Growth of Nationalism In India, (1919-1929), Vol. II, Trimurti Publications, New Delhi, 1973, p. 2
2. Ghose, Sankar : Political Ideas And Movements In India, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1969, p. 112
3. Kumar, Shive : Peasantry And The Indian National Movement, (1919-1933), Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1980, pp.128-129
4. Garud, Shantaram (Ed)(Marathi) : Bharatiya Swatantrya Sangram, Samajwadi Prabodhini, Ichalkaranji,1986
5. Verma, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi,1986, p.51
6. Ibid : p. 50
7. Ibid : p. 54
8. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, 1988, p. 237
9. Ibid : p. 239
10. Ibid : p. 238

11. Ibid : p. 238
12. Ibid : p. 239
13. Ibid : p. 239
14. Ibid : p. 240
15. Ibid : p. 240
16. Ibid : p. 241
17. Verma, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986, p. 180
18. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, p. 241
19. Veram, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986, p. 180
20. Ibid : p. 179
21. Ibid : p. 180
22. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 191 - 192.

23. Verma, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986, p. 62
24. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 200 - 201
25. Verma, Shiva : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986, p. 71
26. Ibid : p. 74
27. Ibid : p. 75
28. Ibid : p. 63
29. Ibid : p. 70
30. Ibid : p. 70
31. Ibid : p. 71
32. Ibid : p.155
33. Ibid : p. 68

34. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, p. 89
35. Verma, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986 with foreword by B. T. Randive
36. Ibid : p. 101
37. Ibid : p. 102
38. Ibid : p. 122
39. Ibid : p. 150
40. Ibid : p. 132
41. Ibid : p. 122
42. Ibid : p. 123
43. Ibid : pp. 130 - 131
44. Ibid : p. 131
45. Ibid : p. 194
46. Ibid : p. 197
47. Ibid : p. 195
48. Ibid : p. 194



49. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed)(Hindi): Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1988, p. 401
50. Sarkar, Jagannath & Others (Ed) : India's Freedom Struggle - Several Streams, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986, p. 56
51. Verma, Shiva (Ed) : Selected Writings of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1986, p. 186
52. Ibid : p. 186
53. Ibid : p. 72
54. Ibid : p. 193
55. Ibid : p. 196
56. Ibid : p. 196
57. Singh & Chamanlal (Ed) (Hindi) : Shaheed Bhagat Singh Aur Unake Sathiyonke Dastavez, Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1986, p. 400