

# Bhagat singh essay sample

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Bhagat Singh, a Sandhu Jat, was born on 28 September 1907 to Kishan Singh and Vidyavati at Chak No. 105, GB, Banga village, Jaranwala Tehsil in the Lyallpur district of the Punjab Province of British India. His birth coincided with the release from jail of his father and two uncles, Ajit Singh and Swaran Singh. His family were Sikhs, some of whom had been active in Indian independence movements, and others having served in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army. His ancestral village was Khatkar Kalan, near the town of Banga in Nawanshahr district (now renamed Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) of Punjab. His grandfather, Arjun Singh, was a follower of Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Hindu reformist movement, Arya Samaj, which had a considerable influence on the young Bhagat.

His father and uncles were members of the Ghadar Party, led by Kartar Singh Sarabha and Har Dayal. Ajit Singh was forced to flee to Persia due to pending court cases against him, while Swaran Singh died at home in 1910 following his release from Borstal Jail in Lahore. Unlike many Sikhs of his age, Singh did not attend the Khalsa High School in Lahore. His grandfather did not approve of the school officials' loyalty to the British authorities. Instead, he was enrolled in the Dayanand Anglo Vedic High School, an Arya Samaji institution. In 1919, at the age of 12, Singh visited the site of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre hours after thousands of unarmed people gathered at a public meeting had been killed.

At the age of 14, he was among those in his village who welcomed protestors against the killing of a large number of unarmed people at Gurudwara Nankana Sahib on 20 February 1921. Singh became disillusioned with Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence after Gandhi called off the non-

cooperation movement. Gandhi's decision followed the violent murders of policemen by villagers who were reacting to the police killing three villagers in the 1922 Chauri Chaura incident. Singh joined the Young Revolutionary Movement and began to advocate for the violent overthrow of the British in India.

A rare historical photograph of students and staff of National College, Lahore, which was started by Lala Lajpat Rai. Singh can be seen standing fourth from the right. In 1923, Singh joined the National College in Lahore, where he was also involved in extra-curricular activities such as the dramatics society. In 1923, Singh won an essay competition set by the Punjab Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, writing on the problems in the Punjab. He founded the Indian nationalist youth organisation Naujawan Bharat Sabha (Hindi: "Youth Society of India") in March 1926. He also joined the Hindustan Republican Association, which had prominent leaders, such as Ram Prasad Bismil, Chandrashekhar Azad and Ashfaqulla Khan. The name of the organisation was changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association at Singh's insistence. A year later, to avoid getting married by his family, Singh ran away from his house to Cawnpore. In a letter he left behind, he stated:

Police became concerned with Singh's influence on youths and in May 1927 they arrested him on the pretext of having been involved in a bombing that had taken place at Lahore in October of the previous year. He was released on a surety of Rs. 60, 000 five weeks after his arrest. He wrote for and edited Urdu and Punjabi newspapers, published from Amritsar, as well as contributing to low-priced pamphlets published by the Naujawan Bharat

Sabha that excoriated the British. He also wrote briefly for the Veer Arjun newspaper, published in Delhi, and for Kirti, the journal of the Kirti Kisan Party ("Workers and Peasants Party"). He often used pseudonyms, including names such as Balwant, Ranjit and Vidhrohi.

Later revolutionary activities[edit]

Lala Lajpat Rai's death and murder of Saunders

In 1928, the British government set up the Simon Commission to report on the political situation in India. The Indian political parties boycotted the Commission, because it did not include a single Indian in its membership, which led to country-wide protests. When the Commission visited Lahore on 30 October 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai led a silent march in protest against the Commission. Police attempts to disperse the large crowd resulted in violence. The superintendent of police, James A. Scott, ordered the police to lathi charge the protesters and personally assaulted Rai, who was injured. Rai died of a heart attack on 17 November 1928, probably as a consequence of shock. Doctors thought that his death might have been hastened by the injuries that he had received.

When the matter was raised in the British Parliament, the British Government denied any role in Rai's death. Although Singh did not witness the event, he vowed to take revenge, and joined other revolutionaries, Shivaram Rajguru, Sukhdev Thapar and Chandrashekhar Azad, in a plot to kill Scott. However, in a case of mistaken identity, Singh received a signal to shoot on the appearance of John P. Saunders, an Assistant Superintendent of

Police. He was shot by Rajguru and Singh while leaving the District Police Headquarters in Lahore on 17 December 1928.

Pamphlet by HSRA after Saunder's murder, signed by Balraj, a pseudonym of Chandrashekhhar Azad Although the murder of Saunders was condemned as a retrograde action by Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress leader, others were more understanding of the motivation.

Bhaghat Singh did not become popular because of his act of terrorism but because he seemed to vindicate, for the moment, the honour of Lala Lajpat Rai, and through him of the nation. He became a symbol, the act was forgotten, the symbol remained, and within a few months each town and village of the Punjab, and to a lesser extent in the rest of northern India, resounded with his name. Innumerable songs grew about him and the popularity that the man achieved was something amazing.

### Escape

After killing Saunders, the group escaped through the D. A. V. College entrance, across the road. Chanan Singh, a Head Constable who was chasing them, was fatally injured by Chandrashekhhar Azad's covering fire. They then fled on bicycles to pre-arranged places of safety. The police launched a massive search operation to catch them, blocking all exits and entrances from the city; the CID kept a watch on all young men leaving Lahore. They hid for the next two days. On 19 December 1928, Sukhdev called on Durgawati Devi, sometimes known as Durga Bhabhi, wife of another HSRA member Bhagwati Charan Vohra, for help, which she agreed to do. They

decided to catch the train departing from Lahore to Bathinda en route for Howrah (Calcutta) early the next morning.

Singh and Rajguru left the house early the next morning, with both men carrying loaded revolvers. Dressed in western attire and carrying Devi's sleeping child, Singh and Devi passed off as a young couple, while Rajguru carried their luggage as their servant. At the station, Singh managed to conceal his identity while buying tickets and the three boarded the train heading to Cawnpore. There they boarded a train for Lucknow since the CID at Howrah railway station usually scrutinised passengers on the direct train from Lahore. At Lucknow, Rajguru left separately for Benares while Singh, Devi and the infant went to Howrah, with all except Singh returning to Lahore a few days later.

#### 1929 Assembly bomb throwing incident

Singh had for some time been exploiting the power of drama as a means to inspire revolt against the British, purchasing a magic lantern to show slides that enlivened his talks about revolutionaries who had died as a result of the Kakori Conspiracy, such as Ram Prasad Bismil. In 1929, he proposed a dramatic act to the HSRA with the intention of gaining massive publicity for their aims. Influenced by Auguste Vaillant, a French anarchist who had bombed the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, Singh's plan was to explode a bomb inside the Central Legislative Assembly. The nominal intention was to protest against the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Dispute Act, which had been rejected by the Assembly but were being enacted by the Viceroy using his special powers; the actual intention was for the perpetrators to get

themselves arrested so that they could use appearances in court as a stage to publicise their cause.

The HSRA leadership were initially opposed to Singh participating in the bombing because they were certain that his prior involvement in the Saunders shooting would mean that his arrest on this occasion would ultimately result in his execution. However, they eventually determined that he was their most suitable candidate. On 8 April 1929, Singh, accompanied by Batukeshwar Dutt, threw two bombs into the Assembly chamber from its public gallery while it was in session. In accordance with the plan, no-one was killed by the explosions, although some members were injured, including George Ernest Schuster, the finance member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The smoke from the bomb filled the Assembly and if they had chosen then they probably could have escaped in the confusion; instead they stayed, shouting slogans of Inquilab Zindabad! ("Long Live the Revolution") and showered leaflets. The two men were arrested and subsequently moved through a series of jails in the Delhi area. Gandhi, once again, issued strong words of disapproval for their deed.

#### Assembly bomb case trial

Singh was elated with the success of the bombing and referred to it and the forthcoming legal proceedings as a "drama". The trial took place in the first week of June, following a preliminary hearing in May. On 12 June both men were sentenced to life imprisonment for "causing explosions of a nature likely to endanger life, unlawfully and maliciously."

Dutt had been defended by Asaf Ali, while Singh defended himself. Doubts have been raised about the accuracy of testimony offered at the trial. One key discrepancy related to the automatic pistol that Singh had been carrying at the time of his arrest. Some witnesses said that he had fired two or three shots and the police sergeant who arrested him testified that the gun was pointed downward when he took it from him and that Singh “ was playing with it.” According to the India Law Journal, however, these accounts were incorrect because Singh had turned over the pistol himself. According to Kooner, Singh “ committed one great blunder” by taking his pistol on that day “ when it was clear not to harm anybody and offer for police arrest without any protest.” Kooner further states that the police connected “ the shell of the gun fire found from the (Saunders’) murder site and the pistol.”

#### Further trial and execution

The HSRA had set up bomb factories in Lahore and Saharanpur in 1929. On 15 April that year, the Lahore bomb factory was discovered by the police, leading to the arrest of other members of HSRA, including Sukhdev, Kishori Lal and Jai Gopal. Not long after this, the Saharanpur factory was also raided and further conspirators became informants. With the new information available to them, the police were able to connect the three strands of the Saunders murder, Assembly bombing and bomb manufacture. Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev were charged with the murder of Saunders.

#### Hunger strike and Lahore conspiracy case

Singh was re-arrested for murdering Saunders and Chanan Singh based on substantial evidence against him, including the statements of his associates,



Hans Raj Vohra and Jai Gopal. His life sentence in the Assembly Bomb case was deferred till the Saunders' case was decided. He was sent to the Mianwali jail from the Delhi jail, where he witnessed discrimination between European and Indian prisoners, and led other prisoners in a hunger strike to protest this.

They demanded equality in standards of food, clothing, toiletries and other hygienic necessities, as well as availability of books and a daily newspaper for the political prisoners, whom they demanded should not be forced to do manual labour or any undignified work in the jail.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah spoke in the Assembly supporting Singh,[40] and sympathised with the prisoners on hunger strike. He declared on the floor of the Assembly:

The man who goes on hunger strike has a soul. He is moved by that soul, and he believes in the justice of his cause ... however much you deplore them and however much you say they are misguided, it is the system, this damnable system of governance, which is resented by the people.

Jawaharlal Nehru met Singh and the other strikers in Mianwali jail. After the meeting, he stated:

I was very much pained to see the distress of the heroes. They have staked their lives in this struggle. They want that political prisoners should be treated as political prisoners. I am quite hopeful that their sacrifice would be crowned with success.

The Government tried to break the strike by placing different food items in the prison cells to test the hungry prisoners' resolve. Water pitchers were filled with milk so that either the prisoners remained thirsty or broke their strike but nobody faltered and the impasse continued. The authorities then attempted forcing food using feeding tubes into the prisoners, but were resisted. With the matter still unresolved, the Indian Viceroy, Lord Irwin, broke his vacation in Simla to discuss the situation with the jail authorities. Since the activities of the hunger strikers had gained popularity and attention amongst the people nationwide, the government decided to advance the start of the Saunders murder trial, which was henceforth called the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Singh was transpo