

It is 50 years since Bhagat Singh made the supreme sacrifice for India's freedom. His memory has not faded with time. On the contrary, it has been reinforced and re-invigorated. He remains the beau ideal of all India, and it would be difficult to find a corner of the country where he is unknown. Considering that he died at the young age of 24 and had a short meteoric political career, this is indeed surprising, but the nation remains fascinated with this promethian hero of our freedom struggle.

Bhagat Singh deserves a well-researched, well-documented and well-organised biography. The simple outlines of his life are well known, but it is time for scholars to put together a worthwhile study of the brave man, his actions and his beliefs. The study of his political views is essential, for, unlike many other revolutionaries, he had studied deeply and had a bold political philosophy and programme for the nation. Reading some of his thoughts, one is surprised to see such thinking and analysis in a youth in his teens.

I have read this little monograph with interest and some astonishment. The chapter on Bhagat Singh and Gandhi is particularly fascinating. The varieties of violence and non-violence in the cause of freedom have been well compared. The material about Mahatama Gandhi's discussion with Lord Irwin, leading to the famous pact, and his



Bhagat Singh when he was 18

The great martyr

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efforts to have Bhagat Singh's death sentence reduced, makes absorbing reading. After studying the Home Department's notes and quotations from various historical books on the Con-

gress and the Gandhi-Irwin pact, the reader is left to draw his own conclusion.

Some of the appendices, particularly, Bhagat Singh and Dutt's statements in court and the regulations of the Hindustan Republican Association, give one a fairly clear idea of the beliefs and programmes of Bhagat Singh and his associates.

Considering that there is so little on Bhagat Singh, this book is welcome, but I must confess that I am disappointed. K. K. Khullar is a well-known contributor to newspapers and a writer whose recent book on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, I have found of great interest. But I find this book to be a "quickie" produced obviously with an eye on the 50th anniversary of Bhagat Singh's hanging. Its text of barely 93 pages, with some appendices, does not do justice to the subject.

The research could have been more thorough and better organised in the book. While Bhagat Singh has been placed in the line of revolutionary movements starting from the Kookas, not enough has been produced about the man himself, his setting, his colleagues and his famous family patriots, in order to make us understand fully this phenomena in India's political ferment. The ink sketches and the cover are amateurish and, as often happens these days, the book is over-priced at Rs 50.

—M. S. Gill