



Jang Hind Punjab: From *Dilli Challo* to Liberation

Poh, Nanakshahi 552



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The Khalistan Centre is dedicated to supporting and cultivating Gurmat-driven leadership to further the struggle for Khalistan.

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ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂਜੀਕੀਫਤਹ ॥ ਇਨਗ੍ਰੀਬਸਿੰਘਨਕੋਦਯੈਪਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀ । ਏਯਾਦਰਖੈਂਹਮਰੀਗੁਰਿਆਈ ।

In 1849, the *Firanghi* (European colonizer) annexed *Sirkar-i-Khalsa* and embarked on a colonial project to dominate, repress, and exploit the Panth & Punjab. The *Firanghi* imposed specific economic and political structures to repress expressions of indigenous sovereignty (*patshahi*) and replace them with an authoritarian state that could efficiently exploit the land and people for the profit of the empire.

This is the same repressive structure that celebrated “independence” in 1947.

The recent agriculture bills are another example of the Indian state exploiting Punjab and the subcontinent to serve nationalist and imperialist interests.

Today’s mobilization directly confronts the authoritarian and centralized structure of the Indian state, as well as the domination and exploitation of global capitalism.

While repealing the three bills is the immediate demand, the ultimate solution is decolonization and the complete decentralization of power in the subcontinent—not only to the respective regions, but to each individual village and farm.

This transformation goes hand in hand with social, political, and economic systems which prioritize the wellbeing of all, the flourishing of diverse communities and spiritual traditions, as well as reciprocity with the environment. This vision is being driven from the ground by the Sikh vision for *halemi raj*—whose foundations have been watered in recent times by the *shaheeds* of the Sikh *sangarsh* for Khalistan.

The Guru Khalsa Panth’s *sangarsh* has always been an exercise of the *patshahi* bestowed upon the Khalsa to *destroy the tyrants and protect the poor*, and establish a just society-polity based on *sarbat da bhala*. In this legacy, the Khalistan *lehar* (movement) was initiated as a revolutionary resistance to abolish the Indian state, capitalist exploitation, and Hindutva’s caste-based supremacy—with a clear commitment to advancing the liberation of the oppressed across the subcontinent.

The Eurocentric model of the Indian state and so-called “development” being strengthened today is based on breaking Panth-Punjab from the divine worldview, socioeconomic justice, and political empowerment engrained within Sikhi.

Rejuvenating our praxis, goals, and struggle in line with *Gurmat* is the starting point for continuing the Khalsa’s *sangarsh* and regenerating the social, political, and economic systems envisioned in *Khalsa Raj* today.

Impacts of the new bills

The Indian state passed three new pieces of legislation in September after manipulating its own Parliamentary process. These new statutes—framed as agricultural “reforms”—will have an inordinate impact on Punjab. Not only do they undermine the minimal supports currently available in an already unstable and punitive agricultural system, but they directly facilitate the corporate takeover of farmland and continue to centralize political power in Delhi.

There are a number of important layers and perspectives to analyze this ongoing movement. While there are some shared concerns for the whole subcontinent, there are **three unique impacts** on the Panth & Punjab. **We need to understand these specific concerns in order to comprehend the overwhelming response from Punjab specifically in recent months.** While all three mutually reinforce each other it is still useful to conceptualize each impact independently.

Economic Devastation:

Firstly, a vast majority of Punjab’s population is engaged in agriculture directly while the remaining segments depend on it indirectly. In a region that is almost entirely economically dependent on agriculture, the corporate takeover of farmlands will lead to economic devastation and the further concentration of capital and political power in the hands of a narrow few.

This over-dependence on agriculture is a function of India’s state-building process since 1947 which intentionally underdeveloped Punjab in order to serve Indian food and national security objectives. Because of excessive centralization, Punjab has been forced to rely almost exclusively on wheat and rice production, while every attempt to diversify the crop pattern or expand into other industries has been denied by Delhi altogether. These policies manipulated Punjab’s agrarian structure leading to environmental destruction, vicious debt cycles and farmer suicides, denial of economic diversification, and forced migration of Punjab’s youth. **In other words, even before these bills were introduced, Punjab and its agricultural system were at a crisis point.**

Centralization of Power:

The imposition of these policies is yet another example of the Indian state denying Punjab (and other regions) the right and ability to self-govern. While the flawed constitution of India provides a minimal degree of autonomy to state governments in several areas (including agriculture), these safeguards have been consistently ignored by Delhi whenever it comes to Punjab, Kashmir, and other dissenting regions. Examples in the past

several years include the recent diversion of state revenues through the centralized GST, as well as the development of its New Education Policy.

With the passing of the agriculture bills, Delhi has once again overridden Punjab’s decision-making authority over agricultural policy and further centralized power by unilaterally imposing its will. Beyond this however, several sections of the bills give Delhi unfettered discretionary powers to order any public employee—or even the state government itself—to do *anything* it considers necessary to implement its legislative goal.

This structural imbalance is the prerequisite for the disastrous policies that have been imposed on Punjab and other regions in the subcontinent for decades. **As long as Delhi is able to unilaterally impose its will on the subcontinent, the masses of South Asia will remain vulnerable to authoritarianism, exploitation, and subjection to the Brahminical caste hierarchy institutionalized by the Indian state and social structure.**

Cultural Genocide:

Beyond the straightforward political and economic impacts, it is important to recognize its distinct impact on Punjab specifically. Punjab is the historic homeland of the Sikh Panth—where Sikh history and institutions developed, where a majority of our people continue to reside, and the environment in which our culture has evolved to be transmitted to future generations.

The deeper penetration of capitalism into rural Punjab does not simply mean economic and political disenfranchisement but also the erosion of the social fabric which sustains our cultural and material existence. Around the globe, capitalism and the discourse of development have been used as colonial tools of counterinsurgency in order to overcome political resistance by transforming social relations and transposing an acculturated consumerist culture. **In the context of a state apparatus committed to the Hindutva project of a Hindu *rashtra* (nation), these bills lay the foundations for another phase of cultural genocide.**

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Background

To understand how the impacts of the proposed bills are made possible, it is imperative to understand three characteristic elements that define the Indian state project as an inherently violent entity since its colonial inception.

Colonial state structure:

The root of Delhi's domination and exploitation of Punjab is in the annexation of *Sirkar-i-Khalsa* in 1849. That was the last time that Panth-Punjab governed itself autonomously to develop and implement policies in line with its own philosophy and needs. Since 1849, British colonial rule and Indian nationalism have used the state apparatus to exercise domination and exploit Punjab for their own imperialist interests.

The *Firanghi* (European colonizer) imposed the colonial state structure to eliminate expressions of indigeneous sovereignty (*patshahi*) and replace them with an authoritarian model that could exploit the land and people for the profit of the empire. **The structure of the state has itself been developed and deployed as an imperialist structure to make exploitation and domination more efficient throughout the colonized world.**

It was this political structure that was handed over by the *Firanghi* in 1947. The *Transfer of Power* made sure that the imperial relation continued and this is the foundation on which centre-state relations in modern India are based. Although there was an undeniable shift, it was more of a *reconfiguration* of global power than an actual end to colonialism. In other words, "national independence" did not lead to decolonization; colonialism changed forms, but the underlying discourse, structures, and power relations remain firmly in place today. Until this lack of political power to determine our own governance structures, policy and future is resolved, this conflict will continue.

Imperialism and global capital:

While the structure of the Indian state is itself a colonial legacy that has continued to enact policies to exploit Punjab and other regions for its own nationalist interest, it also continues to serve foreign interests as well. This can be seen through the imposition of the Green Revolution in the 1960s, forced structural adjustments in 1991, and even the pressure placed on the Indian state to enact these recent bills through the WTO. The forces of capitalism and Indian nationalism mutually reinforce each other in South Asia to slowly erode resistance to the state and capitalism. This is done by manufacturing homogenized Indian subjects and citizen-consumers, and violently enforcing these identities in the face of resistance.

The subjection of Punjab to Delhi is thus compounded by the region's location within the global capitalist system. The further penetration of neoliberalism into Punjab's agrarian structure through these bills serves imperialist interests by providing greater access to Indian markets and the corresponding profits. The corporate takeover of Punjab's farmland will not be limited to the Ambanis, Adanis, or others in the Hindi belt who benefit from crony capitalism domestically. These bills are a clear mechanism to expand access, profit, and control for foreign corporations like Facebook and Google, as well.

Further, the process of commodification (of our *dharti* (land/mother) and *kirat* (labour)) erases the divine nature of the world experienced through Sikhi by turning land and labour into material objects that serve *haumai* (ego) and desire. This Eurocentric model of so-called "development" is based on transforming Punjab's *kirti-kisan* (labourer and farmer) solely into workers and consumers—breaking them from the divine worldview, socioeconomic structures, and political vision of Sikhi. This transformation is what enables excessive rates of mass consumption, exploitation within communities, and the destruction of the environment. **This fundamentally breaks from the Sikh worldview of *sarbat da bhala* premised on developing ethical relationships with all elements of Akaal's creation, including when we work the land (*kirat karni*) and produce any form of wealth (*vand ke chhakna*).** Rejuvenating our praxis in line with this worldview is the starting point for regenerating the social, political, and economic systems envisioned in *begampura* and *halemi raj*.

Hindutva and Indian nationalism:

Beyond the immediate political and economic impacts, these bills are also linked to the larger social project of building a Hindu *rashtra*—a homogenized and subdued population helplessly subject to the whims of a xenophobic Hindu nationalism and global capitalism. In this sense, these bills are a strategic step towards centralizing political power in Delhi, solidifying its international support as an aspiring global power, and culturally homogenizing the subcontinent. Gaining the support of global capital further bolsters Hindutva's chauvinistic domestic policy which seeks to restore the mythic ancient glory of the Hindu nation by striving to become a global 'superpower'.

The trajectory of this process can easily be seen in several initiatives over the past years moving towards the fascist vision of one nation, one language, and one religion. Recent policies have also added "one tax and one market" to the Hindutva maxim. While the abrogation of Article

370, the “reconstruction” of the Ram Mandir, New Education Policy, and the citizenship amendment laws are clear steps in the social project of assimilation and domination of minorities, these are bolstered by the imposition of GST and demonetization. Centralizing political and economic power in Delhi—and forcing states into dependence, strengthens the control of Hindutva which enables it to flex its muscles by imposing its social and economic policies. This is supported by the tacit complicity of liberal democracies and corporations around the world who have faithfully looked the other way and continue to remain silent while fascist paramilitary networks unleash genocidal violence against minorities with impunity.

The political institutions of India were clearly constructed to enable majoritarianism with minimal safeguards for minorities, and an Indian nationalism explicitly based on Brahminical identity and symbols. In this sense, the Congress’ brand of liberal nationalism has only been quantitatively different from the BJP and RSS. From its inception, India established a highly centralized state structure to maintain majoritarian control and unleashed a nation-building project to ensure the peoples of the subcontinent were assimilated into a unitary ‘Indian’ national identity. Various regions and communities that have resisted this process have been projected as pathologies that must either be assimilated or annihilated altogether.

To summarize, **the fundamental issue underlying the recent bills is the ongoing domination and exploitation of Punjab by the centralized political structure of the Indian state.** Following the British annexation of *Sirkar-i-Khalsa*, Punjab has been exploited as a colony of Delhi—subject to the interests of the Indian state and global capital. For over a century, various political structures and economic policies have been imposed on Punjab to its own detriment, only in order to serve imperial interests. **The crux of the current issue therefore lies in questions of political power and a vision for a new political structure that transcends the Indian state altogether. This is not just about the economic viability of agriculture.**



Evolution of the mobilization

The bills were introduced into the legislative process suddenly in June and rammed through Parliament in September. In response, the Panth & Punjab mobilized rapidly—boycotting corporations, blocking highways and railways, and organizing massive demonstrations around the world. In a display of Sikh spirit, the Panth invoked its revolutionary history as it marched on Delhi—destroying every obstacle placed on the path by the state. This resistance has demanded that all three bills be repealed and has begun intensifying the boycott of corporations by recently sabotaging corporate infrastructure. The rage that is being witnessed has been building in the face of decades of violent repression and imperialist policies rooted in assimilation and genocide. This is why there is a qualitative difference between the response in Punjab and other affected regions today.

A unique characteristic of this movement has been the diverse and inclusive nature of participation—displayed in the diversity of geographical regions, caste, class, political ideology, ethnicity, and spiritual traditions of participants. **This is clearly more than just an economic conflict of farmers—it is a revolt against the British-inspired Indian state project itself, neoliberalism, and the fascist project of a Hindu *rashtra*.** Punjab remains at the helm—driven by Sikhi and a commitment to sovereignty, resistance, and *sarbat da bhala*. The Guru Khalsa Panth has always resisted every invasion and uprooted Delhi-based empires in order to defend the oppressed by destroying tyrannical power. This culture of Sikh resistance and vision of *halemi raj* continues to drive the mobilization on the ground and can be evidenced in the discourse, symbols, and institutions seen on the ground.

The current Morcha is simultaneously confronting the authoritarian and centralized structure of the Indian state, as well as the domination and exploitation of global capitalism.

While repealing the three bills is the immediate demand, the ultimate solution is decolonization and the complete decentralization of power in the subcontinent—not only to the respective regions, but to each individual village and farm. This goes hand in hand with social, political, and economic systems which prioritize the wellbeing of all, the flourishing of diverse communities and spiritual traditions, as well as reciprocity with the environment. This demand is being driven from the ground by the Sikh principle of *sarbat da bhala*, and requires the abolition of the Indian state altogether.

As the situation currently sits at a deadlock in Delhi, it is important to maintain clarity on the nature of the root issues, intensify the struggle, and commit to carrying the momentum onwards towards liberation.

From the Delhi Morcha to Liberation

The Khalsa's *sangarsh* throughout the centuries has never been a sectarian movement predicated on a chauvinistic impulse of identity or self-interest. Every struggle has been an exercise of the *patshahi* bestowed upon the Khalsa to *destroy the tyrants and protect the poor*, and establish a just polity based on *sanjhivalta*. *Jujharoos* (warriors) and *Shaheeds* (martyrs) of the Khalsa have consistently fought to uproot every form of oppression and resist any attempts to restrict the Khalsa's inherent sovereignty.

In this legacy, the Sikh *sangarsh* for Khalistan centres around our drive to exercise our Guru-granted *patshahi* and establish a sovereign society-polity built around the Guru's vision of *sarbat da bhala* and *halemi raj*. The struggle was initiated as a revolutionary resistance to abolish the Indian state, capitalist exploitation, and Hindutva's caste-based supremacy—with a clear commitment to advancing the liberation of all oppressed peoples across the subcontinent.

Seeking reforms or limited power solely through the state and its institutions is not sufficient for our liberation. The international state system was itself developed through colonialism to maintain an imperial relationship across the world without needing direct colonial administration. More than merely reproducing that relationship or reforming the structures of the state, a lasting solution can only be found in **neutralizing this authoritarian structure altogether by building decentralized power for all from the grassroots up.** This is the vision bestowed upon the Khalsa by Guru Sahib which guides our steps into the future.

This current morcha is a glimpse into that spirit and possibility, not in terms of a deferred solution to be achieved in the future—but in terms of a praxis to be implemented in our communities today. This Morcha offers three signposts in particular.

1. The Morcha has reminded us of the power of collective leadership when the reins are in the hands of the *sangat*. The “leaders” in this current morcha are only temporary representatives and spokespersons rather than leaders in a hierarchical or authoritarian sense. Building on these decentralized structures of power, **autonomous communities and institutions must be developed from the grassroots** in opposition to the centralized model of the Indian state and the fascist aspirations of Hindutva. These models must be developed and exercised from the grassroots—they cannot be granted by the very state structures we are resisting against.

2. Our future lies in the power of the *jujharoo* Khalsa; a power that is wielded by the *sangat* to **empower the poor and destroy oppressive power**. The examples of direct action we have seen through boycott and sabotaging the infrastructure of the state and the corporate engines of nationalism give us a glimpse of our potential strength. We must harness this energy to shift the terrain from a politics of grievance seeking solutions solely from state institutions, towards **exercising our collective power** through our own sovereign institutions. Justice and political power emanate from Guru Granth-Panth only—they will not and cannot be granted to us by our oppressors.

3. Sikhi is the guiding revolutionary force for the Panth and the foundation of our *sangarsh*. The legacy of our *shaheeds* and the Guru's vision for *sarbat da bhala* are some of our greatest strengths. Our Sikhi is not a "religion" limited to private worship, nor is our *sangarsh* limited to shielding a frozen racialized identity defined and constructed by a Eurocentric lens. **Our political vision, anti-capitalism, and sangarsh flows through Sikh praxis which roots our existence in this world as Sikh on the path of the Guru**—defined by our commitment to actively play the Guru's transformative *game of love*. The success of our *sangarsh* therefore does not rely solely on the limitations of our finite intellect, but is premised on our transformation through *Naam-Bani* to become vessels of the Guru's *hukam*. The Indian state is acutely aware of this relationship, which is why *amritdhari naujawan* and Sikh *dharmic* institutions were specifically targeted through its genocidal counter-insurgency, and why the Indian establishment seeks to demonize the *sangarsh* for Khalistan, or even Sikh participation in the Morcha today.



Laying foundations for the Struggle

A major question remains for those of us unfortunate to have been displaced or otherwise separated from Punjab: how do we meaningfully contribute to the success of the morcha? While the frontlines of the struggle are obviously on the streets of Delhi, the responsibilities of the Guru Khalsa Panth are not limited or distinguished geographically. *Naujawan* of the Guru Khalsa Panth have been the driving force of history in every era we celebrate and that responsibility to struggle for *Khalsa Jee de bol bale* (exercising the Khalsa's inherent sovereignty) and *sarbat da bhala* (welfare of all of *Akaal's* creation) remains on our shoulders today.

These are several suggestions which are not conclusive or exhaustive by any means.

1. Our *sangarsh* seeks to root our existence in this world as *Sikh*, and to strive for *Khalsa Jee de bol bale* and *sarbat da bhala*. *Sikhi* itself is therefore our fundamental starting point. Strengthening your individual relationship with *Naam-Bani* and building a local *sangat* committed to *seva* for the *sangarsh* is key to the longevity of our movement and our ultimate *fateh* (victory).
2. Initiatives to educate yourself and your local community are an important starting point. While there are a lot of resources online about the bills themselves, it is important to delve deeper into the background so we can comprehend the current agitation in its context as an ongoing political conflict with India itself. It is imperative that we understand the nature of the Indian state and its relationship with imperialism, as well as the role of the Guru Khalsa Panth in this world. These initiatives can take a variety of forms and should extend to shaping and influencing public policy and opinion around the world.
3. We need to map out and understand the interconnections between various governments and corporations around the world that engage with those like Ambani-Adani that will be benefiting from or implementing the new bills. For example, investigative journalists have identified a clear nexus between Ambani's Reliance industries and Canadian companies, as well as the MLI Institute which has recently attempted to aggressively demonize Khalistan. There remains a great deal of work to identify links between intergovernmental trade deals and the repressive criminalization of Sikh activists in several countries including Canada and the UK, as well as recent trends of censorship over social media.
4. As we continue to identify these connections, we need to unroll a comprehensive and sustainable boycott campaign around the world to support activists on the ground. This requires a well-defined and coordinated initiative to ensure coherence of our goals, efficacy in our tactics, and clear communications to implement the campaign seamlessly around the world.
5. This Morcha has made it abundantly clear that we need to transform Punjab's agricultural model in its entirety—to serve the needs of Punjab and rejuvenate the environment by realigning with a Sikh worldview. While we work towards the political structure that will enable this, many on the ground are beginning to lay the groundwork for a Punjab-centric agricultural model by facilitating public dialogues to draw on the knowledge of Punjab's *kisaan* themselves. Those outside of Punjab can support the initiative by amplifying these voices and directly providing financial support for the infrastructure required in their respective villages.
6. The dynamics of the Morcha have illustrated the importance and strength of coalition-building. In line with the Khalsa's tradition of *gareeb di rakhiya*, *jarvanay di bhakhia* (protection of the poor, destruction of the tyrant), we have to prioritize solidarity with other allies in every region we reside in and actively engage in grassroots organizing against state power and capital. While we resist the violence of the Indian state, we must also identify and challenge the global power structures that benefit from and support the Indian state's violence. The states where most of the diaspora resides are the same states that have been pushing for India's so-called reforms for years—and are positioned to benefit the most.
7. Lastly, we must rebuild meaningful personal and institutional connections with land, communities, and activists in Punjab. Using whatever skills or interests Guru Sahib has given you or your local organization, we need to find ways to share that work with the grassroots in Punjab. Find ways to build meaningful connections and relationships beyond tourism and consumption; connect with activists on the ground; support them and amplify their voices.



Resources

A Sovereign World (Boycott resources): <https://asovereignworld.com/kisaan>

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ਸਰੀਰ ਦਾ ਖਰਾਬ ਮੋਤ ਹੋਣਾ
ਜ਼ਮੀਰ ਦਾ ਖਰਾਬ ਜਾਣਾ
ਯਕੀਨ ਦਾ ਮੋਤ ਹੋਣਾ
ਮੌਤ ਜਰਕੂਲ ਸਿਖਿਲੀ



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