

How The Tribune Was Launched

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Abstract

In this article the role played by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia for starting the newspaper The Tribune from Lahore on 2nd February, 1881 and several views by different peoples about starting the newspaper by Majithia with the help of several Brahma Bengali friends from Lahore is also described. The issues highlight by The Tribune from starting to its end is also given as this is clearly described that the first issue of The Tribune, which came out on February 2, 1881, took up the explanation for modern education in Punjab through the medium of English. With several efforts led by newspaper the battle was won at the end. The Tribune took up all the public causes, and its voice was taken note of. It is aforesaid that one Lt. Governor of Punjab advised a delegation meeting him to ventilate their grievances through the columns of The Tribune. British civilians of Punjab felt therefore sad on telling their compatriots that the province was being ruled by the Lt. Governor and The Tribune.

Keywords : Dyal Singh Majithia, Jogendra Chandra Bose, Surendranath Banerjee, Lahore, The Tribune.

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Several people have claimed the credit for giving Dyal Singh the concept of beginning a newspaper in English from Lahore. The foremost among them was Surendranath Banerjee, who wrote that he persuaded Dyal Singh to start out the paper. Rai Bahadur Mul Raj wrote that he and Jogendra Chandra Bose requested Dyal Singh to start out a newspaper to carry on the crusade for education in Punjab on Western lines through the medium of English.

Bipin Chandra Pal, a member of the renowned Lal-Bal-Pal trio, who was on the workers of Dyal Singh's paper for some months, says that the Sardar started the paper at the suggestion of his Bengali friends in Lahore. One issue of The Tribune aforementioned that the concept was the Sardar's own.

During his stopover abroad for two years, Dyal Singh had seen the importance of the role compete by an Independent Press. Inside months of his come back from Europe, he came into contact with Surendranath Banerjee and discussed his ideas in regard to starting an English newspaper from Lahore, before long he was involved in the argument over the Vernacular Press Act.

The Indian Association's meeting in the Town Hall in Calcutta had nominated him to be a member of the committee got wind of to manage the implementation of the Press Act. This was in 1878. Surendranath Banerjee was actually the one that inspired him. therefore also were his close Brahma Bengali friends in Lahore, significantly P.C. Chatterjee, a senior member of the Lahore Bar, who later rose to be a choose

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of the Chief Court; and Jogendra Chandra Bose, another member of the Lahore Bar.

The launching of a newspaper in Punjab was not a simple task at that time. Printing machinery had to be procured and the workers had to be recruited. Dyal Singh invited the help of Surendranath Banerjee. The latter secure all help. Banerjee organized the printing press. He also suggested the name of Sitalakanta Chatterjee for appointment on the editorial workers. Being young, he was appointed Sub-Editor, because the newspaper should have some mature person for the Editor's job. because of Dyal Singh's Brahma Bengali friends' help, he was able to get the services of Seetalchandra Mookerjee of Bhowanipore in metropolis, who lived in Upper India and was editing his own paper, The Indian People, from Allahabad. He swear/pledge to edit the proposed Lahore paper from Allahabad itself.

Trained journalists being scarce in those days, Dyal Singh agreed to the arrangement. Seetalchandra Mookerjee sent the editorials and special articles from Allahabad, Sitalakanta Chatterjee looking after the work urban center. Dyal Singh himself made the other appointments. He recruited P.K. Chatterjee who had done some scissoring and pasting job at The Pioneer's sister publication in Lahore, The Civil and Military Gazette. For the job of the printer he restored with R. Williams, who had worked for The Indian Chronicle.

The first issue of The tribune, which came out on February 2, 1881, took up the explanation for modern education in Punjab through the medium of English. Week when week it carried as many as twenty five articles in addition to editorials

razing the arguments of the orientalist-Dr Leitner and his supporters. The other members of the Panjab University College Senate asked however Dyal Singh might continue to be a member of the Senate when his paper was opposing the policies of Panjab University College, which supported Dr Leitner. Dyal Singh resigned his membership of the Senate, and The Tribune continuing its crusade because the President of the Lahore branch of the Indian Association, he involved the headquarters of the organisation in Calcutta to require up the issue with the Secretary of State for India in London. The crusade was crowned successfully when a British government agreed in 1882 to the establishment of Panjab University on the lines of the colleges in Calcutta, Mumbai and Madras. The battle was won.

Dyal Singh's Bengali Brahmo friends played a vital role in making The Tribune more than a mere provincial paper. Modelled on The Bengalee, it was a paper which claimed to represent the whole of Upper India. It took up not solely all-India issues but also international issues, such as they were in the last century. The amount of the copies of The Tribune oversubscribed outside Punjab was more than the amount of the copies oversubscribed inside the province.

Significantly, the first issue championed the explanation for The Statesman Defence Fund, being raised to fight for The Statesman's pro-India Editor, Henry M. Robert Knight, who had been sued by a Hyderabad nobleman at the instance of conservatives British bureaucrats in India, who had been upset at the exposure by The Statesman (through its London edition) of the working of British bureaucrats here.

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Dyal Singh himself was a member of The Statesman Defence Committee. The Tribune took up all the public causes, and its voice was taken note of. It is aforesaid that one Lt. Governor of Punjab advised a delegation meeting him to ventilate their grievances through the columns of The Tribune. British civilians of Punjab felt therefore sad on tell their compatriots that the province was being ruled by the Lt. Governor and The Tribune, and the civil servants were obscurity.

The exposure of public wrongs once led to a famous defamation case, filed in 1890, by a Superintendent of Police against Dyal Singh and the Editor of The Tribune. One of the factors mentioned by the Superintendent of Police was that Dyal Singh was a nationalist and had allowed the compound of his stately mansion in Amritsar to be used for a lecture by a Congress fomenter named Allah Ram.

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