

Colonising the Punjab

In summer of 1984, the lawyers were able to demonstrably establish the innocence of Harchand Singh Longowal, illegally detained by the state. The presiding judge neatly wriggled out of the responsibility to pronounce a judgement by discovering a brand new judicial doctrine hitherto unknown to jurisprudence, namely, the doctrine of “weak shoulders”. Judge’s observation ran somewhat like this ‘my shoulders are too weak to carry the burden.’ The case had to await hearing as only the vacation judge was sitting at that time. It rendered the blackmailing of Longowal possible by bringing home to him that he could be detained even if there was no law to hold him. The same court could not muster the courage to do justice and went into hibernation by stunningly remaining closed on all the days of the orchestrated mass murder of the Sikhs in Delhi, in the spring of the same year. While thousands of Sikhs were being burnt alive and their houses were being looted and set on fire, the Supreme Court Judges were relaxing in the cool comfort of their luxury government houses. Perhaps more relevant to the present argument is the “judicial murder” of Kehar Singh committed by the Supreme Court later than that. Scores of laws, judgements, usage and traditions were cited by independent non-Sikh lawyers to show that Kehar Singh was innocent. Yet he went to the gallows. Presently, in the case of Punjab’s river water, the vital interests of the Sikh people are involved at a much larger scale, expecting different treatment may be a pipe dream.

II

In a variety of ways, the central government in India has given myriads of indications that it treats the Punjab as a colony of India and the Sikhs as an enslaved people. Scores of instances like the few quoted above can be recalled to bear witness to the truth of this statement. The history of looting the Punjab’s river water at gun point in the style of the Pindaris of the past, is the most disturbing and the most shameful chapter of this recent history.

The present Punjab has merely 32.5 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of water from its three rivers, Ravi, Beas and Satluj. It has more than 105 million acres of cultivable land produce from which goes to feed more than half the country. The intensity of irrigation is more than 250% at most places. For the normal paddy-wheat rotation that has been imposed upon the Punjab by the extreme callousness of the central government, 5 to 6 acre feet of water is required. The total water need of the Punjab works out to about 52.5 MAF of water annually. According to Dr. Parihar’s report of 1990 and Dr. Heera’s report of 1994 the Punjab is short of water for irrigation by 1.047 million hectare meter yearly. Yet 17-18 MAF of water from the Punjab’s rivers is diverted to Rajasthan and Haryana. The Punjab is left to make good the deficiency by drawing upon ground water at 10 to 15 times the cost of the surface water irrigation. There are more than 10 lakh irrigation tube-wells in the Punjab, more and more are being added everyday. These tube-wells draw more than 30 MAF of water every year and the re-charge rate for the corresponding period is 3 MAF. From June 2001 to June 2003 average fall of ground water level in the state was 65 centimetres. Competent bodies of experts, such as the World Watch Institute (in its report of 1998), have pronounced that the entire Punjab is scheduled to become a desert by 2025.

Punjab’s water is being looted although the same riparian law as is prevalent in all the prominent federations of the world, that is USA, Canada, Australia and UK, is accepted by the constitution of India. According to it river water is a state subject being mentioned in entry 17 of the List II. There are a host of other national and international laws like the Helsinki Rules and the Common Law of UK, which lay down that the rivers belong to the state through which they pass. This norm is observed everywhere else in India. The Ganges-Yamuna basin for instance, has 450 MAF of water of that only 40 to 45 MAF is utilised and the rest flows into the sea. Haridwar is 1900 feet above sea level and the Ganges water can be easily used to irrigate the entire Hayana, Rajasthan and the Punjab, but these states are not getting a drop of it.

The loot started on January 29, 1955, in room number 12 of the North Block at Delhi. An inter-state conference of deputy secretary level officials was held for the sole purpose of “development and utilisation of the waters of the rivers Ravi, and Beas.” It ended with allocating 8 MAF to Rajasthan, .65 MAF to J& K and leaving only 7.20 MAF for the Punjab. This shows the decision had been taken earlier by the centre and the meeting was called just to endorse the decision already made. The constitution of India provides for inter-state agreements but these are to be reached by the governments of states through their governors in

accordance with Article 299. This so called agreement to rob the Punjab was kept a closely guarded secret and was made public only some thirty years later. This was only the beginning. A chart depicting the truth about the Punjab's river water is appended to make the enormity of the crime and the conspiracy amply clear.

Later on sections 78, 79 and 80 were added to the Punjab Reorganisation Act which ostensibly legitimised the daylight robbery and in defiance of the settled law of the land. Article 4 of the constitution of India says, that while creating new states, the parliament can make "supplemental, incidental and inconsequential" provisions. Sections 79 to 80 mentioned above amend the constitution. For that purpose separate law and procedure has been provided. This was not resorted to. Under Section 5 of the India Contract Act also, this being an agreement in which the Punjab parts with its precious water without a consideration, is void. The Punjab, tried by all legal means, to get this illegal law annulled as it violated entry 17 to List II of the Seventh Schedule to the constitution and other laws. It spilt the blood of its sons in hundreds of thousands in agitations to retain its water. Nothing helped. An example of how justice was denied to the Punjab may be quoted. In January 1982, a writ petition under Article 226 Of the constitution of India was filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. It challenged the validity of the above mentioned sections of the Reorganisation Act and therefore the centre's competence to allocate Punjab's water to other non-riparian states. It floated around in the High Court for about an year, without being admitted. On November 1, 1983, a double bench consisting of the Chief Justice and a senior judge posted the matter for hearing on November 15, 1983 by the full bench of the High Court. Some states moved like lightning and asked the Supreme Court to annul the admission of the suit. Three times the Supreme Court (SC) refused to interfere. A full bench was constituted to hear the petition in the High Court.

On the morning of November 14, 1983, Attorney General of India appeared before the Chief Justice of India and made an oral request to stay the proceeding in the High Court. The Chief Justice of India obliged the Union of India. By the afternoon he improved upon that – he transferred the Chief Justice of the Punjab to the Bihar High Court at Patna. On November 18, the SC granted the thrice rejected Special Leave Petition. In consequence it allowed all the five petitions pending in the High Court were withdrawn to the SC under Article 139 A of the constitution –regardless of the fact that it did not apply to the present situation. The SC has powers under it only if two or more similar cases are pending in two or more high courts or if are pending in one high court and the supreme court. This provision is enacted to provide conflicting judgments. This condition did not obtain and the SC had no power to withdraw to itself the suits pending in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. It went further than this. It transferred the suits to itself without giving any notice to the petitioners. Under the rules framed by the SC itself a month's notice is mandatory.

There is absolutely no doubt that the SC and those operating it behind the scenes, felt that justice to the Punjab had to be denied at any cost. These five petitions still lie buried in the spacious vaults of the SC of India and were, according to the best of knowledge and belief, were never pronounced upon.

In that context, came the issue of digging a canal through the territory of the Punjab to further provide water to Haryana. Land for this was acquired illegally in the Punjab because according to law the state can acquire citizens' land only for a 'public purpose.' Surely, providing Punjab's water to Haryana is no 'public purpose' relevant to the citizens of the Punjab.

III

The circumstances leading to the unanimous adoption of The Punjab Termination of Agreements Act 2004 by the Punjab Legislative Assembly on July 12, 2004, may be briefly recalled.

Taking advantage of the Emergency prevailing in the country and the consequential suspension of all laws, the then prime minister Indira Gandhi's government, issued a letter on March 24, 1976 (17(7)-73/DW JRC vol ii) basing itself on Flow Series from 1921-1960 instead of 1921-1945. The trick was that the heavy floods of the year 1955 could thus be used to enhance the availability of water in the Punjab. In April 1976, the central government issued a notification allocating 15.2 MAF of 'surplus' Ravi-Beas-Satluj water. It gave 3.5 MAF of water to each Haryana and the Punjab. It was issued under Section 78 of the Reorganisation Act 1966. The Punjab challenged the notification as well as the enabling section 78. So on December 13, 1981, Indira Gandhi called a meeting of the chief ministers of the Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana and made them sign a new agreement because of the 'increased flow' from 15.85 to 17.17 MAF as

mentioned above. Darbara Singh, the then chief minister, was made to withdraw the suit earlier filed by the Punjab, like a dumb driven cow, he complied and signed the death knell of the Punjab although he had no authority to agree to the illegal agreement or the withdrawal.

On April 8, 1982, Indira Gandhi herself inaugurated the digging of the Satluj-Yamuna Link Canal (SYL) at Kapuri in Haryana. On the same day the Akali Dal and five other political parties in the Punjab commenced their last agitation to stop its construction. They kept the Punjab on the boil for over two years, allowed the central government to kill hundreds of thousands of its youth during the period culminating in the attack on the Darbar and destruction of the Akal Takhat. On July 24, 1985, however, president of the Akali Dal, Harchand Singh Longowal, signed the Rajiv-Longowal, in betrayal of the trust of the Punjab. By this he agreed to have the SYL canal dug by August 15, 1986. An attempt was made to legalise the illegal agreement. A new section 14, was incorporated into the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956 (ISRWDA) on the basis of the basis of the Rajiv-Longowal accord. Paras 9.1 and 9.2 of the accord were made the terms of reference to the Eradi Tribunal appointed by the Union Government on April 2, 1986 under above Act. This was two times illegal as the rivers of the Punjab are not inter-state rivers as the flow only through the territory of the Punjab. Surjit Singh Barnala, the puppet chief minister of the Punjab however, started the digging and spent 800 crores of rupees for the purpose. The Tribunal gave its report on January 30, 1987. It enhanced Haryana's share to 3.83MAF from 3.5 MAF. This was done by enhancing the water availability by taking into account the seasonal flow of rain water which none can utilise. It was kept close secret for five months and made public only on May 20, 1987, a few weeks before the election to the Haryana Legislative Assembly so as to give electoral advantage to the Indian National Congress of Indira Gandhi. The Punjab rejected the award with the Punjab Minister for Agriculture, Amarinder Singh, condemning it in an article to a newspaper, as based upon "cooked up imaginary water data." The canal digging continued. This order remained un-implemented because the Punjab utilised the opportunity given to it for filing objections. Its main objection was that the decision was based on Section 5 (A) of the ISRWDA was not applicable to the situation. Upon this the Tribunal did not pronounce for want of a technical member. It was all very precarious. The fate of the Punjab appeared to have been sealed.

Then help came from very unusual quarters. The militant section of those agitating for the rights of the Punjab killed two of the senior-most engineers doing the digging and about a dozen labourers in 1992. This had the desired effect and the digging is yet to be resumed.

IV

The dispute in the courts continued. Several deadlines, 12/83, 8/86, 12/87, 3/88, 6/88, 11/90 and 1/91 raised the hopes of Haryana and expired without fulfilling them. On January 15, 2002, the SC ordered the Punjab government to complete the SYL canal within a year. Failing which, the central government was declared duty bound to build it within a year. Haryana applied again for the implementation of the Court's orders. Hearing took place in early June 2004. The Punjab contended that the application was not maintainable. Arguments on maintainability took place. At the end of that, a SC Bench consisting of J. Ruma Pala and J. V. P. Raddi, ordered the Union Government to appoint a Central Agency within two weeks to construct the SYL thus implementing the court's orders of January 15, 2002. It also directed the Punjab government to hand over the land on which the canal was to be built and to provide adequate security to the officials of the executing agency and the construction workers. To add insult to injury, it asked the Punjab to pay cost of the suit. "Punjab's counsel Rupinder Singh Suri said, that the order passed by the court has gone beyond the arguments forwarded by the parties as only the question of maintainability of Haryana's application was argued. – A government spokesman said, Punjab was not even allowed to argue its case with regard to the execution application filed by Haryana in the apex court." (See, *The Tribune*, June 5, 2004, 1).

How eager was the court on Haryana's behalf, can be judged also from the remarks with which it disposed of the review petition filed by the Punjab. Pronouncing on the review petition, the SC admonished the Punjab for trying to become a supreme institution over the SC. It considered the review petition as a 'challenge' to the SC and threatened contempt proceedings under Article 131 of the constitution of India.

The Punjab was truly besieged. The beleaguered government of the Punjab called a political meeting to be attended by all the political parties in the Punjab on June 12, 2004. This meeting authorised the government to take measures to safeguard the interests of the Punjab. On June 15, 2004, the Punjab

Legislative Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution directing the government to safeguard the interests of the Punjab as requested by the All Parties' Meeting held earlier.

It was in execution of this mandate that The Punjab Termination of Agreements Act 2004, was adopted unanimously by the Punjab Legislative Assembly in its special session on July 12, 2004.

In his introductory speech, the chief minister stated the compelling reasons for the enactment. He said 9 lakh acres of land in Ferozepur, Bhatinda and Mukatsar will become a desert if the canal is constructed. It would ruin 1.5 million families of these districts. He also said that Haryana and Rajasthan are not entitled to any water but even then their current allocation is being tolerated "as usage by sufferance." The surplus water calculated on December 31, 1981 as 17.17 MAF has since been reduced to 14.37 MAF according to the flow series from 1981-2002, he said.

The current usage was protected on false premises. The chief minister was of the opinion that Haryana was a minor co-riparian as some of its area fell within the Indus basin. There can be no co-riparian state whose territory falls on the other side of an intervening river basin. In the instant case the Ghaggar basin separated the Yamuna basin and the Punjab rivers' basins. Perhaps this was a ruse used by the chief minister who was keen on diverting a political disaster for himself and his government. That could have been eventually detrimental to the interests of the Punjab at that stage. Nevertheless, his Act invited the strongest possible criticism and denunciation from diverse quarters. The reaction was hysteric and epithets like 'unpatriotic' and 'anti-national' were flung at him right and left. The entire 'national Press' conducted a regular anti-Punjab campaign. The former prime minister A. B. Vajpayee wrote a letter to the prime minister and released it to the Press post haste. He warned, the "problem could degenerate into a crisis." According to him, "emotions on the issue of water had arisen alarmingly." There was much else in the Media on the subject. It was on the same lines.

The President of India was eventually used as a "post office" to refer the Punjab Act to the SC of India. The reference is made under Article 143 (1) of the constitution. According to The Tribune dated August 3, 2004, "The four point reference made by the President A. P. J. Abul Kalam on July 22, has sought the court's opinion on

(i) Whether the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act 2004, and the provisions thereof are in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

(ii) Whether the Act and its provisions are in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act 1956, Section 78 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, and the notification of March 24, 1976, issued there under.

(iii) Whether the State of Punjab has validly terminated the agreements of December 31, 1981, and all other agreements relating to the Ravi-Beas waters and is discharged from its obligation under the said agreements.

(iv) Whether in view of the provisions of the Act passed by Punjab on July 12, it is discharged from the obligation flowing from the Supreme Court judgements of January 15, 2002, and of June 4, 2004, in the SYL case." The Punjab River Water Forum consisting of several distinguished citizens and the present writer, sent a petition to the President of India requesting him to solicit the court's opinion on certain other relevant issues also. It is reproduced below. It did not even receive an acknowledgment from the usually gracious President. The suit is coming up for hearing on March 28, 2007. A judgment is likely to be pronounced on that date. It will come before this article is published. In all probability, it will go against the Punjab especially so because the issues have been so framed by the government in its reference that appreciation of the Punjab's position is not possible.

This Act has Clause 5 which reads, "notwithstanding anything contained in section 3 and 4 of this Act, all existing and actual utilisation through the existing systems shall remain protected and unaffected." This section is totally justified and serves only to legitimise the loot. During his election campaign, the present chief minister promised that he will remove this section from the Act and reclaim Punjab's water for the state. It was taken to be an election gimmick as he was present in the Assembly on July 12, 2004, when the law was enacted and did not demand its abrogation. His track record is full of truck loads of promises that he has regularly made and never fulfilled. No one took him seriously to begin with. However, he repeated his

intention at the sacred shrine of Anandpur Sahib on March 3, 2007 and then again at the Darbar in Amritsar. He must now be taken seriously.

It has been suggested by some political observers that he is just playing jingoistic tunes knowing full well that he will eventually wriggle out of the matter taking the SC verdict of March 28 as an excuse. They expect him to say, "I would have done it. Now the highest court in the land has pronounced etc. etc." This would square with his character and track record. The more cynical of observers believe that he is merely trying to buy respite from the criminal cases against him by using the threat as trading board. But somehow, to those who have been watching him for decades, his intention seems to be different this time. Parkash Singh Badal knows full well that his government will be dismissed once he abrogates that offending clause 5 in the Act of 2004. In the past Akali governments have been dismissed for much less. Perhaps that is what he is aiming at. He hopes to increase his narrow margin in the Punjab Legislative Assembly if there are elections on the issue of river waters in the near future. This intention is, by no means, dishonourable. The cause of the Punjab's river water would justify martyrdom or anything in its vicinity.

All those interested in the welfare of the Punjab must pray that God gives him the strength to stay firm in his laudable resolve. Those, who are Badal's friends, also need to do the same. Up to now Badal has done nothing that will even secure him a small footnote in the history of the Punjab. This may be his last chance to preserve his name as dauntless fighter for Punjab's rights. Such a mention may prove to be the only glorious moment in his otherwise lacklustre political career and may justify the striving of his entire political career.

[Code: Colonising the Punjab, March 18, 2007, Folder River Water Forum, written for 'India Awareness' on Sarabjit Singh's request].

Truth about Punjab River Water Dispute at a Glance

Before 1947, Bikaner was using 1.275 MAF of waters from the Punjab (a state where Sikh population is more numerous) rivers. It was paying royalty to the Punjab in return for the use of water. The total waters of Sutlej, Beas and Ravi is about 32.65 MAF. The amount of un-utilized water of these three rivers that became the property of the riparian Punjab after 1947 was, 22.375 MAF. Of this, only 0.65 MAF has gone to J & K State (a state where Muslim population dominates). The table below shows how the Centre has illegally distributed the remaining 21.725 MAF water belonging to the riparian Punjab to the non-riparian Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi where Hindu population dominates. Constitution does not provide for distribution of river water by the central government unless it is an inter-state river, which none of the Punjab rivers are.

The Chart of Injustice

Year	Share of each State in MAF of Waters				Total waters	Remarks
	Punjab	Haryana	Rajasthan	Delhi		
1947	Used 9.0 Un- used 21.725 -- 30.725		1.275 Gang- canal	-	Used 10.275 Un-used 21.72	The total of 32 excludes share of J & K.
1954	15.325	5.00 (includes old use)	1.40	-	21.725	Sutlej waters
1955	7.325	5.00	9.40	-	21.725	awarded 8 MAF
1976/81	3.625	8.50	9.40	0.2	21.725	awarded 3.7 MAF
1982		8.50+ 5.58	-	-	32.0 Punjab rivers 5.58	12.625-Punjab
Final Position including prepartition use & Jamuna waters	12.625	--- - 14.08	--- 10.675	-- 0.2	--- 37.58	14.08-Haryana 10.675- Rajasthan .2-Delhi --- 37.580

The result is that whereas before the partition, the Punjab was using 9 MAF of its waters, today its total allotment including the pre-partition use is 12.625 MAF. This means that during the last 35 years, since 1947, the Central Government distributed 21.725 MAF of the Punjab water; it gave only 3.625 MAF to Punjab i.e. 16.7% of waters of the available. It has given 83.3% to non riparian Haryana, Rajasthan & Delhi. The total amount of water made available to Haryana & Rajasthan is 14.08 and 10.675 MAF respectively. It is so incongruous that when the 5.58 MAF of Jamuna water was given to Haryana and none to non-riparian Delhi. The latter has been allotted 0.2 MAF from the distant rivers of Punjab. Such is the blatant injustice of the Central decisions made since 1947. No state or people conscious of their just and fundamental rights can accept to be thus economically enslaved.

Punjab River Water Forum

#742 Sector 8,
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July 29, 2004

To

His Excellency A. P. J. Abdul Kalam,
The President of India, New Delhi

Dear Mr. President,

Any people would be proud of having a serious person genuinely devoted to research as its President. We, the undersigned, are very humble people and have ventured to bring certain facts to your notice in the hope that the researcher in you will at once recognise the truth we present. We are attempting to represent the beleaguered and the much abused people of the Punjab, for we fear as the matters are developing, another massacre of the Punjabi youth is being rendered imminent. The truth we represent is our only strength and we expect it to be recognised by the President of a country whose motto enshrined in the constitution is 'truth shall triumph' ("*satyamev jayate.*")

Your Excellency has referred the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act 2004 to the Supreme Court of India for advice. Commenting on this an eminent journalist has said, "President (has been) used as a postman to refer the dispute to the Supreme Court." (Rajinder Puri, *The Tribune*, July 25, 2004, 13). Surely it is not a happy situation. If Rajasthan or Haryana had any objection to the Act adopted by the Punjab legislature in the exercise of its legitimate legislative powers granted to it by the constitution, they could have gone to the Supreme Court. Why did your government lend the immense prestige of your august office to support a partisan venture of those desperately seeking to rob the Punjab at gun point? Some other journalists allege that your office was used merely as a rubber stamp. It is very distressing to realise that a person of your intellectual eminence was possibly so used. To whom shall the deprived section of the people confidently turn for a hearing of their grievances if the first citizen of the country is talked about as nothing more than a "postman" and a "rubber-stamp." Surely it does not augur well for the health of the Union!

Your Excellency will be surprised to know that the terms of reference have been meticulously designed to solicit a desired advice. Basic questions regarding the river water 'dispute' have been carefully avoided. Your Excellency must be aware that the 'distribution' of Punjab river water is done by the central government under Sections 78, 79 and 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966. Many states in India have been reorganised on linguistic basis since 1950 but in none other reorganising law have corresponding sections been included. This is because these militate against the constitution and would have been immediately struck down as illegal. Many times the government and the people of the Punjab have approached the Supreme Court to pronounce upon their constitutional validity, but every time they have been prevented by mean tricks and as often by downright base stratagem from obtaining a proper court verdict. (See Appendix 1 for one example of base stratagem). We request Your Excellency to have the Supreme Court advise you whether these sections of the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 are compatible with the constitutional provisions.

Another act has been amended to facilitate the loot of the Punjab's river water. It is the Interstate River Waters Act 1956. We hope and pray that your Excellency could ask your law department to have a good look at the map of north-west India and say whether the rivers Ravi, Beas and Satluj are purely Punjab rivers or inter-state rivers? Since they flow only in the territory of the Punjab, surely the amendment to incorporate the Longowal-Rajiv Accord is misplaced and not only defies the constitution but also common sense and geography. By such provisions we, in the Punjab, have been robbed of our only natural resource.

The very first 'agreement' on water sharing, was affected in a hush-hush manner by the Union Irrigation minister and two Deputy Secretaries from Punjab and Rajasthan on January 29, 1955. It deprived the Punjab of more than one half of a river (8 MAF of water). It was kept a closely guarded secret for several decades. The procedure for agreements is written in the constitution. We implore Your Excellency to have the Supreme Court advise you whether, according to law proceedings of a meeting are an adequate substitute for an inter-state agreement?

Equally earnestly we request Your Excellency to ask the Supreme Court to advise you whether in the law of any country can there be an 'agreement' which just takes away the most precious possession of one party and gives it nothing in return? The law on the point is so well settled that even a third class magistrate would throw out such an 'agreement' as a worthless scrap of paper. And yet on the basis of such scraps of paper, this state of the proud, the most productive and the most patriotic people has been robbed of its river water.

We are approaching you in the well settled tradition of the humblest in the land approaching the mightiest when they have an overriding Truth to share. It was in this tradition that one small man held the dictator of the mightiest empire on earth by the shirt sleeve and warned him of the 'ides of March.' We request you to recall the reference already made to the Supreme Court, or in the alternative to supplement it with such queries as we are bringing to your kind notice and to ask for advice afresh, if at all it must be sought. The dice of seeking advice, cast by your honourable ministers in your name is loaded and will not result in justice, but in bloodshed as the Punjab Legislative Assembly has warned. Some such device had resulted in widespread massacre in the plains of Kurukshetra some millennia ago.

In conclusion, we request you to also seek the Supreme Court's advice on the following points:

- 1). Whether Sections 78, 79 and 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 are in consonance with the provisions of the constitution and its effect on the government's order of March 1976?
- 2). Whether the verbatim incorporation of a political deal in the Interstate River Water Disputes Act 1956 is in accord with the constitution?

While we write the above to Your Excellency, our hearts are full with a dozen sordid tales. Each one of them is more appalling than the other. All of them tell, how shabbily the people who swore to 'protect and preserve the constitution of India as by law established,' have treated the Punjab and the Punjabis throwing all constitutional propriety to the winds. We, the humblest of the land would like to share all that with one of its greatest sons, should Your Excellency be able to spare half an hour for us on any date at your earliest convenience.

With sincerest regard,

Yours faithfully