

The SGPC and The Congress: A Study of Their Relations (1930-37)

Abstract

The SGPC as the main representative body of the Sikhs determined the socio-political position of the Sikhs in the years preceding independence. Coming into prominence with the Gurdwara reforms movement, the body played an important role in the taking important decisions in the interests of the Sikh community in relation to the communal award bill, the national movement and the two world wars. The paper is a study of the relations between the Congress Party which was a national entity and the SGPC which was a regional/religious entity operating in Punjab. The study traces and brings out various factors which made it pragmatic for the SGPC to harness proximity with the Congress in the face of their contradictory and conflicting interests and political objectives.

Keywords: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Congress, Communal Award, Representation, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience.



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Introduction

It is well known that the Shiromani Gurdawara Parbandhak Committee (hereafter SGPC) came into being as a statutory religious body of the Sikhs in the early part of the 20th century. At this time Gurdwara Reform movement was at its peak. The SGPC was constituted for the purpose of wresting control of the Sikh Gurdwaras from caretakers called Mahants who were an impediment in the way of organizing the Sikhs as a cohesive religious community. Before its formation on November 15th, 1920, the Mahants loyal to the British controlled the Sikh Gurdwaras. However, the socio-religious movements particularly the Singh Sabha Movement led to wide spread socio-religious awakening against the Mahants. Once the SGPC was established as the sole and single most important representative of the Sikhs which would voice their socio-religious concerns, it became incumbent on the SGPC to determine the contours of its role in the larger context of the Indian freedom struggle. As a social organization, role and contribution of SGPC during the freedom struggle and on the eve of partition was phenomenal as it involved serious efforts to rehabilitate refugees. Yet, in the period under study the most important religious organization of the regional community of the Sikhs had to make a large number of subtle maneuvers as far as its relations with the Congress was concerned. Just like the Muslims, the Sikhs were a religious minority. Thus, the responsibility of safeguarding the interests of the Sikh community in the larger context of nationalist movement and in terms of ensuring adequate representation in the emerging political dynamic came to rest with the SGPC. In the years before Independence, the relations of SGPC with the Congress were characterized by a series of episodes where the SGPC had to analyze the intricacies of its regional/religious agenda in relation to the nationalist agenda of the Congress. In this context it becomes important to conduct a study of the changes and transformation that took place in its constitution, working and overall orientation as SGPC has emerged as a formidable force in Punjab politics.

Aims of the Study

1. To analyze the role of SGPC in determining the socio-political status of the Sikhs in the period under study.
2. To understand the dynamics of the relations of SGPC and Congress in the context of the nationalist agenda and the socio-political and religious concerns of the Sikhs.
3. To study the role of important Sikh leaders like Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh.

- To trace the reasons that created the meeting ground between Congress and SGPC/Akalis despite their obvious differences.

Main Text of the Study

The genesis of SGPC its emergence as a political force in the State of Punjab and the basic dimensions of its political culture are vital issues. As such the present study focuses on the religious and political contribution of SGPC in reform of the Gurdwaras till 1947; role in the development of Sikh religion during 1925-1984; the imprint of its socio-religious reforms on the Sikhs and part played by the SGPC in arousing socio-political awareness among the Sikhs. As part of the paper, relations of SGPC with the British Government before freedom and the

Government of India as well as the Government of Punjab after the country was liberated have been examined analytically. The paper also examines the relation between the SGPC and the Akali Dal keeping in mind the changing political scenario of Punjab from time to time. The socio-religious, economic, educational, cultural and relations other organizations during the period of this study in its role as the most important representative of Sikh community are some other significant characteristics of the present study.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the Sikhs in Punjab formed a small but an important minority community.¹ The population of the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in Punjab was as follows:

The population of Punjab on the basis of Religion, Including North West Frontier

Year	Total Population	Hindus	%	Muslims	%	Sikhs	%
1901	26880217*	10287800	38.9	14141122	52	2130987	7
1911	24204814	8773621	36	12275477	50	2883729	11.7
1921	25539248	8779651	35	12813363	50.6	3110060	12

During this period, in their search for identity, the Sikhs founded new institutions and evolved new leadership. Within a span of twenty years, they became a power to reckon with. They began to challenge the established authorities and they jealously guarded their identity. However, they also had apprehensions that their participation in the national movement might jeopardize their identity.

This predicament and dilemma of the Sikhs was quite apparent when Sikhs launched a struggle for Gurdwara reforms popularly known as the Akali Movement (1920-25).² It was commonly believed that the struggle derived strength from the Non-Cooperation Movement: 1920-22.³ It can be safely assumed that both these movements in Punjab reinforced each other. The Gurdwara reform movement developed into a mass movement with a strong anti-government slant, but it was also plagued by contradictions from within. There was one section of the Sikhs who had strong nationalist credentials. Apart from serving the Sikh Panth genuinely, this section wanted to accelerate the pace of the national movement. Quite notably, since the struggle for Gurdwara reforms was rooted in religion the majority continued to think more in terms of their allegiance to the Sikh Panth and wanted to maintain a distinct identity linked to their religious struggle. Thus, in terms of the relations with the congress which was engrossed in the freedom struggle it can be said that the Akali Movement neither merged itself completely and indistinguishably into the national movement nor blindly adopted the Congress programme. However, it maintained close relations with the Congress and continued to pressurize the Government to legislate a suitable Gurdwara bill and forwarding the Sikh socio-political agenda.⁴

Under the circumstances with a partial transfer of power at the provincial level under Diarchy each community-Hindu, Muslim and Sikh wanted to secure more seats in the Punjab Legislative Council in order to strengthen its position in the power structure. The Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme had accepted the Sikh demand of separate representation. They were

given 19.1% seats in the council.⁵ However, the Sikh community was not satisfied as the Sikhs wanted 30% representation to safeguard their interests. The community felt upset because the Muslims were given a statutory-majority of 50% seats in the Council. The working of Diarchy in Punjab convinced the members of SGPC and the Sikh community that the Muslims would always be in an advantageous position. For instance, in 1922 the British with the support of the Muslim members passed the first Gurudwara Act despite strong opposition by the entire Sikh community.⁶

The SGPC and the Central Sikh League warned that if the communal representation was retained; the Sikhs must secure 30% seats to protect their interest. In 1927, when Congress accepted the Muslim demand of joint electorate with proportionate reservation of seats the Sikhs leadership was also assured of adequate weightage for them.⁷ The Nehru Report (1928) purported to provide a framework of a "Swaraj Constitution" and recommended that there would be no communal representation in Punjab unlike other provinces. Quite expectedly, the SGPC rejected the Nehru Report. Master Tara Singh, Giani Sher Singh and other prominent Sikh leaders claimed that they had demanded complete abolition of communal representation not only in Punjab but all over the country. They insisted that if the communal representation was to be given to any minority in any other province, the same concession should be given to the Sikh minority in Punjab.⁸ Moreover, the leaders alleged that by accepting universal adult suffrage, the Nehru Report would establish Muslim rule in Punjab because they had a numerical majority in Punjab.⁹

With the lapse of the Nehru Report in 1929 and after the assurance given by the Congress, an all parties Sikhs meeting passed a resolution appreciating Gandhi's efforts and those of the Congress in acceding to the demands of the Sikhs body. On 26 January 1930, a large number of Sikhs participated in the Independence Day celebrations, even as Master Tara Singh appealed to the Sikh

councilors to resign their seats in deference to the Congress programme.¹⁰

On March 6th, 1930, the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched. The Congress minded Sikh Leaders like Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Amar Singh Jhabbal and others welcomed it. Jaswant Singh led a Jatha of Sikhs to break the salt law.¹¹ However, there was a difference of opinion between Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh President of the SGPC over the question of participation in the civil disobedience Movement. Baba Kharak Singh complained that despite Gandhi's assurance of including the saffron colour of the Sikhs in the National flag, it had not been done till then. Therefore, he refused to participate in the movement. On the other hand, Master Tara Singh did not want to boycott this Movement in an outright manner.¹²

Thus, in the face of some opposition by a section of Sikh leaders, the Shiromani Akali Dal as well as the SGPC resolved to support the Civil Disobedience Movement. These two bodies immediately placed the services of 5000 Akalis at disposal the support of Gandhi. Similarly, the Central Sikh League also decided in favour of participating in the movement.¹³ Master Tara Singh was nominated as a member of the "War Council" formed by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to co-ordinate the activities of the council in Punjab. After the arrest of Saifuddin Kitchlew, Master Tara Singh was appointed. "Dictator" of this body, but he too was arrested at Peshawar.¹⁴

The incident of firing at Sisganj Gurudwara in Delhi proved to be an important event. In connection with the incident of firing at Sisganj Gurudwara Governor of Punjab wrote to Irwin, the Viceroy: "The repercussions of this firing at the Sisganj Gurdwara at Delhi on the Sikhs had been very unfortunate. I am afraid it has brought in a lot of extremist Sikhs as a body in the movement. Formerly, we only had to deal with individual Sikhs' agitating for the independence cause. We shall now have to deal with the whole extreme wing".¹⁵

The SGPC soon launched a campaign of boycott and picketing of foreign cloth shops in protest against firing at Sisganj Gurdwara. Baba Kharak Singh, President of the SGPC, was anxious to maintain the distinct character of Sisganj agitation.¹⁶

As part of an important development, on March 5th, 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. The Congress agreed to participate in the Second Round Table Conference. Similarly, the Central Sikh League also decided to take part in the Conference.¹⁷ In the meantime, a deputation of Sikh leaders led by Master Tara Singh who had contributed in a big way to make the civil disobedience a success in Punjab, met Gandhi and presented him a memorandum of 17 demands to be taken up at the Round Table Conference. Among these, the most conspicuous new demand was the redistribution of the boundaries of Punjab, which read as follows: "The boundaries of Punjab may be so altered by transferring the predominantly Mohmmadan areas to the Frontier province to produce a communal balance. In this

reconstituted Punjab, there should be joint electorate with the reservation of seats".¹⁸

This demand of the Sikhs was probably a reaction against Mohammed Iqbal's scheme of a separate state comprising Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. When their demands were described as communal, Master Tara Singh replied: "The only way to fight communalism is by counter demands of the same nature."¹⁹

In the given situation, the Congress Working Committee put across its own formula to solve the communal problem as a whole involving all religious communities. It was a solution, framed on 'National Lines' though it was Communal in appearance. According to this formula: "For the Hindus in Sind, the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in Punjab and NWFP, as well as for the Hindus and Muslims in a Province where they are less than 25% of the population seats shall be reserved in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures on the basis of population, with the right to contest additional seats".²⁰

This formula did not only amount to a rejection of the Sikh demand of 30% representation, rather it promised to give them 13% representation in proportion to their population whereas under the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme they had been promised 19.1% seats. The only concession given then was the right to contest additional seats, which the Sikhs considered unrealistic and unsatisfactory in the contemporary situation. The All Sikh Parties Conference held in September 1931 rejected the formula and reiterated their charter of 17 demands.²¹ On the other hand, the Sikhs with greater nationalistic orientation like Sardul Singh Caveeshar accepted it.²²

The Second Round Table Conference was opened in London on September 7th 1931. Gandhi was the sole representative of the Congress. Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh represented the Sikhs.²³ Like the first Round Table Conference a Minorities Committee was again appointed. Gandhi presented the Congress Working Committee's formula that ran on national lines though it remained communal in appearance. However, it was rejected by both Muslims and the Sikhs in the Minorities' Committee.²⁴

Finally, in the absence of any solution of the communal problem, the British government was requested to give, its own verdict on the communal question. Thus, on August 16, 1932, Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister of England, on behalf of His Majesty's government, announced the Communal Award which retained separate electorates. In this verdict the three communities in Punjab were represented as follows:²⁵ General Hindus-27.42%; Muslims 51.42%; and Sikhs 18.85%. It was apparent that the Muslims secured a statutory majority because of the bigger size of their population, whereas the Hindus and the Sikhs gained nothing by the award.

The Communal Award was strongly condemned by the SAD and the Sikhs. It was denounced as a "scrap of paper"²⁶. This move was hailed by the SGPC and SAD. The leading moderate Sikhs in collaboration with a number of other Sikh bodies also condemned the award.²⁷ At this point the SGPC requested the Congress to support the Sikhs

against the Communal Award. The Congress Working Committee had already denounced it from a national point of view. It stated: "Judged by the national standard, the Communal Award is wholly unsatisfactory, besides being open to serious objection on other grounds".²⁸ Under the new Constitution of 1935, elections were to be held in Punjab. The Congress had formed a separate Congress Sikh Party for the elections in Punjab with the object of widening the base of the national movement and for developing mass contact among the Sikhs. Sardar Surmukh Singh Jhabbal was made the President of the party. Many sections of the Sikh such as socialists, Kirtis and others joined it.²⁹ Jawahar Lal Nehru's election tours in Punjab strengthened the position of the Congress Sikh Party. Moreover, the Congress had meanwhile abandoned the initial policy of neutrality towards the Communal Award.³⁰ In the time prior to the election, the Congress and the Akali Party³¹ also reached a compromise for electoral gains. The Akali Party decided to contest 14 seats and 10 seats were left for the Sikhs of the Congress.³²

It was also decided that the Akali Party in the Legislature, would support Congress in all political matters and would be amenable to the rules and discipline of the Congress Party.³³ It was clear that the Congress had given up its neutral stance towards the communal stance.³⁴ Secondly, as the programme of the Sikhs' supreme body was identical with the Congress policy, it considered this proper and just to join hands with the Congress. Thirdly, the Akalis alliance with the Congress was bound to help them in fighting against the Khalsa National Party.³⁵ In a nutshell, view of the imminent Muslim domination, the Akalis were anxious to secure the support of the Congress with the object of safeguarding their own interests in the new government.

In the past, the Chief of the Punjab Congress had also worked against the Communal Award, and the statutory majority of the Muslims.³⁶ The SGPC/SAD had probably realized that they would get support from the Gopi Chand group against Muslim majority rule in Punjab. In fact, it can be said that the union of the Congress and the SGPC was purely a marriage of convenience and not a meeting of hearts. It is clear that political objectives and vested interest had motivated the Congress in their approach to the SGPC and the Akalis. Through their support, the Congress wanted to reach down to the Sikh masses. Thus, under the political conditions described above provincial elections were held in 1937. Unionist Party got 96 out of 175 seats in the Punjab Legislative Assembly and secured the majority. The Congress obtained 18 seats.³⁷ Among the Sikhs, the Khalsa National Party secured 14, the Akalis 10, and the Congress Sikhs 5. With the absolute majority of the Unionist Party in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, Sikander Hayat Khan formed the ministry. Sunder Singh Majithia, the leader of the Khalsa National Party, joined it. On the other hand, the Akalis led by Sampuran Singh joined the Congress as an opposition party in the Council. However, even in the given situation the Akalis had been successful in

retaining their liberty in all socio-religious matters affecting their community.³⁸

As the events unfolded, the Sikander-Jinnah Pact (1937) created a strong fear of absolute Muslim domination in the province among the Sikhs. They responded by deciding to join the Congress. The Congress, in order to strengthen the nationalist forces welcomed the Akalis, especially their mentor i.e. SGPC. Unlike the Hindu Maha Sabha and Muslim League, neither the Akalis nor the SGPC had been labeled as a communal organization.³⁹

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the SGPC pressed the government for the protection of their interests in return for their military services during the war. It along with Shiromani Akali Dal viewed the international crisis with deep concern and understanding.⁴⁰ Moreover, both these bodies emphasized that notwithstanding the Sikh support in the First World War, the British authorities had sacrificed interests of the Sikhs and had put them under Muslim rule. So the SGPC asked for sufficient protection for its community in any future constitutional development. The Viceroy's declaration on the war aims did not satisfy the Congress. As a result of this the Congress had decided not to support the government in the war.⁴¹

The SGPC and the Shiromani Akali Dal felt convinced that the Viceroy's statement was not in consonance with the professed war aims.⁴² But keeping in view the interest of their community both the bodies did not want to boycott the war efforts like the Congress. The general consensus among their leaders, as The Tribune reported, was that "the Sikhs should choose such a path which be consistent with their self-interest".⁴³ The leadership of the Sikhs decided to support the recruitment of Sikhs in the army. Master Tara Singh believed that the future political influence of their community largely depended on their strength in the army. Jaswant Singh Jhabbal, another leader, wrote to Mohan Singh, a Sikh adviser to Zetland, Secretary of State, that the Sikhs would be very happy if their recruitment was increased in the army.⁴⁴ Sikander Hayat's effort to increase the recruitment from Punjab was also considered to be a stratagem to further strengthen the Muslim position. The Muslim League had not totally rejected the Viceroy's statement of War aims.⁴⁵ Jinnah was making every effort to strengthen the Muslims' position. This growing strength of the Muslims in the country in general and in Punjab in particular certainly upset the Sikhs and acted as an impetus for them to increase their strength in the army.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be said that the specificities of the role and political functioning of the SGPC and its leaders played an important role in determining the socio-political status of the Sikhs in the years preceding the independence of India. As the chief representative body of the Sikhs, the SGPC successfully negotiated the interests of the Sikhs in the face of more powerful forces like the Muslim League and the Congress. The relations of the SGPC with the Congress according to the analysis given above were determined by three major factors. The

first was the need to safeguard the interests of the Sikh community which was a regional and religion based community in the years preceding the independence of the country. Second was the need to get adequate political representation for the Sikhs and the third was the need to overcome the threat posed by other more powerful minorities like the Muslims. Thus, at different times SGPC both opposed and cooperated with the Congress. Whereas, in the nationalist programme of obtaining political independence of India, the SGPC supported the Congress but it offered stiff opposition to various communal awards under which the Sikh community was not given equal representation. By carefully understanding their role in addressing the needs of the community, the leaders of the SGPC/ Akali Dal played an important part in asserting Sikh interests in relation to the question of communal representation and the Sikh participation in the two World wars. The paper brings out that both the proximity and opposition to Congress was a result of pragmatically weighed considerations rather than a natural closeness.

Endnotes

1. *Report of the Census of Punjab, 1901*, p. 169, 1911, pp. 20-22, 1921, pp. 34-42.
2. *For Akali Movement*, See Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978)*; K.L. Tuteja, "Sikh Politics: 1920-40", unpublished Ph.D. thesis Kurukshetra University, 1979.
3. *Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1962)*, p. 109; John Maynard, "The Sikh Problem in the Panjab 1920-23, in *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 124, September 1923, reproduced in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. I, pt. I, April 1977, pp. 129-141; Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1965) p. 60.
4. K.L. Tuteja, *op.cit.* p. 164.
5. The Sikhs were given 12 seats, i.e. 18.75% representation. With the addition of one more seat of land-holders constituency the strength of the Sikhs was increased to 13 Seats, i.e. 19.1% representation.
6. The nationalist Sikh leaders of the Central Sikh League had strongly advocated the complete abolition of separate representation in the national interests, *Punjab legislative council debates* Vol. 4, 1922, pp. 735-754.
7. *Resolution of Central Sikh League, The Tribune*, October 11, 1927; *Report of the Indian National Congress, Madras Session, 1927*, NMML, New Delhi.
8. *All Parties Conference: Nehru Report*, p. 123; *The Tribune*, 17 August 1928; *Akali-Te-Pardesi*, 8 October, 1928.
9. *The Tribune*, 28 August 1928.
10. *The Tribune*, 14 January 1930; *The Tribune*, 29 January 1930.
11. *File No. 210/1/1930, Home Political, National Archives of India (NAI)*. New Delhi.
12. *The Tribune*, 15 April 1930. *Statement of Baba Kharak Singh; Durlabh Singh, The Valiant Fighter (Lahore : Hero Publications, 1942)*. p. 103.
13. *The Tribune*, 10 March 1930.
14. *Kailash Chander Gulati, The Akalis: Past and Present (New Delhi: Ashajanak Publications, 1974)*, p. 54; *The Tribune*, May 6th, 1930; *Master Tara Singh, Meri Yaad (Sikh Religious Book Society, Amritsar, 1944)*, p. 105.
15. *Montmorency to Irwin, Halifax Papers, NMML, New Delhi*.
16. *File No. 11/1&KVs1/1931, Home Political, NAI; AICC File No. G146/1930, NMM1, New Delhi*.
17. *Montmorency to Irwin, Halifax Papers; The Tribune, March 11*, 1931: *File No 18/1931, Home Political, NAI*.
18. *The Tribune*, 22 March 1931.
19. *Mohammed Iqbal, in, his presidential address to the 29th session of All India Muslim League at Allahabad in December 1930, put forward a proposal that Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan be amalgamated in a single state. C.1-1. Philips, The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858-1947: Select Documents*, pp. 239-241; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishers, 1968) Vol. 45*, p. 199.
20. *Maurice Gwyer and A. Appadorai, Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921-47 (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1957)*, Vol. 1, p. 251
21. *Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Gandhi, S. Gopal (ed.) Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 5, (New Delhi: Orient Longmans 1972)*, p. 47; *The Tribune*, October 9th, 1931.
22. *The Tribune*, 19 October 1931.
23. As there was a dispute between Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh over the nomination of Sikh representatives for Round Table Conference, the Government decided to send those Sikh representatives who attended the First Round Table Conference.
24. At the instance of Gandhi, The Minorities Committees was adjourned for a week to hold informal discussions for solving the problem of communal representation. Round Conference, Second Session, *Proceedings of Minorities Committee*, pp. 1340-1345, NAI, New Delhi.
25. *Ibid.*; *Templewood Papers, NMML, New Delhi*.
26. *File No. 41/4/32, Home Political, NAI, New Delhi*.
27. *Sunder Singh Majithia Papers, NMML New Delhi; Khushwant Singh, .A History of Sikhs, Vol. 2, (Princeton, 1966)*, p. 225.
28. *Master Tara Singh's Presidential Address at joint session of Khalsa Darbar and Central Sikh League, The Indian Annual Register, 1933, Vol. 2, p. 260; Congress and the Problem of Minorities*, pp. 124-125, NAI, New Delhi.
29. *The Tribune*, 9 June 1936; *Duni Chand, op.cit.*, p. 172; *AICC File No. E-17/1937*.
30. *File. No. 4/9/1937, Home Political, NAI, New Delhi; Jawaharlal Nehru to Master Tara Singh, S. Gopal (ed.) op.cit.*, Vol. 7, pp. 383-85.
31. *Shiromani Akali Dal was constituted in December 1920 with the object of reforming the Gurdwaras by moral pressure. By 1937, it became the prominent political party of the Sikhs.*

32. *In spite of this compromise there was a dispute between the Congress and the Akalis on a few seats. For instance, in South Amritsar Constituency, Partap Singh Kairon, an Akali candidate, contested election against Baba Gurdit Singh of Congress Sikh Party, AICC File No. E-17/1937, NMML, New Delhi.*
33. *Statement of Gopi Chand Bhargava, The Tribune, 20 November 1936.*
34. *Jawaharlal Nehru to Master Tara Singh, S. Gopal (ed.) op.cit., Vol 1, pp. 383-385.*
35. *Niranjan Singh, Jivan Vikus (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1970); Khalsa National Party was formed in 1936 by Chief Khalsa Diwan for the forthcoming elections of Provincial Assembly. Most anti-Akali elements had joined this party.*
36. *Gopi Chand Bhargava belonged to Lala Lajpat Rai group in Panjab Congress. On the issue of the Communal Award, he left the Congress and joined the Congress Nationalist Party of Madan Mohan Malviya. He was firmly opposed to the statutory majority of the Muslims. In 1934, he had worked against the Congress in the Central Assembly elections. With the change of the Congress policy towards the Award, the Gopi Chand group again joined the Congress.*
37. *The community wise break-up of Congress seats was as follows: Hindus-11; Sikhs-5; and Muslims-2; Thus, total 18. File No. 20/111/36 F, Reform Office, NAI, New Delhi.*
38. *The Tribune, 22 February 1937; 3 March 1937.*
39. *Emerson to Linlithgow, Linlithgow Papers, NMML; File No. 18/10/1937, Home Political, File no.20/IV/ 1937 F, Reform office, NA1, New Delhi. In December 1938, the Congress Working Committee had declared. Hindu Maha Sabha and Muslim League as communal organizations, and no member of the Congress was allowed to join these organizations.*
40. *Sikhs and the War, (A pamphlet in) Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, NMML, New Delhi.*
41. *On the declaration of War the Viceroy appealed to the people for their support. But the Indian National Congress requested the government to declare its war aims before any help would be rendered.*
42. *The Tribune, 22 October 1939; for more detail also see Sikhs and the War, (A pamphlet in Jawaharlal Nehru Papers), NMML, New Delhi.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Giani Gurcharan 'Singh, Ankhi Soorma: Jiwan Master Tara Singh Ji (Delhi, 1950), pp. 126-131, Zetland to Linlithgow, 19 September 1939, Zetland Papers, NMML.*
45. *Master Tara Singh, op.cit., pp. 129-130; V.P Menon ,Transfer of Power of India (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1957), p. 67*