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# "The Red Spark: Bhagat Singh's Quest for Social Justice"

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Abstract :

This study explores Bhagat Singh's revolutionary ideology, delving into his socialist theory and quest for social justice in colonial India. Through a critical analysis of his writings, speeches, and actions, this research examines Singh's unique blend of Marxism, nationalism, and humanism. The work situates Singh's thought within the broader context of Indian independence movements and global socialist currents.

Keywords: Bhagat Singh, socialism, Indian independence, colonialism, Marxist-Leninism, social justice, revolutionary thought.

## Introduction

The revolutionary movement was left without a leader in the mid-1920s when the Kakori Conspiracy Case led to the arrest and execution of all of its prominent figures. A distinct kind of militants emerged later on, ones who would bring the movement back to life. Bhagat Singh, the group's strongest personality, is evidence of this. Bhagat Singh was educated at the National College of Lahore. He was born in Lyallpur, Punjab, into a Sikh household that was influenced by the Arya Samaj and the Ghadr Party. When he was a little boy, his uncle Ajit Singh was sent to Mandalay with Lajpat Rai. The 1919 Jallianwallah Bagh massacre in Amritsar, when General Dyer slaughtered hundreds of civilians, especially horrified him. Following Mahatma Gandhi's suspension of the non-cooperation battle, he participated in it and, like many others, joined the revolutionary movement. In an attempt to create a socialist and nonreligious organization, he founded the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in 1926 and attempted to enlist the young of the region.Bhagat Singh blamed his own countrymen, who were immobilized by superstitions, even though the British were his natural target: "A branch of the peepal tree is cut and religious feelings of the Hindus are injured." When a piece of a paper idol, the tazia of the Mohammedans who destroy

idols, breaks, "Allah" becomes angered because he would not settle for anything less than the blood of the Hindu idolaters. In India, individuals smash their skulls in the name of "holy beasts," despite the fact that humans deserve more respect than animals.

With the founding of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HRSA) in September 1928, Bhagat Singh's signature blend of socialism, humanism, and nationalism was about to grow even further. Although Bhagat Singh continued to be the HSRA's principal figure, other notable persons served as its leaders as well, such as Shiv Verma, Sukhdev, a strong communist supporter, and Chandrashekhar Azad, who oversaw the Association's "military" activities. These individuals founded the Central Committee, with two delegates from Punjab, the United Provinces, as well as Bihar, the provinces where the movement was well-established. The ideological and military wings of the organization were split apart right away. While leading the former, Bhagat Singh also participated in the latter. In fact, he had a direct hand in the murder of J.P. Saunders, a police officer who had been mistaken for J.A. Scott, the head of police, whom Bhagat Singh believed to be accountable for Lala Lajpat Rai's demise. Lajpat Rai, a Congress politician and an Arya Samaji, was murdered by a lathi charge as he and others were protesting the Simon Commission's visit to Lahore. Similar to 19th-century terrorists, the HRSA believed that by assassinating Saunders, it could “let the world know that India still lives; that the blood of youths has not totally cooled down and that they can still risk their lives if the honor of their nation is at stake.” This belief was stated in a “official” communiqué.

Bhagat Singh, however, made the shift from terrorism to revolution. He makes a very striking reference to his previous behavior in his last essay, which was written in February 1931: "Apparently I have acted as a terrorist." I am not a terrorist, however. I am a revolutionary with such clear concepts for a comprehensive plan. With all the force at my disposal, allow me to declare that, with the possible exception of the early stages of my revolutionary career, I am not and have never been a terrorist.

While this was happening, certain uncommon readings had changed Bhagat Singh's perspective on the world. His library's list of writers includes several works written by different Western authors. Marx, Engels, Trotsky, Morris Hillquit, Thomas Paine, Upton Sinclair, Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo, Spinoza, Bertrand Russell, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Jefferson, N.A. Morozov, Burke, Lenin, Kautsky, Bukharin, Danton, Omar Khayyam, Henry Maine, Thomas d'Aquin, Tagore, Herbert Spencer, and Rousseau are among the authors that can be found there.

These works, which Bhagat Singh studied both before and after his incarceration, helped shape his views on socialism and rationalism. In his jail journal, Why I Am an Atheist, he became the first revolutionary to openly renounce religion, just before he was given a death sentence. In this passage, Bhagat Singh clearly explains his approach to death and his lack of hope for a life after death: “A Hindu who believes in God may expect to be

reborn as a king, a Muslim, or a Christian. He may dream of the comforts of paradise and the reward he will receive for his sufferings and sacrifices."

But what can I anticipate? I can tell the instant the rafters are taken out from under my feet as well as the rope fastened around my neck. That is going to be the last moment—that is the last moment. That's where I, or more accurately, my soul, to use the language of metaphysics, will end up. Nothing more. If I have the fortitude to see it that way, a brief life of struggle without such a wonderful conclusion will be the prize in and of itself. And that's all. I have given my life to the cause of independence without any thought of self-interest or the desire to get recognition now or in the future, simply because I am unable to do otherwise. The period of liberation will begin on the day when a large number of men as well as women with this mentality are found to be unable to dedicate themselves to anything other than serving humanity and freeing the suffering human race.

Bhagat Singh's socialist critique of capitalism as well as casteism, two oppressive institutions, was matched by his rejection of religion, which divides the people. Indian revolutionaries have hitherto solely taken aim at capitalism as well as colonialism.

In February 1931, Bhagat Singh made the observation that "revolution means the complete overthrow of the existing social order and its replacement with the socialist order" in an effort to encourage young people to adopt Marxism. Our immediate goal is to gain power for that reason. In actuality, the ruling class uses the state and the political apparatus as nothing more than a weapon to protect its interests. We want to seize it and wield it in order to use it for the realization of our vision, which is the new, Marxist foundation for social reconstruction.

Bhagat Singh is really a character like to Janus, fusing ideas from many sources, some Marxist, others reminiscent of the anarchists' "propaganda by action." His most recent action makes this clear. He and B.K. Dutt detonated 2 explosives in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929, with the stated intention of "making the deaf hear," as stated on the pamphlets they handed out after their lightning coup. The French anarchist Auguste Vaillant is credited with creating this formula. However, Bhagat Singh also indicated that this move was a component of a bigger scheme. Its initial goal was to deter the assembly from passing the Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bill, which would have penalized Indian workers if it had been put into effect. Secondly, it was intended to criticize the way this so-called Indian parliament presented itself—that is, as a collaborator with the British. Ultimately, its goal was to get revenge for Lajpat Rai's death. All of these interpretations link this conduct to both the socialist and anarchist ideologies. It is evident from the other side of the coin that Bhagat Singh did not elevate violence. After throwing their explosives into the gathering, Bhagat Singh and Dutt dropped a pamphlet that one must read through to the conclusion in order to fully comprehend his political thought. It ends with these striking words: "We are sorry to admit that we have been forced to shed

human blood. We are sorry that we who attach such a great sanctity to human life, who dream of a glorious future, when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty."

These statements convey a rejection of violence, one that Singh and Dutt would later express in a more methodical manner in their declaration before the judges. There, like great chemists, they would emphasize that the two bombs had been thrown towards the empty rows and that their composition rendered them inoffensive; if they had been loaded with another high explosive or with lethal darts or pellets, they could have eliminated most of the legislative assembly's members.

Even in their defense of their use of force, Singh and Dutt only mentioned "force": "We are next to none in our love for humanity. Far from having any malice against any individual, we hold human life sacred beyond words. Our sole purpose was "to make the deaf hear" and to give the heedless a timely warning." When force is used aggressively, it is considered "violence" and is therefore morally wrong, but when it is used to further a cause that is right, it can be justified morally."

It's interesting to note that Bhagat Singh considered Gandhi and Jesus Christ to be among his role models. He said of Jesus Christ, in legalese, "if we set aside motive, then Jesus Christ will appear a man responsible for breaking peace and preaching revolt, and a dangerous personality." However, we revere him. We have a deep regard for him and a special place in our hearts for him; his image uplifts our spirits.

**Inspiration of Socialistic Thought**

The young Bhagat Singh was profoundly impacted by the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter. The incident revealed British imperialism's darker side. The murder served as proof that the Congress's more moderate approaches—prayer, petitions, and entreaties—had failed. Punjab, the region that gave the British army the largest manpower contribution during World War I, was experiencing a disillusionment wave. The state's young rapidly became radicalized as a result of it. When Bhagat Singh returned from his April 1919 visit to Jallianwala Bagh, he carried a handful of the blood-stained sand.

Much of the enthusiasm of the Indian youth was drawn onto the Non-Cooperation Movement, which was started by the Congress party, although this was short-lived. The young were forced to choose the extreme path when Gandhi abruptly put a halt to the campaign in 1922. Drawn to such inclinations, Bhagat Singh became interested in the railwaymen's strike when he was 14 years old and invited protesting Akali workers to his village after Mahant Narain Das massacred at least 140 Sikhs in conjunction with the British authorities.

Upon arriving in Kanpur in 1923, Bhagat Singh addressed a letter to his father, attempting to stifle his revolutionary tendencies by arranging for him to be married. In the letter, he expressed that his life was devoted to the country and that, thus, he could not consider getting married. He met members of the Hindustan

Republican Association (HRA) at Kanpur, including BK Sinha, Ajoy Ghosh, Shiv Verma, as well as Jai Dev Kapoor.

Bhagat Singh was seeking an ideology as well as turned to socialism as well as marxism for 2 reasons. Bengal and Punjab's previous revolutionary movements had a significant religious component. Naturally, it excluded Sikhs, Muslims, as well as other secular-minded revolutionaries from both the movement as well as the tactic.Second, the greatest threat to capitalist imperialism had come from the Bolshevik Revolution. The first politicians from outside the country to advocate for colonial self-determination were its leaders, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. He noted that "revolutions in Asian countries would display an even greater distinction than the Russian revolution" in 1920 at the Communist Party's Ninth All-Russian Conference. Trotsky suggested that Egypt, Ireland, and India all had the right to self-determination in October 1917.

Bhagat Singh also adorned himself at the Dwarkadas Library, where he studied a ton of Marxist books. The HRA was renamed at Bhagat Singh's request, which was the immediate result. In September 1928, at an HRA conference held in Delhi's Firoz Shah Kotla on September 8–9, he suggested adding the word “socialist” to the organization's name. With the assistance of other revolutionaries like Sukhdev, BK Sinha, Shiv Verma, and Jai Dev Kapoor, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) was born out of HRA.

Professor Chaman Lal, a renowned historian of Bhagat Singh, claims that this name change was not symbolic. He contends that for Bhagat Singh and his allies, "it was a well thought out qualitative change of perception about the goal of the Indian revolution," in contrast to Indira Gandhi, who inserted the word "socialist" to the Preamble of the Constitution. He points out that Bhagat Singh trained in mass organizational activity via the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, which was founded on the model of Young Italy and drew inspiration from Mazzini and Garibaldi, prior to the HRA becoming the HSRA. During this time, the former Ghadarite revolutionaries returned and founded the newspaper Kirti. They had been disillusioned with anarchism and had received training in communist practice at the Eastern University of Toilers in Moscow. Bhagat Singh and was employed by Kirti as an editorial staff member.

When Muzaffar Ahmad, a pioneer of the Indian communist movement, came to Lahore after his release from prison in connection with the Kanpur Conspiracy Case in 1924, he met Ahmad. After the non-cooperation campaign, Batukeshwar Dutt, a fellow revolutionary, worked with the Workers' and Peasant's Party, the communist front. He subsequently accompanied Bhagat Singh in tossing a bomb in the Central Assembly. The HSRA's revolutionary agenda was most closely aligned with communist ideology.

He also delivered a sharp assessment of the Hindu reformers who were only partially committed to addressing this societal evil, as well as the caste system. “People like the Pandits or the Maulvis, if a low caste boy garlands them, even in the twentieth century, they bathe in their clothes,” the author said. When he remarked, “Swami Dayanand abolished untouchability but he could not go beyond the four varnas,” he was criticizing the more egalitarian Arya Samaji spiritual system of his family. Discrimination persisted.

He restated the Naujawan Bharat Sabha's policy of not using the word “untouchables” in a booklet titled “The Issue of Untouchability.” He made the following argument: “We should count those who have been labeled untouchables among ourselves, ask for their forgiveness, and regard them as equal human beings like us without being granted the amrit, reciting the karma, or being purified.”

## Conclusion

As a conclusion remarks, I am reminded of Bhagat Singh's unwavering dedication to social justice. His example challenges me to re examine my own commitments and actions, inspiring me to become a more engaged, empathetic, and empowered global citizen. Bhagat Singh's revolutionary legacy continues to inspire and educate those seeking social justice and equality. His socialist theory, forged in the crucible of colonial India, remains relevant today. Through his writings, speeches, and actions, Singh embodied the power of resistance and the pursuit of a more just society.

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