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Period: 6 months (July-December 2010)

Site: British Library and School of Oriental and African Studies – UK

Purpose: Archival Research

The research I undertook as an AIPS Pre-Doctoral Fellow sought to examine three foundational figures in the so-called Punjab renaissance: (1) Muhammad Iqbal; (2) Dayal Singh Majithia, and (3) Lala Lajpat Rai. But in privileging these Punjabi icons, whose stories intersect one another at various moments, my aim was to look beyond their individual life stories. I was interested, in other words, in the specific conditions of possibility that lent these three voices historical plausibility. For in the decades before the outbreak of World War I, in the span sometimes referred to as the *belle époque* or *fin de siècle* in European historiography, Lahore also came to be the site where fervent religious revivalism that ceded way to an ardent nationalism which reached its climax with the Ghadar rebellion of 1915. Over the course of six months in Britain, spent primarily at the British Library, but also in the newspaper collections at the School of Oriental and African Studies, I consulted and compiled a collection of invaluable vernacular sources, official documents, and tract literature on late colonial Punjab. And I was repeatedly struck by the ways in which the story about the radicalization of Punjabi revivalism quickly stretched beyond the boundaries of Punjab.

That the numerous revivalist “societies,” Hindu samajes, Sikh *khalsa diwans*, and Muslim anjumans, struck a peculiarly reverberant note in colonial cities such as Lahore is well-known. However, as Punjabis flocked to locations as wildly disparate as Shanghai, Vancouver, Berlin, and San Francisco the nature of Punjabi revivalism must itself have been transformed. The nature of my inquiries continued to raise new questions in course of my research: How are we to make sense of the complex transnational conjunctures that played a role in the elaboration of Punjabi revivalism? What allowed religious revivalists in Punjab to be so responsive to the international scene despite their ostensible immersion in and renewed commitment to Indian religious traditions? Might their responsiveness itself be more profitably understood as a consequence of their revivalism, rather than, as the dominant historiography asserts, *in spite of* their revivalism?

Both Dyal Singh Majithia and Muhammad Iqbal were influenced greatly by the modernist literature that had emanated from Europe. More precisely: we can identify the strain of modernism that influenced them as liberalism. Dyal Singh was particularly enthralled with this new political ideology, as revealed by a rarely cited booklet titled “Nationalism,” written in 1895. We can brook “no sympathy with the sentimental ideas,” the sirdar advised, “of [those] leaders of thought who speak loftily of Eastern and Western civilization, of what the east has given to the west, and the west to the east....For, justice, truth and love, courage, freedom, independence, and industry are the privileges of man.” He added that just as “the truths embodied in the geometry of Euclid, in the works of Bacon or Newton, in the ancient literature of Greece, Rome, or India, or in modern literature of Milton and Shakespeare...the truths of God cannot be confined to any one nation or sect.” The sirdar concluded with a Kantian appeal: “Too much respect for what came before...in all its beliefs and customs and institutions, is a state of self-imposed bondage....New doctrines must be accepted only so far as they commend themselves our higher reason and conscience.” How are we to explain this trenchant liberalism of Dyal Singh? What explains why Dyal Singh’s own vision of emancipation eclipsed even the

conception of the “free individual”—shorn of direct social bonds—in J. S. Mill’s classic treatise *On Liberty*? And what of Iqbal’s own early, but rarely commented upon, interest in political economy?

Historical records also document how Lala Lajpat Rai, the influential Arya Samajist in Lahore whose nationalist sympathies rested with the “moderate” camp within the Indian National Congress led by Dadabhai Naoroji, came to be equally fascinated by the radical group Young Italy founded by Giuseppe Mazzini. His deportation, without a trial, on charges of sedition for campaigning against water rate hikes in the canal colonies in 1907, radicalized students in groups such as the Arya Samaj as well as the Anjuman-i-Mohibban-i-Watan (Society of Patriots). One such student was Har Dayal. His initial conversion to the nationalist cause was deeply influenced by the ideals of Swadeshists such as Tilak who held that the ethical rebirth of India was impossible under British rule. After stints in London, Paris, and Martinique in the service of this idealized vision of a respirtualized India, Har Dayal adopted the call of internationalism upon migrating to the United States in 1911. Drawn increasingly to syndicalism, Har Dayal founded the Bakunin Institute in California, contributed to the union work of the Industrial Workers of the World in San Francisco on the eve of World War I, and stood out as the chief theorist behind *Ghadar* (“Revolution”), a Gurmukhi/Urdu newspaper that sought to entice the predominantly Sikh migrants on the Pacific Coast—against the wishes of the Khalsa Diwan of San Francisco—to return to India to spark an anti-colonial struggle.

This dissertation project seeks to contribute to the wider field of Pakistan studies by exploring the ways in which these complex transnational conjunctures evince the enormous sociopolitical transformations in late colonial Punjab. Its emphasis on the internationalism of Punjabi radicals in era before World War I defies the present-day methodological “communalism” in Punjab studies, its close identification with Sikh studies in India and its narrow emphasis on Punjabi Muslims in Pakistan, as it tracks the intellectual-political trajectory of Punjabi revivalism from moderacy through extremism to radicalism.