

WSN Bureau
CHANDIGARH

At an impressive ceremony at the Chandigarh Press Club, in the presence of a galaxy of scholars, writers, political, social and religious leaders of the Sikh community, Ajmer Singh's new book 1984 -Unchitvya Kehar was released by Lt.Gen. Kartar Singh Gill - chief of the International Sikh Confederation. The first copy of the book was presented to Bibi Paramjit Kaur Khalra, wife of slain human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra, in the presence of his daughter Navkiran Kaur.

Releasing the book, which is the third book of the author in the series of books on contemporary history of Punjab, Gen. Kartar Singh Gill said that the events of 1984 are unforgettable and the lame duck apology offered by Dr. Manmohan Singh without change of heart and change of attitude and policy towards the Sikhs was wholly unacceptable to the Sikhs.

Calling Mrs. Indira Gandhi a dictator, the former General of the Indian army recounted the behind-the-scenes manoeuvres in the conduct of Operation Bluestar. Expressing his feelings, Kartar Singh said that "whenever we have suffered an onslaught, we have come out stronger, and though it appears that we are still in the dumps, we will definitely emerge more committed and strong." He exhorted everyone to read the book to understand the nuances of the Indo-Sikh conflict so ably and painstakingly narrated by Ajmer Singh in all the three books that he has written so far.

Human rights activist and editor of World Sikh News, Jagmohan Singh presented a preview of the book and pointed out that it was the non-understanding of the theo-political status of Darbar Sahib in all its ramifications that led to the catastrophe of 1984. He said that since the SGPC has failed to respond with a comprehensive White Paper to the wild and superfluous allegations of the government of India, these three books by Ajmer Singh can easily be labelled as the "unofficial authentic White Paper of the Sikh community to the events of 1984". He further said that it was befitting that the book is being released during the year when the Sikhs are commemorating the 25th year of Saka Akal Takht, code-named Operation Bluestar. Sikhs have to understand the working of the Hindu mind and the Hindus have to understand the Sikh psyche and in this lies the basis of peaceful co-existence of the two nation-groups.

As the audience was interested to know more about the book, speaker after speaker dwelt about different aspects of the book. Dr. Jaspal Singh, editor of Desh Sewak pointed out how the author's two earlier books -Vehvin Sadhi di Sikh Rajniti and Kis Bidh Ruli Patshahi were very popular in the United States. He called Ajmer Singh a true historian whose narrative style makes his books easy reading and interesting. Calling Ajmer Singh to continue his journey he expressed the hope that the author would continue his search for truthful history of the Sikhs and Punjab.

Daljit Singh Bittu, president of the Shiromani Akali Dal (PanchPardhani) emphasized that though there is silence from the Sikh side, the opponents continue their war against the Sikhs. "It is upto the Sikhs to realise whether they hear the sounds of battle or not." Reading the pages of Ajmer Singh's books is discovery and rediscovery of the journey which the struggling Sikh youth have undergone over the years in the recent past. The cause and rationale for Sikh sovereignty, the reasons for the martyrdom of many of his close associates who were brutally tortured to death, what was the phenomenon called Sant Jarnail Singh, all these and many more questions need to be answered by all concerned Sikhs for in the search for an answer to all this lies our survival as a nation, said the leader in his soft but impassioned speech.

Daljit Singh further said the spiritually logical and impassioned treatment of the book deserves kudos and expressed the hope that the next books will be able to deal with the period after 1985 in the same forthright manner as the earlier ones.

Left activist and writer Rajinder Rahi in his brief and passionate speech said that the books of Ajmer Singh are well researched and provides the reader enough material as talking points for discussions and debates on 1984. The deep insight and experience of the author are tools

1984 -Unforgettable and Unforgivable

Galaxy of social, religious and political activists sing paeans about Ajmer Singh's latest book, 1984-Unchitvya Kehar at its release ceremony in Chandigarh exhorting the writer to write more in the coming years.



Ajmer Singh's new book 1984 Unchitvya Kehar was released by Lt.Gen. (retd) Kartar Singh Gill. The first copy book was presented to Bibi Paramjit Kaur Khalra. On extreme left is Khalra's Daughter Navkiran Kaur. Jagmohan Singh is seen at the extreme right.



Writer Ajmer Singh



Attendance at book release function

We need not minutes and hours, but days, weeks, months and years to understand the full gamut of issues relating to 1984, said the author of the book Ajmer Singh in his concluding speech. Suffice it to say that the phenomenon of Sant Jarnail Singh was not the result of some round table conference or the conclusion of some premeditated plan or an accidental occurrence; the only plausible explanation is that it was a religio-historic build up, which happens from time to time to provide much-needed impetus to history.

used to the full by the author which has led to him being perceived as "the new emerging challenge" by some ill-informed leftist thought followers.

Former senior journalist Jaspal Singh Sidhu in his short and sweet speech pointed out that the book attempts to deal with the question of minorities which has not been handled constitutionally and the creation of a monolithic state continues to be a silent operation of the Indian

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He said that while the Akali leadership was responsible due to its weakness and inefficiency, but he does not see them as collaborators and conspirators in the tyranny against the Sikhs. They were culprits and victims at the same time. 1984, he said was the attempt of Hindu India to foist and impose a singular definition of Indian identity

and the Sikhs have fought and will continue to fight this trend.

Daljit Singh, editor of Amritsar Times and a long time friend of the author ably introduced the author and other speakers, dwelling on the role of each one of them during the last decades and enunciating how their affinity with Ajmer Singh came about. He pointed out that whether one agrees with the angle of Ajmer Singh or not, his book flows more easily than a purely academic and factual style account, it is straight from the heart and therefore is appreciated by the academic community as well as the lay reader and the activist who is still entrenched in the on-going struggle for rehabilitation of Sikh identity. Daljit Singh pointed out that there is a dire need for Sikh scholars and the near-absent Sikh intelligentsia to imitate the work of Jews in recapturing memories of holocausts, particularly through the medium of cinema.

The book release function was well attended. Human rights activists Navkiran Singh, D. S. Gill, political leader Daljit Singh of Shiromani Akali Dal (Panch Pardhani), religious activist Rajinder Singh of Shiromani Khalsa Panchayat, social activist Mohinder Singh of Vanjara Trust, author Harjagmandir Singh, former SGPC member Amarinder Singh, Col. Jasmer Singh Bala, Malwinder Singh Mali, Major Singh Matran, Megh Raj Butter of BKU, Gurbachan Singh from Jalandhar. Youth activists from various student groups were also present. Others present included those who had worked with the author during the turbulent periods in the last four decades.