History of the Indian Revolutionary Movement

MANMATHNATH GUPTA

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History of the INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

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Introduction

TWENTY YEARS AGO, in a souvenir article on revolutionaries, I wrote: "The revolutionaries whose story I propose to relate covered a whole gamut, ranging from raw terrorists to sophisticated Marxists." This book is an attempt to study the movement and its impact in greater detail. The movement itself had a tortuous and uneven course, resembling the progress of a river: sometimes it was just a shred of water and at other times it was a flood with its eddies and undercurrents.

After the first war of independence in 1857 and till 1919, when Gandhi took over, for a full 62 years, the revolutionaries alone waged an unceasing war with British imperialists. During this period the revolutionary movement threw up a galaxy of martyrs, heroes, and philosophers unrivalled at any time in our history.

Two names stand out: Tilak and Aurobindo. By their burning patriotism and philosophical reasoning, they brought the best out of this generation. Tilak began as an ideologue of the revolutionary cult. He was accused, and jailed, for having supplied the moral gunpowder to the Maharashtra revolutionaries — the three Chapekar brothers and the Natu brothers. A decade later he was again convicted for six years for extolling Khudiram, the young Bengal revolutionary who was hanged at the age of fifteen clutching a copy of the Gita. Tilak had saluted him in a series of articles in the *Kesari*. This conviction was condemned by people from all walks of life and in Bombay it evoked a labour strike. On this Lenin wrote in *Proletary* on July 23, 1908: "In India the proletariat is beginning to stand up for its writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak — he was sentenced to a long term of transportation — this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the moneybags, led to street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay." Tilak wrote his famous commentary on the Gita in prison.

Aurobindo Ghosh too made his debut as a revolutionary. He could not be sentenced, as nothing incriminating could be proved against him, thanks partly to C. R. Das, the young lawyer. But Aurobindo's brother, Barindra, was sentenced to transportation for life in connection with the Alipur conspiracy case. Aurobindo escaped to Pondicherry, then a French territory, and strayed into spiritualism. Aurobindo too wrote a commentary on the Gita, another revolutionary interpretation. Shachindranath Sanyal in his famous book *Bandi Jiwan* (Prison Life) wryly comments:

> He is gone to the mountain
> And he is lost in the forest
> The spring dried in the fountain
> When the need was the sorest.*

No wonder that Gandhi, to combat the cult of revolution, was also forced to write a commentary on the Gita styled as *Anasaktiyoga*, in which he sought to give a non-violent interpretation, saying that the battle of Kurukshetra was waged in the mind against the lusts invading it.

Tilak and Aurobindo began as revolutionaries, but later on strayed away from this path. It happened with some other leaders also like Surendranath Banerjee, the uncrowned king of Bengal, Bepin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai. In view of the hardships that dogged their path, this is neither unusual nor unexpected. Not everyone is endowed with the iron nerve of a Marx or Lenin or Madame Cama or Sohan Singh or Surya Sen or Chandrashekhar Azad.

Before 1919, the revolutionary movement had also produced other martyrs and heroes like Shyamji Krishna Verma, V. D. Savarkar, the Chapekars, Hardayal, Rash Bihari Bose, Barindra Ghosh, Kartar Singh, Pingley, Gendalal Dixit, Jatin Mukerjee, M. N. Roy, Raja Mahendrapratap, Kanailal, Barkatulla, Obeidulla, Madni, Bhupendranath Dutt (brother of Swami Vivekananda), to name only a few. I have not included the heroes of 1857, the Wahabi martyrs Abdulla and Sher Ali, and Ram Singh and his Kuka band.

Had the British been defeated in the first world war, some of

* *Bandi Jiwan* (Hindi), p. 173.

these revolutionaries would have formed the Indian Government and one wonders if this team would not have fared better than Nehru's Cabinet.

As I said, before 1919 the revolutionaries alone fought the British with some effect. After 1919 when Gandhi captured the Congress and converted it into a mass organization, the revolutionaries, in deference, postponed their movement till Chauri-chaura, where a number of policemen were burnt to death. Then onwards the Gandhian movement and the revolutionary struggle ran on parallel lines, sometimes coming closer as when Lala Lajpat Rai died after a lathi-charge and it was avenged by Bhagat Singh. Even the non-cooperation movement was triggered off by the Rowlatt Bill, an offspring of the Rowlatt Committee, also known as the Sedition Committee, appointed to suggest ways and means to suppress the revolutionary movement.

This association continued till 1935 when provincial autonomy was granted and there was a lull. When the second world war began and the Congress ministries resigned, it revived the revolutionary movement as well as the Satyagraha. But the two movements could not cope up with the new situation. Gandhi was still formulating his ideas when the revolutionaries started campaigns for disrupting railway lines and cutting telegraph wires to paralyze the Government in its war efforts.

When the Congress started the movement, the revolutionary forces took over and the new movement was different from the decennial Congress movements of 1921, 1930 and 1932. It became so glaringly revolutionary that Gandhi, after his release, disowned his own child -- the 1942 movement - with the result that in spite of the leftists taking it over, it could not gather the requisite momentum. There was another factor too. Hitler's invasion of Russia and the consequent slogan of people's war by Indian Communists misled the revolutionary forces and divided them. The movement was easily suppressed.

The emergence of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose who took over the Indian National Army from Rash Bihari Bose, a revolutionary in exile in Japan and his march upto Manipur and the trial of INA officers at Red Fort in New Delhi created such an impact that the British Government felt it could no longer rely on the Indian Army. The rumblings in the armed forces took the form of mutiny in some cases. Due to these and a number of other

reasons, the British decided to quit. It was the INA of Subhash Chandra Bose that delivered the *coup de grace*. Had the struggle continued, the history of India would have been different and we would have ushered in an era of socialism.

This is the history of the revolutionary movement which has been blacked out by official historians who would like to bestow on the Congress the whole credit for freeing India. But this falsification shall not succeed, as more and more people are now aware of facts.

My book in Hindi, *Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan ka Itihas*, was first published in 1939. It was immediately banned by the Congress Governments in U.P. and Bihar. Copies of the book were seized by the police. Another book of mine also met the same fate. The first book was republished after Independence in a revised form and it has gone into six editions, not counting the illegal editions which, I am told, were published during my last incarceration from 1939 to 1945.

I have since then come across new facts which have been incorporated in this edition. It is, thus, in effect, a new attempt to describe the Indian revolutionary movement.

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History of the INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

CHAPTER I

The Genesis

THE FIRST PHASE

INDIA DID NOT go under the British yoke in a single day. It took them nearly a century of conspiracies and swift political manoeuvres sandwiched between perfidious breaches of promise to hoist their flag on Indian soil. Their belief that the freedom of India was snatched away on the battle-field of Plassey in 1757 is an oversimplification. Plassey was the fag end of a long drawn out process, which resulted in India's subjugation. The British did not conquer India the way the Normans conquered England or the Goths founded their kingdoms in Europe.

Within a few years of Plassey, there was a mutiny[1] in Bengal, sparked off by some new military regulations. When Major Monroe came to know of the revolt, his British soldiers attacked the Indian soldiers, and a gun battle followed. The rebels were captured and each one of them was blown up by cannon fire. Captain Krum, a British officer, has chronicled this massacre in his book *Bengal Army*.

Another mutiny in 1795 has been described in the *Calcutta Gazette*. Napolean, who had then come to power, was at war with England, and, the enemies of the French Republic combined against him. A battalion of the Bengal Army (the 15th battalion) was ordered to leave for Tamluk where ships were waiting to carry them, and were under orders to fight the Dutch who were siding Napolean. The battalion marched up to Tamluk, but refused to board the ships. The Commander, a British officer, ordered the battalion to be dismissed, its flag burnt, and the soldiers court-martialled. The trial led to Raghu Nath Singh,

[1] The history of all these revolts has been culled from a Bengali article by Nibaran Chakravarti. Vide *Krantikari Andolan Ka Itihas* (Hindi) p. 3.

Umrao Singh, Yusuf Khan and other leaders being tied to the mouths of cannons and blown up. The other soldiers were dismissed and the 15th battalion was disbanded.

The Madras Army revolt, in Vellore, in 1806, was so widespread that it nearly cost Lord Bentinck his job. He later explained that the revolt was not against his inefficient administration, but the result of Muslim discontent over the years. Lord Bentinck himself contradicted this in his minutes of January 8, 1806, where he says, the revolt spread to Nandi Durg, Sankari Durg and other places where no communal feelings were involved. Two years before the 1857 rebellion, the 3rd regiment of the Nizam's Army had revolted on December 21, 1855. The Commander, Brigadier Machenzie, was wounded and had to flee for his life.

Nor was the discontent confined to the barracks. Popular forces were also active. The Wahabi movement, imported into India by Syed Ahmed of Bareilly, was directed against the foreign oppressors of Islam. Originating from the Arab revolt led by Muhammad Abdul Wahab against the tyranny perpetrated in the name of religion, it became the symbol of revolt and spread outside the Arabian peninsula.

In Faridpur too there was an uprising under the guidance of the Wahabi leader, Shariyat-Ullah and his son, Dadu Mian. This group was known as "Farz" (Duty). They clashed with the military forces in many places. It is stated that for quite some time they wielded complete authority in the 24-Parganas, Nadia, and Faridpur.[2]

The various groups which combined to trigger the 1857 outburst were not agreed about the ultimate objective, though all of them wanted to overthrow the authority of the foreigners.[3] Some doubt that if the revolt had succeeded, it might not have been in the interest of the progress of the country. I am afraid this is ill-conceived. It is possible that if the mutiny had succeeded, it might have led to the return of that very feudal order which was being liquidated by the revolutions in the West. Behind the revolt were certain forces of reaction that would have taken India

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4. Also see *Muktir Saudhane Bharat* (Bengali) by Jogesh Bagal.

[3] Sardar Panikkar, in his book *Survey of Indian History* (p. 206), says: "All were united to the object that they had in view, the expulsion of the British and the recovery of national independence. In that sense the mutiny was no mutiny at all, but a great national uprising". (Quoted from Balshastri Haridas in *Armed Struggle for Freedom*, p. 30).

back to feudalism. But in actual practice feudalism in its old form could not be revived. Had the leaders been more united, more efficient, the imperialists could have been dislodged. The seeds of powerful revolutionary movement were imbedded in this effort. Lenin mentioned the rebellion of 1857 in the first number of *Iskra* (December 1900) as "the rebellion of the native Indian population against Britain" in an article on "The war in China".

The ruthlessness with which this revolt was suppressed is unparalleled in history. The British destroyed cottage and small-scale industries in the most inhuman manner to clear the road for capitalist exploitation. And the British, who intended to remain as a company of traders, found out that they could do this better if they also became the ruling power.

Other forces too were at work between 1857 and the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Keshab Chandra Sen was active around 1860 though he confined his activities to social and religious awakening, but his powerful speeches and articles created a stir and led to real national awakening.

Dayananda Saraswati established the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875, nearly half a century after the death of Raja Rammohan Roy. His was a pure form of revivalism, though many new-fangled ideas were cleverly smuggled in through the backdoor.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and later Swami Vivekananda, contributed to this resurgence of the spirit. When discrimination, exploitation, famines, internal strifes and other social evils had weakened the people, when everything seemed lost, these reformers rejuvenated them and asserted that Indian religion and culture were as great as any other. European orientalists like Goethe, who admired Kalidas, also played a part in this renaissance. Vivekananda and Keshab Chandra Sen convinced audiences in foreign countries that the contribution of Indian culture was not insignificant and that the world could well learn some useful lessons from her.

As most of these reformers were Hindus and as they used Hindu concepts, the national awakening had a definite Hindu flavour. It was unfortunate for it called for a nationalism with a Muslim content. The formation of the National Mohamedan Association and the establishment of the Aligarh College (May 24, 1874) were the first steps in this direction. The Hindu nationalists, however, could very conveniently conceal their communalism

under the garb of nationalism.

The fact that in the matter of jobs and education the Muslims lagged behind the Hindus was already causing heart-burning. Economic causes fanned the rift between the two major communities. The Hindu ideologues fed the people's nationalist aspirations on the history of the Rajputs, the Sikhs and the gallant warriors like Rana Pratap and Shivaji.[4] The Muslims could hardly stomach these symbols of nationalism[5] and started looking back to the earlier periods of Muslim history and their eyes were set on Islamic communities outside India. Due to these causes and the presence of a third party in their midst, Hindu and Muslim nationalism marched often in diametrically opposite directions.

To come back to the movement, the Wahabis were in favour of driving the British out of India. Even after the revolt of 1857, they pursued their activities in a sporadic manner. Patna was the centre of their activities then. Their leader, Amir Khan, was detained in 1871 under Regulation III of 1818. The Wahabis engaged an eminent English Barrister, Mr. Anesty of Bombay and took him to Calcutta to file an appeal against the detention. He contended that if Amir Khan was guilty, the matter should be openly adjudged in a court of law. He also referred to the reign of terror in the days of Lord Mayo. His arguments were purely of a political nature. The Wahabis published his arguments in book form and distributed it. The appeal was heard by Justice Norman and despite the efficient handling by Mr. Anesty, the appeal was dismissed. The Wahabis did not take the judgment lying down, and a Wahabi named Abdullah stabbed Justice Norman, who succumbed to the injuries. Abdullah was sentenced to death and the furious English officers cremated him after execution instead of burying him according to Muslim rites. This sacrilege enraged the Wahabis further. Subsequently when Lord Mayo was on a visit to the Andamans on February 8, 1872, a Wahabi called Sher Ali assassinated him there. But in the text

[4] Bankinchandra Chatterjee, Rameshchandra Dutt, D. L. Roy in Bengali and much later Maithilisharan Gupta, Vrindabanlal Varma in Hindi and hundreds of others took this line.

[5] "The revivalist movements, which spread in the nineteenth century exacerbated mutual suspicions and fears" (*History of the Freedom Movement in India*. Vol. II. edited by Dr. Tarachand p. 368).

books of history Sher Ali is described as an ordinary convict. Abdullah and Sher Ali were the harbingers of the terrorist movement in India.[6]

Bengal too was in ferment then and inspired by the exploits of Italian patriots Mazzini and Garibaldi, even sons of landlords formed secret societies on the pattern of the Carbonari.[7] Rabindranath Tagore mentions about such a society which had as its president Rajanarayan Basu and secretary the writer Jyotiridranath. Another secret society, formed in 1876, was led by Shivanath Shastri, a great literary figure. Shastri formed the society while still in government service, and he used to hold meetings in his house. The members suddenly decided that government service was incompatible with their vow. In his autobiography Shastri says that as he was going round the fire, chanting holy verses, he felt an iron determination surging within him. A few days later he resigned from the service. Bipin Chandra Pal, another great writer and extremist leader, started as a member of this secret society.

The Indian National Congress, established in 1885, did not have either a revolutionary set-up or a revolutionary programme. The revolutionaries of those days, whose aim was to overthrow the British power, took scarce notice of the Congress. It emerged as a meeting ground of extreme moderates and job-seekers. It was thus futile to expect direct opposition to imperialism from such a party. Moreover, the Congress also alienated the Muslim intelligentsia led by Syed Ahmed, Ameer Ali, and other important ideologues. The Chapekar and Savarkar brothers, Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Kumar Ghosh and others who sponsored the revolutionary movement were not members of the Congress.

Tilak joined the Congress, but his *Kesari* did not preach the Congress ideology, nor was he convicted as a Congressman. At that time the Congress had no contact with the masses, and therefore, neither the rulers nor the ruled bothered about it. The glorification of the Congress became a cult much later when Gandhi made it a mass organization. But he could not keep pace with the revolutionary masses.

[6] *Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan Ka Itihas* (Hindi), 6th edition by Manmathnath Gupta, p. 9-10.

[7] Bipin Chandra Pal in his autobiography mentions this, vide *Muktir Saudhane Bharat*, p. 133.

The Chapekar brothers established the *Hindu Dharma Sanrakshini Sabha* in 1894. They used to sing verses reoriented by Tilak on the occasion of Shivaji and Ganesha festivals.

In 1897, there was a devastating plague epidemic in Poona and the British sent Mr. Rand, a haughty Englishman, for tackling the epidemic. But instead of carrying on his work with a missionary spirit, he wielded the big stick and became very unpopular in Poona and surrounding areas. Newspapers ran him down. Tilak wrote in *Kesari* on May 4, 1897 that under the pretext of fighting the epidemic, the Government was actually trying to crush the soul of the people.

The Sedition Committee of 1918, presided over by Justice S. A. T. Rowlatt, gave great importance to Tilak's writings.

The report of the Sedition Committee said: "On the 4th of May Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Chitpavan Brahmin, published an article in *Kesari* (the most influential paper in Western India), imputing not merely to subordinate officials but to the government itself the deliberate direction to oppress the people. He described Mr. Rand, Plague Commissioner, as tyrannical and stated that the government was practising oppression. It was useless to petition the Supreme Government, as the orders for oppression had emanated from it."

On June 12, 1897, the anniversary of Shivaji's coronation day was celebrated. While commenting on the celebration, *Kesari* published on June 15 some verses. The police was of the opinion that in the guise of these verses an attempt had been made to inculcate hatred of the British.

According to the police report, one speaker at the Shivaji anniversary meeting had said: "All occasions like the present festival, which tend to unite the whole country must be welcome." Another speaker is reported to have observed: "Those who took part in the French revolution denied that they had committed murder and asserted that they were only removing thorns from their path." Tilak presided over the function and, according to the police report, he had observed: "Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan or not? Lord Krishna's advice in the Bhagvad Gita is to kill even our own teachers and kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being actuated to reap the fruits of his deeds. If thieves get into our house and we have not sufficient strength to drive them out, we should

without hesitation shut them up and burn them alive. God has not conferred upon the foreigners the grant inscribed on a copper plate of the kingdom of Hindustan. Whatever Shivaji did, he did with a view to wiping out the authority of the foreigners. Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well. Get out of the Penal Code and soar high into the realms of the Gita and think over the deeds of the great men."

The 60th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Victoria was celebrated all over the British Empire on June 22 that year. Forty years had elapsed since the British had captured India and not much had happened to challenge their authority. Suddenly shots were fired in Poona and Mr. Rand and Lt. Ayerst were killed. The assailant, Damodar Chapekar, was caught after great difficulty. Damodar and his brother pleaded guilty to the charge and admitted that they had intentionally murdered Mr. Rand. They also admitted that they had earlier disfigured the marble statue of Queen Victoria in Bombay. They declared that they did all this "in order to make the Aryan brethren rejoice, fill the British with sorrow, and invite upon themselves the stamp of treason". The Chapekar brothers were hanged.

Tilak was sentenced for publishing an article in the *Kesari* of June 15 in which, according to the Rowlatt report, he had theoretically supported this assassination. Evidence now available shows that his support was much more than theoretical. The assassination was committed with his full knowledge and Balshastri Haridas goes to the extent of saying that within a few minutes of the killing, he was told in Marathi 'Kam Jhale'— action is accomplished. Meanwhile two others belonging to the Chapekar group made an unsuccessful attempt to kill a chief constable in Poona. Later, they killed the men who were rewarded for spying and getting Damodar Chapekar arrested.

Exiles in UK

Britain had remained the refuge of a large number of revolutionaries. Marx and Lenin lived in London. But the British were not prepared to give asylum to Indian revolutionaries. Yet many leading Indian revolutionaries lived there. The most important was Shyamji Krishna Verma who had a remarkable career. Born in a poor family in Cutch-Mandvi in 1857, he excelled in his

studies, particularly Sanskrit. By the time he was 18, his reputation as a scholar had spread to Bombay and Prof. Monier Williams, who was at that time teaching Sanskrit at Oxford, heard about him while on a visit to India. Shyamji went to England in March, 1879 as his assistant, passed the requisite examinations and joined the Walpole College, simultaneously studying for his bar-at-law. Prof. Williams started the Royal Institute for India and the India Library the same year, and Shyamji was the chief assistant in these ventures.

His fame as a Sanskrit scholar spread in England and he started coaching students. He also learnt Greek and Latin, graduated from Oxford in 1883, and was appointed as regular professor of Sanskrit, Marathi and Gujarati at the same university. The Secretary of State for India meanwhile sent Shyamji to represent India at the Oriental Congress in Berlin in 1881. In 1883 he represented India at the Lauden Oriental Congress. He was one of the first Indians to graduate from Oxford and be appointed professor there.

Shyamji returned to India in 1883, and after staying here for some months went back to England to qualify for the Bar. He set up practice in Bombay and the Raja of Ratlam appointed him his Dewan. This job lasted till 1888. After this he practised for some time in Ajmer. He was then taken as a member of the Council of State of Udaipur in 1893. He became the Dewan of Junagarh on February 6, 1895 but soon found that he could not serve here for long.

While doing all this he was internally connected with the revolutionary activities in Maharashtra. In an article in the *Indian Sociologist* he said later: "When the Natu brothers were arrested and Lokmanya Tilak was prosecuted, I came to the conclusion that individual freedom did not exist in India nor was the press free. The so-called British justice was also a myth. That is why I left my motherland and immigrated to England and now when I realised that it was not possible to live in safety in England, I migrated to Paris and this city became my headquarters."

Shyamji did not reveal how intimately he was connected with the revolutionary movement. But we have it on good authority that Tilak wanted to smuggle Damodar Chapekar into the army of some native State with the help of Shyamji.[8]

[8] *Armed Struggle for Freedom* by Balshastri Haridas, p. 139.

It is very often claimed that Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to connect our national struggle with similar struggles going on in the world and that it was he who imparted an international dimension to our struggle. This is far from truth. Dr. Abinashchandra Bhattacharya, who wrote a biography of Shyamji on authentic material[9] collected in Europe, says: "During those days (of the Boer War 1899-1902) Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was practising law in Natal and had become a respectable citizen, built up a volunteer corps and came to the war front. This pained General Botha and other Boer generals. As soon as Shyamji heard about it, he was very much upset. He could not understand how Gandhi could take up the cudgels for a nation that was holding down India under its heels by sheer brute force and in this particular case was trying to trample to death a small nation. Gandhi's action appeared to him unjust as well as illogical. Shyamji came out with a stinker on Gandhi in his paper. From then on, his nationalism became more and more international and aggressive. It is in connection with this event that the *Gaelic American*, the organ of the Irish Republican Party, wrote: "No language can adequately describe the meanness of Natal Indians. It is a shame that Indians are helping their British oppressors. This has definitely lowered the status of Indians." Gandhi's action was disliked by all revolutionaries, especially by the Irish freedom fighters who had sent a volunteer brigade to fight on behalf of the Boers in their war with the British.

In 1905, under Shyamji's leadership, 20 Indians formed a society called the Indian Home Rule Society. Shyamji became its president and Rana, J. M. Parikh, Godrej and Abdulla Suhrawardy became its vice-presidents. The object of the society was to establish a government of Indians, by Indians, for Indians. A meeting, held on May, 1906, was attended by Vithalbhai Patel, Bhai Paramanand, and others. It passed resolutions condemning the Bengal Government for breaking up the Barisal conference and arresting Surendranath Banerjee.

In 1907 Shyamji announced a prize of Rs. 1,000/- for the writer of the best essay on the constitution of a free India. Ten essays were received, including one by Aga Khan who said that India was unfit for self-rule because there was communal hatred. As

[9] *Europay Bharatiya Biplober Sadhana* (Bengali) by Dr. Abinashchandra Bhattacharya.

the response was rather poor, no prize was awarded.

Shyamji very soon gathered round him many young men and one frequent visitor was V. D. Savarkar. After a distinguished educational career in India, Savarkar had gone to London to qualify as a barrister. Even as a student in India he had tried to build a revolutionary group. He went to England as a sort of emissary of this group. He met a kindred spirit in Shyamji, and the revolutionary work among Indian students went on with great gusto. *Indian Sociologist* now became more vocal, and incurred the wrath of a Tory Member of the British Parliament who asked the Home Secretary in July 1907 if the Government proposed to take any action against Shyamji's subversive activities. This was a signal for the police to act, and Shyamji shifted his headquarters to Paris. But the *Indian Sociologist* continued to be published from Britain. By July 1909, however, the British Government could no longer allow it to continue. Its first printer was punished, and the next one was convicted to one year's rigorous imprisonment in September 1909.

The Rowlatt report quoted the following passages from the *Indian Sociologist* of December 1907: "It appears that any agitation in India must be carried on secretly and that the only methods that can bring the British Government to its senses are the Russian methods vigorously and incessantly applied until the English relax their tyranny and are driven out of the country. No one can foresee what rule will be laid down or line of action defined for any particular course. That will probably depend on local conditions and circumstances, but it is likely that as a general principle the Russian method will begin with Indian officials rather than European."

The passage from the *Indian Sociologist* also shows that Shyamji was the kingpin and the chief ideologue of the conspiracy against the British. Some admirers of Savarkar have tried to minimise the contribution of Shyamji. Shyamji did not plunge in the movement headlong. He did not throw a bomb at the British nor for that matter did Savarkar. But he did not relent nor did he recant in old age. Till the very end of his life he was persecuted by the police and he died in a foreign land, unsung and unwept. When the first world war started, even Paris became too hot for him and he quietly left for Geneva. It was then when he was nearly 70 that Nehru met him in his Geneva flat. Nehru writes:

"There was Shyamji Krishna Verma living with his ailing wife high on the top floor of a house in Geneva. The aged couple lived by themselves with no whole-time servants and their rooms were musty and suffocating and everything had a thick layer of dust. Shyamji had plenty of money, but he did not believe in spending it. He would even save a few centimes by walking instead of taking a tram. He was suspicious of all comers presuming them, until the contrary was proved, to be either British agents or after his money. His pockets bulged with ancient copies of his old paper, the *Indian Sociologist* and he would pull them out and point with some excitement to some article he had written a dozen years previously. His talk was of the old days, of India House at Hampstead, of the various persons that the British Government had sent to spy on him and how he had spotted and outwitted them. The walls were covered with shelves full of old books, dust-laden and neglected, looking down sorrowfully on the intruder. Books and papers also littered the floor, they seemed to have remained so for days and weeks and even months past. Over the whole place there hung an atmosphere of gloom, an air of decay; life seemed to be an unwelcome stranger there and as one walked through the dark and silent corridors, one almost expected to come across, round the corner, the shadow of death: with relief one came out of that flat and breathed the air outside."

Shyamji died on March 30, 1930. According to Dr. Abinash Bhattacharya, he was cremated on the third day and his ashes were preserved in an urn where it would be kept till 2038 A.D. Let us hope that by that time there will be a socialist government in India and it will claim the ashes of this great revolutionary. We have it on the authority of Nehru that Shyamji's wife left their property for women's causes. Shyamji and his wife were not misers, but just cautious with the little money they had.

Miloslan Karasa, Czechoslovak research scholar writing in *Looking towards India* (A study in East-West contacts) says: "Undoubtedly, great attention was also aroused by the terrorist movement, by attempts on the life of representative of colonial rule and by the courageous, patriotic attitude of those who, endeavouring in this individualistic manner to fight for their country's freedom, were condemned to death. Prague was aware of the existence of the journal *Indian Socialogist*, later banned, whose publication is bound up with the name of an outstanding

figure in the Indian National resistance, Shyamji Krishna Verma, described by Maxim Gorky as the 'Mazzini of India'. The Czech press took notice of another revolutionary, likewise active in his European exile, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and of his exciting escape and arrest while being deported from Britain to India."

Another pioneer who was drawn into the circle of Shyamji was Madame Vikaji Cama of Bombay who took an active part in editing the *Indian Sociologist.* A forceful speaker, she represented India at the Stuttgart Conference of Socialists in 1907. Ramsay Macdonald, who later became Prime Minister of Britain, questioned the accredition and the *bona fide* of Madame Cama, but the French socialist leader Jaures, the German socialists, Beekel, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg as well as the British socialist Hyndman came to her rescue and she was accepted as a representative. Madame Cama unfurled the first national flag of India and after saluting it, proposed a resolution that in the opinion of the assembled socialists the continuance of British rule in India would be disastrous in every way. She said that world opinion should be roused to free India from the tyranny of British rule. All the British representatives except Mr. Hyndman opposed the resolution. Van Col, a socialist from Holland attempted to prove that the colonialists had a civilising influence and tried to justify imperialist plunder. But Madame Cama's resolution secured the support of the delegates of all other countries. The chairman did not put the resolution to vote as it was the tradition of the gathering only to pass unanimous resolutions. All the same, the case for an independent India was for the first time put before an international conference. Madame Cama was later on forced to shift her residence from London. During the first world war she was interned as an alien in Vichy, and emerged from detention with her health completely shattered. She was advised to give a bond not to take part in politics and return to India to which she reacted with anger and said she could still deliver lectures and talk. After 30 years of patriotic service in London, Paris and other cities of Europe, her friends succeeded in repatriating her in November 1936. She died on August 12, 1937.

Virendra Chattopadhyay, known as Chatto among Indians in Europe, was another revolutionary. His father, Aghor Chatto-

padhyay, was perhaps the first Indian doctor from Zurich. He had to write his thesis in German. His talented children included Sarojini Naidu, Virendra, Mrinalini and Harindranath.

Virendra was sent to England in 1903 to sit for the I.C.S. examination. He soon came in contact with revolutionary ideas and could not get through the I.C.S. He joined the Middle Temple to qualify as a barrister, but was turned out for his revolutionary activities. After that he led a turbulent life travelling extensively in Europe to plead the Indian cause.

Nehru, who seldom praised revolutionaries unless he wanted to play to the gallery, had a kind word for Virendra. He said: "This sudden importance thrust on a small group consisting mainly of inexperienced young men, went to the head of some of them. They felt that they were playing a historical role, that they were involved in great and epoch-making undertakings. Many of them had exciting adventures, hair-breadth escapes."[10] Just after independence when Nehru was asked to lay the foundation stone of a monument to Khudiram at Muzaffarnagar, he refused to do so. But after a decade when he was asked to unveil a statue of Shivaji, he did it with great eclat. In addition to what Shivaji represents as a symbol, Khudiram represented the principle of secularism. If Khudiram had killed a Britisher, Shivaji had murdered Afzal Khan. Nehru, however, said of Virendra Chattopadhyay: "An entirely different type of person was Virendranath Chattopadhyay, member of a famous family in India (Nehru does not disclose the name of the family or Virendra's relationship with Sarojini Naidu). Popularly known as Chatto he was a very able and a very delightful person. He was always hard up, his clothes were very much the worse for wear and often he found it difficult to raise the wherewithal for a meal. But his humour and light-heartedness never left him. He had been some years senior to me during my educational days in England. He was at Oxford when I was at Harrow. Since those days he had not returned to India and sometimes a fit of homesickness came to him when he longed to be back. All his home-ties had long been severed and it is quite certain that if he came to India he would feel unhappy and out of joint. But in spite of the passage of time the home pull remains. No exile can escape the malady of his tribe, that consumption of the soul

[10] *Autobiography*, J. Nehru, p. 152, first British edition.

as Mazzini called it." Then again: "Of the few (revolutionaries in exile) I met, the only persons who impressed me intellectually were Virendra Chattopadhyay and M. N. Roy. Chatto was not, I believe, a regular communist, but he was communistically inclined."

After Shyamji's exit from London, the mantle of leadership fell on V. D. Savarkar. India House became the venue of all revolutionary activities. The day commemorating the mutiny of 1857 was celebrated here with great gusto. V. D. Savarkar was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet. He knew the importance of revolutionary literature. He pored over books and documents in the British Museum and wrote a book on the history of the 1857 rebellion. It was originally written in Marathi, but he and his friends translated it chapter by chapter and read it to the members of the Free India Society. Very soon the Scotland Yard was on his trail, and its agents managed to get hold of a chapter. The original book was smuggled into India, but the owners of the Marathi press in Maharashtra refused to print it. Finally a press was prevailed upon to undertake the job, but before it started the work, the police got scent of it. A friendly police officer tipped off the printers and the manuscript was smuggled back to Europe. An effort was made to print it in a Sanskrit press in Germany, but no suitable type was found and German compositors and proof readers could not do justice to Marathi book. The project was dropped but it was decided to complete the English translation and print it. Some Maharashtrian students who had gone to England to qualify for the I.C.S. completed the translation and the manuscript was sent to France for being printed. In the meantime the British police alerted the French police and the French printers refused to take up the work. In the end, the revolutionaries were able to get the book printed in Holland. In order to put the police off the track, they declared that the book was being printed in France. The British Government banned the book even before it was published. Savarkar wrote a letter to the *Times*, London, questioning the propriety and legality of the ban even before the Government had seen the book. The *Times* published the letter with the remark that there must be something wrong with a government that had to take recourse to such a step.

Copies of the book were printed in Holland and smuggled to

India disguised as Pickwick Papers. Savarkar had postulated that the 1857 revolt was not just a mutiny, but was part of a bigger national upsurge. He had earlier written a biography of Joseph Mazzini which was published by his brother, Ganesh Savarkar in India.[11] Savarkar's book was more secular in nature than the nationalism of the old Ganpati and Shivaji festival days. He said the anniversary of 1857 could be celebrated as a national festival.

On July 1, 1909 Madanlal Dhingra, a Punjabi youth, shot dead Sir Curzon Wylie at a meeting of the Imperial School in London. Dhingra also shot an Indian, Lal Kaka, who rushed to him. He was overpowered and arrested. Sir Curzon, an officer under the Secretary of State for India, was spying on Indian students. After his arrest some papers were found on his person, one of which contained a prepared statement declaring that the murder was committed as a revenge for the hanging and transportation for life of Indian revolutionaries. The transportation referred to Ganesh Savarkar who was punished for publishing a poem on June 9, 1909. The hanging referred to Khudiram (hanged on August 11, 1908) and Kanailal (hanged on November 20, 1908).

Dhingra hailed from a loyalist family in the Punjab. When the news was conveyed to his father, the latter disowned him. Two brothers of Madanlal, who were also in England also dissociated themselves from the acts of their brother. Later when the brothers wanted to see him, Madanlal refused the request.

Madanlal had the following statement which he was not allowed to give in court: "I admit, the other day, I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the inhuman hanging and transportation of patriotic Indian youths. And in this I have consulted none but my own conscience. I have conspired with none but with my own duty. I believe that a nation held in bondage with the help of bayonets is in a state of perpetual war and since guns are denied to me, I drew forth my pistol and attacked by surprise. Being a Hindu I believe that an insult to my country is an insult to God. For the worship of my country is the worship of Shri Ram and the service of my country is the service of Shri Krishna. What could a son poor in wealth and intellect offer to the Mother except his own blood? My only prayer to God is that I may again return to the same Mother

[11] *The Indian War of Independence* by V. D. Savarkar; see the introduction entitled "The story of this history".

and die in the same cause till the Mother is freed for the service of humanity and glory of God. Vande Mataram."

Everyone knew that Dhingra would be sentenced to death and this was what he very much wanted. He had told the court "I do not plead for mercy nor do I recognise your authority over me. All I wish is that you should at once give me capital punishment. I want to be hanged, for then the vengeance of my countrymen will be all the more keen."

Dhingra did not engage any lawyer. He maintained throughout the trial that he was innocent and pleaded that he should be sentenced to death. During the trial no Indian was allowed inside the courtroom, but those who managed to get a glimpse of the hero while he was being taken to the court found that he was cheerful and unruffled. When the judge pronounced the sentence, Madanlal thanked him. He ascended the gallows, calm, as usual, and dressed like a beau, as if he were going to a wedding party. This was testified by the few Indians who were given charge of his body.

Although Madanlal was not allowed to read in court the prepared statement, it found its way to the British and continental press and reached India. It became an important revolutionary document. The words "I believe that a nation, held in bondage with the help of bayonets, is in a state of perpetual war" echoed and re-echoed in the heart of every Indian youth. Madanlal's action found an echo here too. Anant Kanhere, a student of an art school at Aurangabad shot dead Mr. Jackson who had committed Ganesh Savarkar to the sessions court. Kanhere pumped seven bullets into Jackson and attempted to kill himself but failed. He later told the court: "I have preformed my part. Ganesh Savarkar is sentenced to transportation for life, whereas your executive engineer, Mr. Williams, who caused the death of an Indian cartman is being rewarded. It is for all this that I have killed Jackson." Seven persons were tried in the case and Krishnajipant Karve, Vinayakrao Deshpande and Kanhere were sentenced to death.

Savarkar had taken shelter in Paris, but after some time he found that the life of a fugitive was unbearable and decided to take the plunge. He said that he could not look on passively while others were being sent to the gallows. Though he was advised not to leave Paris where many other revolutionaries including

Shyamji, Madame Cama and Hardyal were living, he refused to listen. As soon as he set his foot in England, he was arrested and sent back to India by steamer. When the steamer touched Marseilles, he escaped. The escape was soon detected and the British police went after him. They had no authority to arrest him on French soil, but the ignorance of a French police officer about international law helped the British to apprehend Savarkar. This action was challenged in the Hague International Court, but the British imperialists managed to have the judgment rigged in their favour. Savarkar was sentenced to transportation for life and was sent to the Andamans to waste his youth in that swampy island.

Bengal in Ferment

After 1857 the Wahabis had set the pace for the revolutionary movement in India. But neither the Muslim intelligentsia nor the Muslim masses were involved in it. The Aligarh group of intellectuals, who were misguided by Prof. Beck, had greater hold on the Muslim masses. Aligarh became the hotbed of Muslim communalism and it was here that the idea of a separate Muslim nation was nurtured.

Lord Curzon, who came to the not very wrong conclusion that English education was nourishing the spirit of rebellion, promulgated the University Act, which sought to restrict the number of English-knowing people. This type of education had given birth to a new middle class which had avidly accepted the imperial flag and was complacent. But when they saw that the Act threatened their job prospects and economic interests, they started an agitation against it.

The middle class in Bengal were the most perturbed. Lord Curzon dealt a fresh blow when he observed in his Convocation Address at the Calcutta University that the people of India were temperamentally liars.[18] Half a century earlier when Lord Macaulay had made a similar remark, it evoked little protest. But now nationalism was vibrant and in March a campaign challenging the Viceroy's statement was started at a mammoth meeting in Calcutta.

His Lordship, however, continued his assault and dealt another

[18] *Muktir Saudhane Bharat* (Bengali), by J. C. Bagae, p. 249.

blow. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa formed one Presidency with a population of over 7 crores and Bankim Chandra's national anthem *Vande Mataram* originally had the words *saptakoti* (seven crores) referring to the population of the area. Lord Curzon came to the conclusion that Bengal should be partitioned. He wanted to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims and announced the partition. Bengal which was the first to accept British rule, now spearheaded the revolt against it. The Bengalis did not wish to see their "Golden Bengal" partitioned. Although this agitation began with a limited objective, it ultimately became a movement for the independence of the country.

Bengal was partitioned in spite of the agitation, but the struggle continued. Poets and novelists stirred up the people. It was during the agitation that the first call for swadeshi, picketing, rational education, and even the call for civil disobedience was given. Shri Aurobindo's speeches stirred the people. In the course of one speech in East Bengal in April 1908, he said: "There was a time when it was possible to believe that awakening could come only to some sections of the people, those sections that had received the education provided by the rulers. But this is the age of popular awakening. In the present struggle for existence, if any nation has to survive, if any nation wishes to attain its freedom and maintain it, the masses must be roused from apathy and slumber. Every individual must be made to feel that his own freedom is inextricably bound with the attainment of national freedom."

The same year, explaining the swadeshi and national movement in Bombay Aurobindo said: "When the real call came, Bengal was ready to respond to it. That call permeated our whole being. The community instantly responded. The masses came out of their stupor. Bengal at once woke up from slumber, it immediately recognised the path of freedom and showed it to the entire country. A call was given forth to all to follow." He pointed out that a divine life lay in store for the community and that the prevailing poverty and downfall were not realities. The community had in store "a life without death, the life eternal. It was destined to attain that life".

Although the agitation acquired Hindu overtones to some extent, Bipin Chandra Pal explained that "the new India of our dreams was neither Hindu nor Muslim and certainly not British.

The new India would be born as a result of the fusion of three cultures — Hindu, Muslim and European". Nevertheless, reference to religion in the course of this agitation narrowed its scope. There was another factor also. As Bengal alone was affected by the partition, people in other parts of the country could not feel strongly about it.

This was the period of industrial boom and factories were being set up in Calcutta and Indian capitalists were advancing with cautious steps. Indian capitalists discovered that they stood to gain by the call for boycott of foreign goods. The call for *swadeshi* goods came in handy for them. It gave an impetus to Indian factories.

When Japan inflicted a defeat on Russia in 1905, there was great excitement all over the East and this proved a tonic for the jaded spirits of Indian patriots.

In 1906 a conference was held at Barishal, and despite its proceedings being open, it was dispersed by force. The editor of *Jugantar*, Bhupendra Nath Dutt (a brother of Swami Vivekananda) was imprisoned on a political charge and he did not defend himself in court. Even the policy of not defending oneself, adopted by Congressmen later, originated during this *swadeshi* period.

Aurobindo spearheaded this movement. An Anglophile, who was educated in England and had to learn Bengali later, and who narrowly missed the I.C.S. as he could not pass the riding test (his spiritualist disciples claim that he did not pass it because of some inner compulsion), Aurobindo left his job at Baroda and returned to Bengal to take part in the agitation and his genius as a writer and orator proved a great asset to the movement. Some years before this, his brother, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, had gone to Bengal for the same purpose. As he himself stated in court, later on, he had gone there to build a revolutionary organisation to overthrow the British.

When he was later arrested, Barindra gave the following statement in court: "I returned to Bengal after staying one year at Baroda. My object was to spread the cult of freedom as a nationalist missionary. I travelled from district to district and established physical culture centres, where youths were initiated into the freedom movement. I got tired of the poor results and returned to Baroda. I came to the conclusion that mere political propaganda would not be able to capture the minds of the people

in India. People should be approached spiritually, so that they could stand suffering when the need arose. I had in mind the plan of a religious organization. By this time the swadeshi and boycott agitation had started. With the help of Bhupendra Nath Dutt I started the *Jugantar*. After some time I handed over the paper to a group and started revolutionary work. I collected a few youths and I lectured to them on religion and politics. Collection of arms also was taken up. A friend, Hem Das, was sent to Europe to learn how to prepare explosives. When he returned we started a bomb factory. I never thought that terrorism alone would bring freedom. We took to terrorism, because we thought that the people needed this to boost up their courage."

Upendra Nath Bannerjee, another revolutionary and an eminent writer, also stated in court: "I came to the conclusion that until the people are asked to do something as a part of their religious duty, they won't move. I approached the *sadhus*, but I found that they were a worthless lot. Hence I began to work among students. I began to spread moral, religious and political teachings among them. I told them that the only method to attain freedom was to fight. Thus a secret society was established and arms began to be collected. Also we wanted to kill the government officers, such as Kingsford and the Governor, who were a nuisance."

Barindra was the leader of the Alipur Conspiracy and all those connected with it were well educated and some of them, like the Ghosh brothers, were educated in foreign countries.

Sir Lawrence Jenkins quoted the following words of a Sessions Judge on the *Jugantar* and endorsed them. The Judge had said: "They (the copies) exhibit a burning hatred of the British race, they breathe revolution in every line, they point out how revolution is to be effected. No calumny or no artifice is left out which is likely to instil the people of the country with the same idea or catch the impressionable mind of the youth." The Rowlatt Committee also quoted a few passages published in the *Jugantar* to prove that the revolutionaries understood the importance of political work in the Indian army. "The revolutionaries have additional advantages, where the ruling power is a foreign power, because the latter has to recruit most of its troops from among the subject people. Much work can be done by the revolutionists very cautiously spreading the gospel of independence among these

native troops. When the time comes for practical collision with the ruling power, the revolutionists not only get these troops among their ranks, but also the arms with which the ruling power supplied them."

The *Sandhya*, another revolutionary paper wrote: "We want complete independence. The country cannot prosper so long as the least shred of the *Feringi's* supremacy over it is left. Swadeshi, boycott — all are meaningless to us, if they are not the means of retrieving our whole and complete independence...." The revolutionaries looked down upon the Congress and the book *Mukti kon Pathe* (What is the path of salvation?), a reprint of articles from the *Jugantar*, denounced the "smallness and lowness" of the ideals of the National Congress and went on to point out the bold line of action to be followed by revolutionaries.

In October, 1908, it was planned to blow up the train carrying the Governor of Bengal and on December 6, it was blown up, but the Governor had a narrow escape. On December 23, 1908, shots were fired at the ex-District Magistrate, Mr. Allen, but he too escaped. In April, 1908, a bomb was thrown at a French Major in Chandernagore, because it was rumoured that he had stopped the smuggling of arms into British India through French India. These portended more trouble.

Mr. Kingsford was notorious as a vindictive judge during the swadeshi movement, who had sentenced many political prisoners to heavy terms. Aurobindo was arrested and produced before Mr. Kingsford, but it was found that he could not be punished until Bipin Chandra Pal deposed against him. Pal refused to give evidence on the plea that he did not want to be witness in a British court. This enraged Mr. Kingsford who sentenced Pal to six months rigorous imprisonment for contempt of court. All these and many other events had made Kingsford extremely unpopular and the revolutionaries decided to assassinate him. A bomb concealed in a book was sent to Kingsford, but it missed the mark. Perhaps sensing his unpopularity Kingsford was transferred to Muzaffarpur, but the revolutionaries did not leave him. Two youths, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, were entrusted with the task of going there to kill Kingsford. They threw a bomb on April 30, 1908, at the carriage, but unfortunately Kingsford was not in it but one Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter who were offered the carriage, were killed by the bomb. Khudiram

was arrested when he asked a shopkeeper for a glass of water and Prafulla Chaki was betrayed by one Nandlal, a Bengali spy. Prafulla tried to escape, but he was shot dead and cremated in an unknown place. Khudiram was hanged on August 11, 1908 and cremated on the banks of the Gandak. The bravery of these youths echoed through the length and breadth of India.

Tilak wrote the article on Khudiram in the *Kesari* of June 22, 1908,[13] for which he was sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment. According to the Sedition Committee, he wrote: "Neither the Chapekars nor the Bengali bomb-throwers committed murders for retaliating the oppression practised upon themselves. Hatred between individuals or private quarrels or disputes were not the cause of these murders. These murders assumed a different aspect from ordinary murders owing to supposition on the part of the perpetrators that they were doing a beneficent act. The causes of the Bengali bomb are particularly subtle. The very system of administration is bad and unless the authorities are singled out and individually terrorised, they would not consent to change the system." Another Marathi editor, Paranjape, wrote in his paper *Kal* on July 8, 1908, "Many of the Russians side with their government against these bomb-throwers, but it is doubtful whether such sympathy will be found in India." Paranjape was also convicted for this praise of Khudiram.

The police discovered a bomb factory at 34 Mraripakur Road and live bombs and sticks of dynamite were unearthed. This led to the arrest of 34 people, and their trial developed into the famous Alipur Conspiracy case. One Naren Gosain became a confessor and was granted pardon on June 30, 1908, but before he could give his evidence in court he was shot dead inside the jail by Kanailal and Satyendra Chaki who had smuggled revolvers inside concealed in jackfruits.

The news electrified the whole of Bengal. It was hailed as a national victory and Surendranath Banerjee, a senior leader and the editor of the English daily *Bengali*, went out of his way to distribute sweets in his office.

Kanai and Satyen were given the death sentence and hanged on November 10, 1908. Motilal Roy, a revolutionary writer, was allowed to have a last glimpse of the body of Kanailal and talk to the European Jailer, who told him: "I used to have long

[13] *Report of the Sedition Committee*, p. 6.

chats with Kanailal. He has been very cheerful since the day he was sentenced to death. I shall never forget the enchanting smile that lit up his face yesterday. I told him 'Kanai, you are all smiles today, but tomorrow your lips will be coal-black'. I was present when Kanai was actually hanged. He had been blindfolded and the loop was on the point of being fastened to his neck. Suddenly he turned towards me and said, 'Well, how do I look now?' Really this type of heroism is impossible in a mortal frame." The jailer also told Motilal, "Why are you weeping, Sir? The country that produces such heroes is blessed. Everybody will die, but how many are called upon to die like this?" Thousands attended Kanai's cremation and his ashes were worn round the neck in closed urns as talisman.[14]

The Alipur Conspiracy ended in the conviction of Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutt, Upen Banerjee and others to various terms of imprisonment.

After Banindra and his other disciples were sent to the Andamans, Aurobindo left British India in disgust. He could have guided the destinies of the movement from exile as was done by Lenin. But he decided to become a whole-time spiritualist. Thus the movement was deprived of a great leader. Trailokya Chakrabarti and Shachin Sanyal later condemned him for this desertion.

But this did not stop the movement in which he had played a very important part. His writings were there. It must be said to the credit of Sri Aurobindo that even after he ceased to be a revolutionary, his writings retained a partially revolutionary character.

The revolutionary movement in Bengal started with the very limited objective of getting the partition annulled. This was done with great fanfare in a Durbar at Delhi in 1911, but it did not stop the movement. In reality it is this aspect that frightened the rulers in London.

One of the early revolutionaries was M. N. Roy who fathered the Communist Party in India. In the beginning the movement maintained underground groups only on subscriptions. But when Naren, the approver, spilled information and revealed all the secrets of the group, the rich sympathisers were frightened and severed their ties with them. The revolutionaries were forced to

[14] *Kanailal* (Bengali) by Motilal Roy.

find other avenues for financing their organization. To begin with, members gave as much subscription as they could, but this proved insufficient. Like their counterparts in Ireland and Russia, Bengal revolutionaries had to adopt the method known as forced contribution. There was an instance of a revolutionary group which, after robbing a capitalist, left a receipt for the amount taken. In 1916, a robbery was committed in Calcutta and the owner of the house received a letter from the Bengal branch of the 'Independent Kingdom of United India' saying: "We have received in our treasury Rs. 6,861-0-5 towards your debt to us. As and when freedom is won, the sum will be returned to you with interest!" This sounds melodramatic and funny, but it reveals the sincerity of the revolutionaries.

One dacoity, planned by Pulin Bihari Das of Dacca became as famous as the Kakori train hold-up later. The story reads like a thriller — hair breadth escapes, gun battles and encounters with an ignorant mob and the police. Thirty-one armed young men set out at dawn in two boats and reached Burha at 8 o'clock in the night. The house where the dacoity was to take place was hardly a quarter of a mile from the bank of the river. They surrounded the house from all sides and went on firing to frighten the people. The firing attracted a large crowd and as the revolutionaries were retreating through the bush and the marsh, one of the villagers threw a dragnet used for catching fish which struck the arm of a young revolutionary called Rajendra Dutt. In the meantime the police arrived on the spot and started shooting at the boats. The revolutionaries left the mainstream and entered one of the tributaries with the police party and the villagers hot on their pursuit. The gun battle raged through the whole night. One of the bullets had pierced the boat and when two revolutionaries were bailing out water from the boat, one of them, Gopal Sen, was fatally wounded by a police bullet. The revolutionaries remained undaunted even after a colleague's death. They reached a village called Dhamrahi. A section of the crowd had realised that the robbers were in fact revolutionaries and did not try to follow them any more. The police were on their trail again when a violent storm struck as it often happens in the month of Baishakh. Taking advantage of the storm, the revolutionaries took the boat in the direction of the wind putting the police off the track. The boat glided into the stream in the Bhawal forest.

They abandoned the boat and entered the forest. They divided the money and put it in small bags. Arms were taken in another direction and they dispersed in small groups. They had eaten nothing for two days. The following afternoon they realised that they were still being pursued. But there was no danger of falling into the clutches of the police.

Nalini Kishore Guha, one of the revolutionaries involved in the Burha robbery said later: "It was on that boat that we first heard of socialism. But we had not yet heard of Marxist socialism. At that time socialism had a very crude connotation for us. It was collecting wealth in the Robinhood manner and distributing it among the needy and the poor."

We have already mentioned about political murders. When the organization began to spread, it was realised that besides killing traitors like Naren Gosain, it was necessary to punish other people as well. Nanda Lal who had posed as a sympathiser and effected Khudiram's arrest was one such person singled out for assassination. The revolutionary revenge became so famous that police officials used to say that once a person got into the black list, there was no escape for him. No matter how many years passed, such a person would finally meet his doom. A person who had helped the police in 1908-09 was assassinated in 1914. This person had felt very safe under police protection as all the persons whom he had harmed were lodged in prison. Some had even died and there were few who could now recognise him. The revolutionaries ultimately located him at Chittagong and killed him.

In 1915, the house of the police Inspector, Satish Chandra Banerjee, was attacked. There were three other officers in the house at that time. Inspector Banerjee escaped, but one of the visiting officials died. Deputy Superintendent Basant Chatterjee, who had been unsuccessfully assaulted a number of times, was killed in broad daylight in 1916 and Madhusudan Bhattacharya, a C.I.D. official, was killed in front of the Medical College with a large crowd looking on.

According to the Sedition Committee Report, the work of the revolutionaries was progressing fast in 1913. Two police officials were killed. Head Constable Haripad Dev was killed by three Bengali youths in the Lake area with a big crowd looking on. Nobody was arrested, nor was anything known about it later.

Within twenty-four hours of this incident an acid bomb was thrown into the house of Inspector Bankim Chandra Chowdhury at Mymensingh killing him. And an absconder's bullet killed Inspector Suresh Chandra Mukherjee on duty.

Ram Das, a former revolutionary, who was collaborating with Basant Chatterjee, was killed in a Dacca park. Basant himself was spared as the assailant failed to recognise him. Subsequently his house was raided in Calcutta.

The assassination of Basant Chatterjee became a legend, in those days. According to the report of the Sedition Committee, five revolutionaries had come armed with pistols which were part of the fifty pistols that had been stolen from the Rodda Company and distributed.

Heavy punishment was awarded in the Alipur Conspiracy case, but the movement, instead of dying down, acquired new vigour. Attempts were made to manufacture arms and revolutionaries were trained in the use of them.

The Report of the Sedition Committee describes how such organisations spread. It states that the groups were not necessarily small. The Dacca group and the groups known as the West Bengal and North Bengal parties had many branches. The Dacca party was the most powerful and became a threat to the existence of the British Government in that area. This group had started having its impact from 1910 onwards and its strongholds were Mymensingh and Dacca, and its influence spread far and wide, in Assam, Bihar, the Punjab, U.P., Madhya Pradesh, and Poona.

Rumblings in North India

The Punjab (comprising Haryana and a part of Himachal) responded to the revolutionary enthusiasm of Maharashtra and Bengal. Sir Ibbotson, the Governor of the Punjab, referred to the unrest in the province in his report already in 1907 and he deplored that in at least two cases Englishmen were insulted just because they were white men and on one occasion there was a riot because an editor was sentenced.

The Governor contended that revolutionaries from Lahore had started the mischief But it was the ruthless exploitation by the Imperial power, all-round starvation, poverty and unemployment of the area that gave rise to the agitation. Dissatisfaction in the

villages was primarily due to economic factors.

If the voice of these people could be silenced, the Governor said, the people would once again be peaceful and loyal. After a lot of research, the Regulation 3 of the Act of 1818 was invoked to imprison without trial anybody suspected of revolutionary activities.[15]

Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh (the uncle of Sardar Bhagat Singh) were arrested and exiled to Burma. The treatment meted out to these two popular leaders made the people ever more restless and Mr. Morley, reporting to the British Parliament in June 1907, complained that between March 1 and May 1, 1908, 28 meetings of the agitators were held in the Punjab, of which only 5 were concerned with agricultural problems, the rest were purely political in character.

On November 1, a Bill to ban anti-government meetings was introduced and regarding this the Viceroy said: "We cannot forget that in Lahore Englishmen were harassed without any provocation and there were riots in Rawalpindi. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that the Governor had taken a serious view of the matter. It was in view of this that Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were arrested and an Ordinance issued. Apart from this, everyday news of boycott, insults, looting and many other illegal acts pour in. At the root of all these happenings were a few agitators who by their anti-government speeches and by declarations through the press were arousing racial hatred of the worst type among the people."[16]

After the arrest of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, the tempo of the agitation slowed down for a few days. But, in the meantime, there was a large output of revolutionary literature. Within six months of his detention, Ajit Singh escaped to Iran. Lal Chand 'Phalak' came out as a national poet and he was sentenced for writing patriotic poems. Bhai Paramanand was arrested and he had to give a surety. A copy of the Bomb Manual was found in his house — the same manual that was recovered from the revolutionaries involved in the Alipur Conspiracy. Two letters by Lala Lajpat Rai written in the stormy period of 1907, were also found on him. In one of the letters he wanted Shyamji to suggest the latest books on politics for the students of India. He had also said that Shyamji should be asked to donate Rs. 1,00,000 to political

[15] *Sedition Committee Report* (1918), p. 141.

[16] *Ibid.*

missionaries. In the second letter he had hinted at the restlessness of the masses and the prevalent feeling of dissatisfaction, among the peasants. This letter was not meant for publication, and it clearly showed that the prevalent unrest among the masses was due to exploitation. When questioned, Lajpat Rai stated that it was only after coming back from detention that he had come to know that Shyamji was a believer in political violence, and he had since then severed all connections with him. He had to say this to his inquisitors. He also wrote the biographies of two great revolutionaries, Mazzini and Garibaldi in Urdu.

Master Ameer Chand, a teacher in Delhi, was one of the earliest revolutionaries. He started as a religious reformer, but when the Swadeshi agitation became strong in Bengal in 1905, he veered towards the revolutionaries. He was the son of Rai Hukam Chand, the Secretary of the Legislative Council, Hyderabad. We have it on the authority of Lala Bishenswarup that Rai Hukam Chand had been to England, where he was eulogised by Queen Victoria for his legal acumen. He was the principal of a law college and wrote a book *Res Judicata* which served as a text book for law students.

Master Ameer Chand was a dedicated teacher. He first came into prominence as a preacher against the tramway company which started functioning in 1907. He and Hyder Raza conducted meetings against the introduction of tramway. Their arguments were that the foreign company would reap all the benefit and that the people would become lazy. He was instrumental in opening a Swadeshi store where people could buy articles manufactured in India. He also founded the National Library at Kinari Bazar, where patriotic literature was available. He went from house to house and tried to inculcate the reading habit among people. He started the National Press to print patriotic literature and helped in the publication of a Hindustani paper named *Akash* under the editorship of Ganeshilal Khasta. The editors and printers of the paper were again and again prosecuted. *Akash* did not carry any advertisement as a matter of principle. Ameer Chand and his closest friends bore all the expenses. He was a great lover of Swami Ramtirtha and but for his devotion some of the works of the Swami would have been lost for ever.

He was one of the sponsors of the 1909 Swadeshi exhibition where Lala Lajpat Rai was prevailed upon to speak.

Har Dayal, another revolutionary leader of Delhi, after taking his M.A. degree from the Punjab University, went to England for further studies on a Government scholarship. In England, he discovered that the British system of education was basically unsuited for Indians and he refused to study at Oxford on government scholarship. When he came back to India, he devoted himself to political propaganda. His field of activity was confined to Lahore and Delhi. By 1908, he had collected a group of young men which included Dina Nath, J. N. Chatterjee and Ameer Chand. When Lala Har Dayal went abroad to work for revolution, the mantle of leadership fell on the shoulders of Ameer Chand automatically.

Hanumant Sahay was a dealer in foreign clothes. He took the vow of using only swadeshi materials and gave up his lucrative business. After coming in contact with Lala Har Dayal, he was convinced that the type of education being imparted to Indians made them slavish, and he started a national school in his own house at Chelpuri in 1909. He opened a reading room in which he kept many nationalist books. Ameer Chand and some others who subscribed to his view acted as teachers in the school. These teachers later became fullfledged revolutionaries. One of them was Master Avadh Bihari. These people had some sort of connection, though not close, with Bengal revolutionaries. The connections were broken in 1910 after the Alipur Conspiracy, but when Rash Bihari Bose came to North India, they were re-established. Before Rash Bihari Bose came to Dehra Dun as an employee in the Forest Department, the revolutionary group in Delhi was just a propaganda unit and more or less a study circle. It was Rash Bihari Bose who galvanised the youths into active revolutionaries. He gave political training to Avadh Bihari, Dina Nath, Bal Mukund and others, and arranged for publication of the *Liberty*, a revolutionary bulletin. He also taught these people how to make bombs.

When King George V succeeded King Edward VIII to the British throne, Bengal was in the throes of a great unrest, resulting from the partition of the Province. It was suggested by the imperial advisers that a visit by the Emperor to India would perhaps act as a damper to revolutionary activities. The impressive coronation ceremony took place in 1911 and the capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. It was announced that the Govern-

ment had very graciously annulled the partition of Bengal. Bengal was brought under the administration of a Governor.

The Government reunited Bengal but it did not help matters. The revolutionary movement had gone far ahead. Lord Hardinge, who had been appointed Viceroy of India, was making his official entry into Delhi, the new capital of India on December 12, 1912. The Viceregal procession was proceeding in a leisurely manner with all the pomp and pageantry and it appeared as if British imperialism was firmly entrenched in India. When the procession reached Chandni Chowk, a bomb was thrown at the Viceroy. He had a hair-breadth escape, but became unconscious with an injury at the back of his head. His bodyguard was killed. Although the Viceroy could not be killed, it created the desired effect.

The explosion caused panic and Chandni Chowk was at once surrounded from all sides, but the police failed to catch the person or persons who had thrown the bomb. Subsequently two arrests were made. A bulletin was distributed by the organisers of this conspiracy which highly commended the attempt on the Viceroy's life. It called upon the people to destroy the enemies of the Motherland and said that good times were round the corner and that God had taken the destiny of India in His own hands. It was later on proved that these very persons had thrown a bomb in the Lawrence Park of Lahore, where the Europeans used to gather.

During a search at Rajabazar of Calcutta, the police stumbled on Avadh Bihari's name. It was found out that he was staying in Master Ameer Chand's house. A search of Ameer Chand's house led to the discovery of some revolutionary papers, a bomb-cap and some letters. Ameer Chand, his nephew Sultan Chand, and Avadh Bihari were arrested. The police learnt that the mysterious 'M.S.' was actually Dina Nath. Many Dina Naths were arrested till in the end the real Dina Nath was found. This man and Sultan Chand, the adopted son of Master Ameer Chand, became crown witnesses the moment they were caught and gave out all the information they had. But even Sultan Chand had no inkling of the man who had actually thrown the bomb at Lord Hardinge. However, 13 persons were prosecuted in this connection. The trial lasted 7 months, at the end of which Avadh Bihari, Ameer Chand and Bal Mukund were sentenced to death. The appellate court was even more unkind. In addition to the three revolutionaries already sentenced to death, Basant Kumar Biswas

was also sentenced to death. In reality Basant Kumar was the man who had actually thrown the bomb on the Viceroy. From a personal servant of Rash Bihari, he had grown into a personal friend and trusted revolutionary. He kept his mouth shut till the very end.

In the course of his trial the police produced a pamphlet written by Ameer Chand which stated: "India can achieve nothing through constitutional means. The only way in which we can attain Independence is by revolution. History shows that exploiters have never given freedom out of their own sweet will. It is only the sword that can win freedom for the exploited masses."

Master Ameer Chand was admired for his character, so much so that even the British judge said: "It must be borne in mind that patriots of Ameer Chand's type are often, except the monomania possessing them, esteemable men of unblemished character."

It is very strange that although none of the witnesses had thrown any light about the person who had thrown the bomb on the Viceroy, four persons were executed. Old warders of the Punjab prisons told political prisoners that during their sojourn in the condemned cells they used to teach the warders to read and write, and many other things.

On the day Avadh Bihari was to be executed, an English officer asked him: "What is your last wish?" and pat came the answer: "I only desire the end of British rule." The English officer turned his face and said: "At least die in peace now." Avadh Bihari laughed and said: "How can there be peace? I wish that in a revolutionary holocaust the British power be completely reduced to ashes."

For some time Bal Mukund had been serving as a tutor to the princess of Jodhpur. When Dina Nath mentioned his name, he was rounded up and found in possession of two bombs. The entire land on which his house stood was dug up two yards deep in search for more hidden bombs. Bhai Paramanand, his brother, appealed on behalf of his brother. But this was of no avail and in the end Bal Mukund was sentenced to death. Bal Mukund's story would be incomplete if we omit to mention his wife. Ever since her husband's arrest she startted losing weight. During an interview in jail which she had managed to have with her husband with great difficulty, she came to know that he was getting bread mixed with grit, and that he was sleeping with only two blankets in a dark

cell. From that day on she also started mixing grit in her food and sleeping on blankets. The day Bal Mukund was executed, she dressed herself like a bride and sat on a high stone platform. There was no trace of sorrow on her face. But she never got up from there. She died in that posture. The bodies of the husband and wife were cremated together.

Ameer Chand, Avadh Bihari and Bal Mukund were hanged in the Delhi jail on May 8, 1915. This jail was situated on the site where the Azad Medical College stands now. After independence some revolutionaries tried their best to save the 5 yards of land where these four people had been hanged. At first the Home Minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, agreed, but on second thoughts he refused. Ultimately, the Delhi Adiministration laid a slab on the spot in May 1970. Basant Kumar was hanged in Ambala jail on May 10.

Sachindranath Sanyal of Benaras formed a revolutionary group round about 1908. It was not yet a full-fledged revolutionary party but only trained youths in the use of lathis, wrestling and gymnastics. He named it *Anushilan samiti*. Subsequently, when the Bengal Anushilan party was banned, Sanyal changed the name of his organisation to Young Men's Association. In his first attemept Sanyal failed to give a revolutionary turn to his group, and so he went on a visit to Bengal. He met Makhan Sen of Dacca and had talks with him. The talks did not satisfy him, for Makhan Sen was harping on doing political work disguised as religious work. Sanyal, himself deeply religious, did not approve of this. He met the leaders at their headquarters in Raja Bazar, where he came in contact with many revolutionaries. One of them was Shrish Babu. He took him to Chandranagore where he came in contact with Rash Bihari. Nalini Kishore Guha writes: "Sachindranath Sanyal was like a pomegranate filled with gunpowder. He was all the time restless. Rash Bihari gave him the nickname of a top. He was always on the boiling point."

Pratul Ganguly was an absconder during those days. He was asked to tour the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) with Sachindranath Sanyal and report. After this Rash Bihari was to decide to what extent he could collaborate with Sanyal. Pratul Ganguly gave a good report with the result that Sanyal became the right-hand man of Rash Bihari. From then on the groups carried on their activities jointly.

The Sedition Committee attributes "a lot of mischief" to *Swarajya* and some other papers. It writes: "The first determined and persistent impulse towards a revolutionary movement in these now peaceful provinces came from the establishment of the *Swarajya* (self-Government) newpaper in Allahabd in November 1907 by a certain Shanti Narain, a native of the United Provinces, who had formerly been sub-editor of a Punjab newspaper and desired to commemorate the release of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, the Punjab deportees. The tone of this paper was hostile to the Government from the first and gradually intensified in virulence. Finally Shanti Narain was condemned to a long term of imprisonment for objectionable articles on the Muzaffarpur murders. The *Swarajya,* however, proceeded on its way under eight successive editors, three of whom were prosecuted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for objectionable publication. Seven of these editors came from the Punjab. The paper was only suppressed when the new Indian Press Act of 1910 came into force. Of its offending articles, one was a panegyric on Khudiram Bose, the Muzaffarpur murderer. Others related to subjects like 'Bomb or Boycott', and 'Tyrant and Oppressor'. Notwithstanding the perseverance with which the paper waged war on the Government, it produced no visible effect in the Provinces. The *Karmayogi,* a paper of similar tendencies published late in 1909 also at Allahabad, and suppressed in 1910, was equally ineffective."

Mr. Amir Chand Bombwal, the last editor of the *Swarajya* wrote about the prevailing situation: "By 1907, when the revolutionary movement for freedom starting from Bengal in the east had spread all over the country, U.P., the land of heroes, was totally lacking in it." In the Punjab, Mr. K. K. Athavle, editor of *Punjabi* had been convicted. The first editor of *Hindustan,* Mr. Dina Nath, had been sentenced to undergo five years' rigorous imprisonment; Lala Pindi Das, editor of *India* had also been sent to jail for five years. In Delhi, Syed Haider Raza's *Aftab* was proving irksome to the authorities and the police were conducting a futile search for its editor, Pandit Ram Chander Peshawari. The *Aftab* was succeeded by Master Amir Chand Shahid's weekly *Akash* under the same editor from November, 1908. Even in the backward province of N.W.F.P. the *Frontier Advocate* kept the Political Department on tenterhooks. In the Deccan *Kesari, Marhatta* and *Kaal* were a source of great annoyance to the

Government. And in Bengal, the *Sandhya* and the *Jugantar* were shaking the very foundations of the British Government.

Swarajya toed the Tilak line and was similar to his papers *Kesari* and *Marhatta*. Shanti Narain participated in the historic Surat Congress in 1907 with many young patriots. Pandit Amir Chand Bombwal of Peshawar was one of those young men who attended the Surat Congress along with him and had the privilege of being introduced to Tilak. They visited Poona where it was decided to start *Kesari* in Urdu from Agra, like the *Kesari* in Hindi appearing from Nagpur. It was also decided to publish a Hindi edition of Mr. Paranjpe's paper *Kaal* from Banaras. Lokmanya took the responsibility of meeting the financial liabilities of all these papers.

After his return to Allahabad, Shanti Narain made necessary arrangements for running the *Swarajya* and then busied himself with giving practical shape to the scheme of publishing *Kesari* and *Kaal*. He had not yet emerged from the preliminary difficulties in this connection when the Government started proceedings against him under Section 124-A of I.P.C. on the basis of two articles appearing in the *Swarajya*. One of them was a translation of Lokmanya's article, on the basis of which a case was launched. In May 1908, Shanti Narain was sentenced to three-and-a-half years' rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 1000/-. After the expiry of his term of imprisonment, he had to serve another six months with hard labour in lieu of the fine. The *Swarajya* Press was also forfeited and auctioned to recover the fine.

Having awarded such severe sentences, the authorities thought they had dealt a death-blow to the freedom movement in U.P., but they were mistaken. Eight young patriots from the Punjab and North West Frontier Province came forward to keep the *Swarajya* going. The Government increased the sentences of jail term from four to five and then from seven to ten years, but this had quite the opposite effect. Four of them were sent to serve their terms of imprisonment in the Andamans. The enthusiasm of the *Swarajya* fans increased proportionately with the severity of the sentences imposed.

The following is the roll of honour of the *Swarajya* editors: 1. Shanti Narain Bhatnagar; 2. Ram Das Suralia, afterwards known as Swami Prakashanand Saraswati; 3. Hoti Lal Varma; 4. Babu Ram Hari; 5. Nand Gopal Chopra; 6. Sham Das Varma;

7. Ladha Ram Kapoor; and 8. Amir Chand Bombwal.

Patriots from U.P. had already made Lahore the centre of their political activities. Under the inspiring guidance of Lala Lajpat Rai and the mystic revoltionary, Sufi Amba Prasad, from Moradabad, they founded a society called 'Bharat Mata Society' or 'Anjuman Muhibbhane Vatan'. Sardar Ajit Singh, his two brothers Sardar Kishan Singh and Sardar Swaran Singh, Anand Kishore Mehta, Pindi Das, Kedar Nath Saigal, Iswari Prasad, Lal, Chand 'Falak', Maulvi Ziaul Haq of Hapur, Lala Hardyal, Lala Shyam Das Varma, Pandit Ram Chandra Peshawari and Pandit Pyare Lal Sharma of Meerut (afterwards Education Minister of U.P. in 1937) and many other young men from U.P. had already joined the Society. Shanti Narain was the latest addition to the Society.

Sufi Amba Prasad was then serving as a special correspondent of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika.* His criticism of the highhanded policy of the Commissioner of the Ambala Division made his despatches biting and popular. The Commissioner became an object of ridicule as most of his confidential orders found their way into the columns of *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* and the poor Commissioner did not know that his deaf and dumb bearer was none other than Sufi Amba Prasad!

The *Swarajya* soon became the torch bearer of revolutionary awakening in the U.P. and its circulation increased by leaps and bounds. Tilak in his message to the editor said: "May *Swarajya* help in the birth of freedom movement in the United Provinces." The message from Shri Motilal Ghosh contained these prophetic words: "May *Swarajya* prove an active champion in the cause of political advancement of the country. But in so doing be prepared to keep one foot in jail and your successror ready to take your place." A panegyric on the martyrdom of Khudiram Bose provided the occasion. The mother of the martyr weeps over his son:

You gave your life on the gallows
With smiles on your lips:
Oh darling
Did I bring you up for this day?

Then addressing the youth:

Give up fear even if costs your life.
God helps those who love their Motherland

Shanti Narain was arrested for publishing this poem and was prosecuted under Section 124A of I.P.C. in the court of Mr. Macnaire, the District Magistrate of Allahabad and Purushottam Das Tandon appeared as the defence counsel. The accused told the court: "I did what I think best for my country and you may do what you think best for your country." Shanti Narain was sentenced to three-and-a-half years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000/-. Shanti Narain was succeeded by Ram Das Suralia from Amritsar (afterwards Swami Prakashanand Saraswati). He had hardly brought out a couple of issues of the *Swarajya* when in lieu of fine imposed on Shanti Narain, the *Swarajya* Press was attached and auctioned. The warrants of arrest against Suralia were issued but he went underground to arrange funds for a new printing press.

When the new press was installed, Hotilal Varma of Haryana, who had just returned from England and was staying at Aligarh, took over editing *Swarajya*. After he had brought out a few issues, Varma was also arrested under Section 124A and sentenced to a total of 10 years transportation on two counts.

Babu Ram Hari, a young patriot from Qadian, Gurdaspur, succeeded Varma. The first number of the journal under his editorship was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Indian War of Independence, and it carried the following poem by Shri Babu Ram Hari:

Oh! My dear Motherland why
are your crying?
The rule of the foreigners is
about to end!
They are packing up!
The national shame and misfortune
Will not last long!
The wind of freedom has
begun to blow,
Old and young all are yearning for freedom!

When India becomes free,
'Hari' will also enjoy his freedom!

Babu Ram Hari could edit only 11 issues of the journal before the cycle of repression took its turn and he was arrested. He was produced before the Sessions Judge, who sentenced him to transportation for life to an aggregate term of 21 years on three different counts.

Munshri Ram Sewak, editor of *Sahaik* of Lahore, rushed to fill the vacant post. He arrived by the first available train from Lahore, but did not know that a police officer was also travelling by the same train with an arrest warrant for him for publishing a seditious article in his Urdu weekly.

While Sewak was filing a declaration before the District Magistrate of Allahabad, he was arrested and the same evening taken to Lahore and Mr. Macnaire sarcastically remarked: "Who is the next man to occupy the Moghul throne?" Although he was thus deprived of a chance of a pilgrimage of 7 or 10 years in the Andamans through *Swarajya*, he was convicted by the Sessions Judge, Lahore, and sentenced to 7 years' rigorous imprisonment.

Nand Gopal Chopra, editor of the weekly *Inquilab*, Lahore, the son of Bulaki Ram, Bar-at-Law, the founder of the freedom movement in Dehra Dun, had already been sentenced to five years' hard labour at Lahore for his seditious writings. His appeal was pending and he was released on bail when he offered his services to *Swarajya*. Nand Gopal arrived at Allahabad and filed the declaration. The publication of the paper was again resumed. He could manage to edit nearly a dozen issues before he too was rearrested and sentenced to transportation for life on three counts, to an aggregate term of 30 years.

Sham Das Varma, editor of *Bharat Mata*, the official organ of the Bharat Mata Society of Lahore, assumed the additional responsibilities of *Swarajya* now. He had hardly brought out two issues when he received urgent summons to return to Lahore to meet the situation arising out of Sufi Amba Prasad and Sardar Ajit Singh having absconded to Persia. He was succeeded by a young patriot, Ladha Ram Kapur, who hailed from Varachanwala of Gujarat in Punjab. Kapur had just returned from South East Asia, after amassing a fortune. When his family was looking forward to a future of ease and comforts, destiny took a different course. While

all the others were bachelors, Kapur was married. "How can I refuse the call of freedom?", he replied to one of his elders and to his wife he said: "I love you with all my heart, but my love for my country has no equal." Kapur was sentenced to 30 years in the Andamans for publishing three "offending" articles. The Sessions Judge of Allahabad observed: "The article 'Loyalty' refers to a rape case in which an Englishman was prosecuted in a court at Rawalpindi on the charge of forcibly violating the chastity of an Indian woman. The offending article says that 'Normally speaking, she was a sister to all of us. This Englishman, in a most cowardly manner, destroyed the chastity of a respectable woman.' I do not see what stronger language could be used by the writer for bringing into hatred or contempt or for exciting disaffection towards the Government established by law in British India. In my opinion this article is clearly seditious and undoubtedly transgresses the law as laid down in Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code."

His concluding remarks were: "The only question then left out for this court's consideration is the amount of punishment it should impose on the accused. This is the fourth time that an editor of the *Swarajya* has been arraigned before this court in Allahabad for sedition under section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. The last case, that of the previous editor Nand Gopal, was decided by me only as late as March 29, 1910. The case of Babu Ram Hari was also tried by me. For reasons given in my judgment of 10th December 1908, I sentenced Babu Ram Hari to transportation for seven years on each one of the three counts under Section 124A of the I.P.C. Nand Gopal was then sentenced by this court to three terms of transportation for ten years for the three seditious articles written by him. These severe sentences on successive editors of *Swarajya* has not deterred this present accused Ladha Ram from coming from his district Gujrat in the Punjab and continuing the same vile stream of sedition by making foul aspersions against Government. On a consideration of all the circumstances of this case, this court finds the accused, Ladha Ram, guilty on all three counts of three offences punishable under section 124A of the I.P.C. and sentence him to transportation for ten years for each one of the three offences."

The well-known revolutionary, Pandit Paramanand who was also in the cellular jail of Andamans, informed B. N. Pande that

Ladha Ram was subjected to inhuman torture. He was tried for breaking prison regulations and sentenced to six months further term of imprisonment. His rare bravery and courage soon earned him the title of 'Field-Marshal'. 'Field-Marshal' Ladha Ram breathed his last on January 5, 1966 in a forlorn colony of New Delhi, in extreme poverty without proper medical attention, leaving behind his widow.

Many applied for the editorship of *Swarajya* which fell vacant again. Among them were Ramchandra Bharadwaj of Peshawar, Mahashe Khushal Chand 'Khursand' of Lahore and Pandit Amir Chand Bombwal. Amir Chand Bombwal took over.

On October 22, 1910 the *Swarajya* was killed by the Press Act of 1910. Bombwal was the last editor. Before his arrest Ladha Ram had inserted an advertisement in his paper: 'Wanted an editor for *Swarajya* on a remuneration of two unbuttered chapatis, a glass of cold water and 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for each editorial'. And Bombwal told Pande: "I was the last of the editors. A security of Rs. 2,000/- was demanded along with the filing of a fresh declaration for *Swarajya*. From Lahore, I came to Delhi to meet Master Amir Chand (afterwards martyr of the Delhi Bomb case). The *Swarajya* had by then become the symbol of national honour. Master Amir Chand collected Rs. 2000/- and gave them to me for the resumption of its publication. Thus armed, I arrived at Allahabad. I deposited the cash security and filed the declaration. The *Swarajya* reappeared in September, 1910. This enraged the Lieut.-Governor of U.P. He ordered that in future the security for good behaviour under Section 108 Cr. P.C. may also be demanded from the declarants simultaneously with security from the printing press and the newspaper under the Press Act.

"Hardly four issues had appeared under my editorship when orders were issued forfeiting the deposit. When I was busy arranging the amount for a fresh security, they sought sanction for my prosecution on the basis of two articles published during my editorship. But the District Magistrate was so eager that he did not wait for the Government sanction for my prosecution and issued orders to bound me down for keeping good behaviour for one year under Section 108 Cr.P.C.

"Forewarned by a well-wisher, I went underground and took shelter in the house of my friend and editor of *Karmayogi*, Pandit

Sundarlal. I thought that the police would never imagine that I could take refuge in a house which was haunted day and night by the C.I.D. To me it was the safest place. I remained with him till Chirstmas, 1910.

"I was arrested on the Christmas day under dramatic circumstances. I went to see a great exhibition where an aircraft was on display for the first time. Those who saw it came back with great praise for it. It was a temptation for me which I could hardly resist. Thus, on Christmas day I found myself in the exhibition grounds. In the words of Tandonji, 'we had never witnessed such an interesting exhibition before'.

"While watching the aircraft, I was suddenly surrounded by the police and arrested. When produced before the District Magistrate, Rajarishi Purushottam Das Tandon was my defence counsel. He took advantage of a technical flaw in the arrest warrant. The police officer mistook me for Master Amir Chand and naturally in the warrant of arrest, Masterji's parentage was given as mine. Tandonji argued, 'How can you prosecute my client on a fictitious parentage?'

"Another of his objections was that the charge-sheet mentioned that the copies of the newspaper containing the offending articles were seized at the printing stage, prior to their publication. Tandonji argued, 'Pre-publication stage does not come under the Act's purview.'

"The prosecution got confused and moved for a brief adjournment for necessary amendments in the arrest warrant as well as in the charge-sheet. My handcuffs were removed and I became a free man for some time.

"Tandonji put a pad of currency notes in my pocket and confidentially advised me to catch a Banaras-bound train from Prayag station which was due to arrive there within an hour. And by the time a fresh warrant was got ready, I was half way to Banaras."

Ghadr Party

This brings us to the new group of revolutionaries who organised themselves in a foreign land and how they tried to combine with their brothers at home. The Ghadr Party was formed in America. The slavery of India proved to be a handicap to Indians in the foreign countries. It devalued them in all respects and it hurt

them at every step. Indians were refused entry into certain countries and often they were refused jobs. Pandit Kashi Ram, Baba Keshar Singh, Baba Ishar Singh Maharaj, Bhaga Singh alias Gandhi Singh, Baba Sohan Singh, Udham Singh, Harnam Singh Tundi and others carried on an agitation to improve their lot in Oregon in the U.S. The Indian community in California also organised itself. This organisation came to be called the Hindi Association, which afterwards was transformed into the Ghadr Party and Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna was elected President, Baba Keshar Singh Vice-President, Lala Har Dayal Secretary and Pandit Kashi Ram Treasurer. The Association soon managed to have a large membership and funds for the party were collected. It sponsored a publication called the *Ghadr*. As the majority of Indians had settled down in California, the headquarter of the party was located in the city of San Francisco. The premises of the office of the party was named the Jugantar Ashram, after the organ of Alipur group of revolutionaries. Lala Har Dayal became the first editor and its first issue was brought out on the first of November 1913. The first few numbers appeared in Urdu and were cyclostyled. A Punjabi edition appeared in 1914, and when its demands grew, it was printed from No. 5 Wood Street. Begun by Har Dayal and Kartar Singh it was later on joined by Jagatram, Prithvi Singh, Mahbub Ali, Inayat Khan. Up to March 1914 when Har Dayal had to leave, he was the editor. After him Ramchandra Peshwari became the chief and *Ghadr* was printed in four languages. Three thousand dollars were deposited in the *Ghadr* fund. The paper was to be distributed free.

Indian residents in America met at Stockten in February 1914 and the meeting was presided over by the veteran Punjabi revolutionary Jawala Singh, and among those who attended were Babas Sohan Singh, Keshar Singh, Kartar Singh, Lala Har Dayal, Tarak Nath Das, Prithvi Singh, Baba Karan Singh, Baba Basakha Singh, Baba Santokh Singh, Pandit Jagat Ram Haryanvi, Dalip Singh Phal, Puran Singh, Niranjan Singh Pandori, Karan Singh Dhoot, Nidhan Singh Mahrori, Nidhan Singh Chaggha and Arud Singh. This was the first conference of the revolutionaries abroad and several resolutions were passed. Baba Sohan Singh and Kesar Singh, accompanied by Bhagat Singh and Kartar Singh, toured California for organsing the Indians there. In the meantime funds were being collected for the party and the message of freedom was

conveyed to every Indian living in the U.S. Some were so excited that they donated their bank balance. The party soon had branches in Canada, Panama and China. The party was strictly secular in character and every member was to volunteer his services for freedom and equality.

The Ghadr party stood for some sort of Panchayati raj, i.e., republic. The form was not defined, but Mula Singh said, "If the opium-addicted Chinese can establish panchayati raj, why can't the Indians do so? We have to follow in the footsteps of China and other countries that had a revolution." (Panchee, p. 56).

The Ghadr party was able to forge complete unity among all Indians. The Sikh and Muslim members used to dine together and the Singapore army, which joined the revolt, was made up of Muslims.

Russian and Irish revolutionaries used to speak at Ghadr Party. Har Dayal incurred the wrath of the American police for speaking against the tyranny of the Tsar at a meeting. When the work increased, Sohan Singh Bhakna left his lucrative work and settled down in Jugantar Ashram and organised branches all over California immediately. Santokh Singh, the Secretary, was a student of Khalsa College, Amritsar, and had proceeded to America for higher education, and Kashiram, the Treasurer, was an indefatigable worker.

Another redoutable figure, Maulana Barkatulla, of Bhopal, was a professor of Tokyo University. He had gone on a tour of Turkey, Egypt and had correspondence with Shyamji Krishna Verma. The Japanese Government had stopped his paper and as soon as the war started, he lost the University job. He came to the U.S.A. and immediately took over as the Vice-President.

For some time the Indians carried on their work without any hindrance. But soon British agents were all over the place and it was feared that some of them might even attempt to kill or kidnap Har Dayal. Harnam Singh Tundilat and Kartar Singh Saraba served as his bodyguards. Har Dayal was to speak at a meeting on March 16, 1914, but was arrested on the way. When the police was escorting him to a waiting car, the bodyguards took out their pistols, but Sohan Singh Bhakna asked them to keep their peace. The police had second thoughts and they left after getting the warrant signed by Har Dayal. Indians were very sore over the fact that the American Government allowed itself to be bullied by the

British Government. Some Americans also came out against this servile attitude of their Government. Har Dayal was released on a bail of $1,000 and was forced to leave the U.S.A. He faded away after this.

While this movement was going on, 'Koma gata Maru', a ship chartered by the Indians on April 4, 1914 with 341 Sikhs and 21 Muslims reached Vancouver on May 23, but the Canadian police refused to let it touch the harbour. This enraged the Indians in Canada. Bhag Singh and Watan Singh were killed while kneeling in prayer. In the course of the trial, the murderer, Bela Singh, an Indian, stated that he had been instructed by the U.S. Immigration Department to commit the murders.

The Ghadr Party contributed probably the youngest martyr to the revolution. Born in Ludhiana in 1866, Kartar Singh was a born leader. He went to the United States after studies and found that even though the Americans talked all the time of freedom and brotherhood, they did not welcome Indians. He came to the conclusion that Indians were hated because they belonged to a subject nation. With the arrival there of Bhagwan Singh, who had been exiled from the Punjab, a revolutionary group was formed and it started a journal called *Ghadr* of which Kartar Singh became one of the editors. Editing the journal included composing type, making up the pages, printing and selling.

When the first world war broke out, Kartar Singh felt the time was ripe for a revolution in India. He came over to India and met Rash Bihari Bose at Banaras. Bose told him, "Go and prepare the Punjab while we are getting ready here". The 18-year old youth started strengthening the organisation, arms were collected, a large number of sub-committees were set up, and even funds were collected by forced contributions. They also fixed February 21, 1915 for launching the revolution throughout the country. An army officer had promised to give him the keys of the arsenal. But when Kartar Singh and his companions reached the army camp it was learnt that the soldier had been transferred the previous day. Undeterred he, along with Pingle, went to Meerut, Agra, Kanpur, Allahabad, and other cantonments to convert the soldiers and set up revolutionary committees. But just before the fateful day the entire plan was revealed to the Government. A reign of terror was let loose, there were mass arrests and on the slightest suspicion entire battalions were disarmed. Kartar Singh went

underground, but the people were so terrified that they were not prepared to help him. Kartar Singh, finally, slipped out of India, but returned soon and was arrested near a cantonment.

He could not keep quiet even in prison and hatched a plot to escape from prison and attack the armoury of the Lahore Cantonment. But the Government got scent of it. Kartar Singh pleaded guilty to all the charges and said, "I know the consequences — either transportation for life or death sentence. I shall prefer to be executed, for, that would give me an opportunity to be reborn to serve my country. Should I be born as a woman in my next birth, I would wish to give birth to rebel children." And the judge passed the death sentence. When Kartar Singh's grandfather came to see him, he showed not the least trace of fear. His grandfather asked: "Kartar, for whom are you accepting this death sentence? They are all disowning you." For a while he looked crestfallen. He mentioned a couple of names of his dead relatives and asked: "Tell me, grandpa, where are they?" His grandfather said, "They are dead!" Kartar Singh said, "And we are also going to die. What is there to bother about?"

Balwant Singh was another revolutionary to ascend the gallows. Born in Jullundur he was in the Army for ten years but went to Canada to settle down. There were no gurudwaras in Canada and Indians were not allowed to cremate their dead. He successfully agitated for these facilities. He also fought against a campaign to send Indian coolies to Honduras Islands. The first world war drew him, along with hundreds of Indians, to his motherland. Balwant Singh reached Shanghai but instead of proceeding to India he went to Bangkok, where he was arrested and handed over to the British. He was accused of being involved in the Lahore Conspiracy and sentenced to death. He was also accused of trying to commit suicide by taking opium which he was supposed to have concealed in the folds of his turban. To this he said, "That's indeed wonderful! In a few days' time I am going to die a proud man. Is there any earthly reason why I should be such a coward as to commit suicide."

The Ghadr revolutionaries were not connected with the Bengal revolutionaries. Kartar Singh tried to link the two, but his first attempt failed. Later Sachindranath Sanyal went to see them and an understanding was reached. Sanyal met Prithvi Singh in Lahore, but before they could meet again the latter was arrested. Vishnu

Ganesh Pingle from Maharashtra who had gone to Seattle for higher education, joined the Ghadr revolutionaries and returned to India to organise the revolution. Pingle linked the Bengal party with the Ghadr party. Mula Singh was entrusted with the work of organisation. Mathura Singh was in charge of the bombs. Nidhan Singh was to collect funds. Kartar Singh was given liaison work with the Bengal party. Rash Bihari along with Pingle reached Amritsar and met Ghadr revolutionaries. The headquarters of the party was shifted to Lahore from Amritsar. Arms were collected and bombs prepared with the help of Bengal revolutionaries. Cantonments were visited regularly. But an informer, Kirpal Singh, foiled the whole plot. Kartar Singh returned from Ferozepur Cantonment a disappointed man. Bhai Paramanand and some others have decried this attempt to trigger the rising with a simultaneous mutiny in the cantonments as more or less childish, but Panchhi quotes Sir William Vincent as saying in the Legislative Council that the Singapore rising of 1915 and the conspiracies in Burma and India constituted a very serious threat to the Government. Twelve men of the 23rd cavalry were hanged and 6 were given transportation. Some revolutionaries ambushed a picket party on June 11, 1915 and escaped with their arms. Two of them, Bachan Singh and Ruhr Singh, escaped to Kapurthala, but were arrested with three others and they were hanged. Bachan Singh became a Crown witness. The No. 12 cavalry of Meerut was ready to join the rising on February 21. But Jamadar Nader Khan who went with Pingle to Banaras sabotaged the effort. Ten bombs "powerful enough to blow up half a regiment" were taken from a Bengali revolutionary, and when Pingle came to deliver them, Nader Khan got him arrested. Pingle was hanged.

On February 15 there was rebellion in the Singapore Army organised by Santokh Singh and others. German prisoners in Singapore were released, but they refused to join the rebels. Many Europeans were shot in the streets. The British requested a French and a Japanese ship as also the Sultan of Johore to help suppress the revolt. Martial law was declared. Over 420 rebels were arrested and 41 were sentenced to death.

The judgment of the Lahore Conspiracy case was pronounced on September 13, 1917 and those sentenced to death included: Baba Sohan Singh, Baba Keshar Singh, Prithvi Singh, Kartar

Singh, B. J. Pingle, Bhagat Singh, Jagat Singh, Bhai Paramanand, Jagat Ram, Baba Jauhar Singh, Har Nam Singh, Bakshi Singh, Sohan Singh Avval, Sohan Singh Doyam, Nidhan Singh, Bhai Paramanand Lahori, Hriday Ram, Har Nam Singh, Ram Saran Kapurthala, Ralin Singh, Khushal Singh, Basakha Singh, Kahila Singh, Balwant Singh, Sawan Singh and Nanda Singh. All were not executed though ultimately 28 persons were hanged. During the searches a declaration of war was found. The most prominent item in this programme was winning over the Army and in cantonments at Meerut, Kanpur, Allahabad, Faizabad, Banaras, Lucknow, the revolutionaries had infiltrated.

This gives only a faint idea of the Ghadr Party's farflung activities. Sir Michael Odyer in his book *India as I Knew It* admits that the Government was rendered very weak during this phase of the war. It had only 13,000 British soldiers at its disposal, who were being marched up and down the country to boost up the prestige of the Government. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was also of the opinion that the revolutionaries constituted a great danger to the Government.

A teacher, Damodar Swarup Seth, was the leader at Allahabad while Rash Bihari, Sanyal and Pingle were to go to Lahore. Two persons from Bengal were appointed to manufacture bombs and Vinayakrao Kaple was to be sent to the Punjab with the bombs. Vibhuti and Priya Nath were to work in the Army in Banaras and one Nalini was to be in charge of the Army at Jabalpur. Soon after, Mani Lal (who became a confessor later on) and Kaple started carrying 18 bombs. Rash Bihari had informed the colleagues that the revolution would start on February 21, 1918. But when they suspected that one of their own men had betrayed them, they changed the date. The groups in Banaras were not aware of the change of date. On the eve of the 21st they were waiting for some signal. By this time there were large-scale arrests. Rash Bihari and Pingle came back to Banaras. On March 10, 1915, Pingle was arrested. According to the statement of Vibhuti, the Crown witness, these bombs had been brought to Banaras from Calcutta and had been there ever since. They were found in a tin trunk.

During these days a Sikh army was stationed at Dacca. Sikh soldiers sent letters of introduction to establish contact with the Sikhs of Dacca. Anukul Chakravarty, the revolutionary leader of

Dacca, contacted the Sikh soldiers of the city with these letters. Two Sikh soldiers became interested in the conspiracy, but the matter ended there. The revolutionaries used to learn shooting in the Surul forests of Mymensingh and Rajashahi.

Kaple who was involved in the Banaras conspiracy was killed in February 1918. Subsequently Sushil Lahiri was arrested in this connection and sentenced to death. Pandit Jagat Narayan, who was later on the chief prosecution lawyer in the Kakori conspiracy, was also appointed the lawyer in Lahiri's trial.

The murder of Kaple was most intriguing. Kaple, a very sincere revolutionary, had been made the chief organiser in U.P., but later on when he got a lot of money and fire-arms at his disposal, he became a different man. Lahiri was sent to take charge of the arms and money. At first Kaple avoided Lahiri, but later on they agreed to a rendezvous at Lucknow to talk matters over and he even promised to return the arms to the party. They all met in darkness in a secluded spot. Lahiri was accompanied by Nripendra, a tried revolutionary. Kaple also had a companion, and as soon as Sushil and Nripendra came within range, Kaple's companion fired at them but missed. Nripendra whipped out his revolver and before Lahiri could stop him fired at the direction killing Kaple.

Mainpuri Conspiracy

The Mainpuri conspiracy was unique as it was the only conspiracy in Northern India which was not at any stage directly influenced by Bengal. Pandit Gendalal Dixit was the leader of this. An Arya Samajist and a teacher by vocation, Dixit formed the Shivaji Samiti and resolved to free the country by Shivaji's methods. Gendalal started organising the dacoits who infested these parts. He did not think deeply on the subject. Even Sanyal originally believed that all criminals in jails should be released at the time of a mass revolution hoping that they would help the revolution. Subsequently when he spent long periods in jail with ordinary criminals he changed his views. Gendalal came across a dacoit leader, Brahmachari, and with his help, organised the dacoits operating between the Chambal and the Jumna rivers. Brahmachari and Gendalal decided to plunder the house of a moneylender, but a spy informed on the group. The spy mixed poison in the

food being prepared for the party and Brahmachari ate it. He at once understood that there was foul play and promptly shot the spy who tried to escape under the pretext of getting water. The police, alerted by the shots, closed in on them and a gun battle followed. Thirty-five men of the Brahmachari group were killed. Brahmachari, Gendalal and a few others were arrested and locked up in the Gwalior Fort.

Gendalal had also organised a group of young men, called "Matri Vedi". They also had to commit a few dacoities to fill the coffers of the party, but they were different from the Gwalior group. They tried to free Gendalal but were arrested.

The trial of all these youths became known as the Mainpuri conspiracy case. A young man, Somadev, became the King's witness. Gendalal became a consumptive. While being taken from Gwalior to the Mainpuri prison, he was made to walk the whole distance from the railway station to the prison. He was so weak that he had to sit down several times. He pondered over the facts and he told the police that he would like to become a Crown witness himself. The police chief was delighted and Gendalal was transferred to the barrack. Gendalal scaled the walls of the jail that night taking with him Ramnarayan, one of the approvers. They both reached Kota where Ramnarayan locked up Gendalal inside a room and ran away. For three days Gendalal remained in that room without any food or water. He somehow managed to come out, and walked all the way to Agra. He struggled his way to Delhi, the police on his trail. He had no money with him and his colleagues were either in prison or in hiding. His relatives were only eager to hand him over. Sick and tired, he felt frustrated. He took up the job of a water man and his disease went from bad to worse. At last, he wrote a letter to a friend who rushed to his rescue with Gendalal's wife.

Gendalal now started getting epileptic fits. His wife nursed him day and night, but now it was probably too late. When Gendalal was nearing death, his wife started crying. Gendalal looked up and said: "You are crying? Well, do cry. My heart also cries. I took a big plunge, but what have I achieved? I am dying, but I do not see any silver lining in the horizon. As I die I see that whatever I tried to build up has gone to pieces. Alas, I was not able to avenge the atrocities that have been heaped on my Motherland. My body will perish, but like a Hindu I do not aspire to

have *Moksha*. I wish that till the time our country is free, I may be born and reborn to die for the attainment of freedom."

He soon fell into coma. The friend persuaded Gendalal's wife to leave her husband in this state and get him admitted in a hospital. Thus he died alone in a hospital in December 1920. He was not identified after his death and his body was probably classed as unclaimed.

Pandit Ramprasad Bismil who was later sentenced to death in connection with the Kakori conspiracy, also had a warrant against him in the Mainpuri conspiracy case. When the first world war ended in British victory, it was followed by an amnesty to political prisoners. All the Mainpuri convicts including absconders were pardoned. Only then did Ramprasad Bismil appear in public.

Shiv Krishna and Mukundi Lal, who was later sentenced to transportation for life for being associated with the Kakori conspiracy, were also involved in the Mainpuri case. The latter was sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

In Bihar and Orissa the revolutionary movement had a late start probably because of the non-existence of an educated middle class. The very first revolutionary act in Bihar was the assassination of the Kennedys by Khudiram. It had nothing to do with the Biharis or even the Bengalis settled in Bihar. Khudiram had been sent from Bengal. He was arrested under tragic circumstances. When he heard that two English women were killed he was stunned and let out a shriek. When the police heard him and saw a young man with dishevelled hair, they at once knew that he was the culprit.

It is very interesting to know that the people, who chased and got Khudiram arrested later on, gave him the honour of a martyr after his execution. They had by then realised their mistake. After independence a memorial was erected at the place where he was cremated and Nehru, who was asked to act as chief guest, declined to participate. Many other Congress leaders took part in it.

Raj Narain Basu, a maternal grandfather of Aurobindo had settled down in Deoghar and had even tried to form an underground group. Barindra Ghosh had most of his education at Deoghar and belonged to a group called the Golden League, which preached the boycott of foreign goods and advocated the uses of Swadeshi. The printer of the *Jugantar*, the revolutionary

organ of Aurobindo's party belonged to Deoghar. During the searches in connection with the Alipur conspiracy it was discovered that a house called "Sheeler Badi" was used for making bombs.

After the Muzaffarpur incident, nothing much happened in Bihar, though it continued to be the centre of absconding revolutionaries of Bengal.

Sachindranath Sanyal had started a sub-committee of the Banaras Samiti in Bankipur, Patna. Bankim Chandra Mitra was a member of this group. He joined the Bihar National College and used to lecture to people on Vivekananda. People joining the group had to swear in the name of God and the Brahmins that they will keep their mouths sealed and will not reveal the activities of the group. Bankim Chandra enrolled a Bihari youth, Raghubir Singh, who distributed many copies of the *Liberty*. Later, he got an appointment as a clerk in the No. 113 Infantry at Allahabad and was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment for distributing the paper.

The Bengal Anushilan entrusted Revati Nag with the responsibility of carrying on revolutionary work in Bihar. Tej Narayan, a student of the Bhagalpur College, later on told the police how Revati Nag operated. "Revati used to tell us about the miserable plight of our country. He said that we Bihari students should be doing something to liberate the country. He wanted us to emulate the Bengali students in this field. He told us that Bihar lacked in strong public opinion as well as political leaders. He asked us to sacrifice everything, even our lives, on the altar of our motherland. He told us that Bengalis had taken to hold-ups not for personal gain, but to bring about a revolution. He asked me to read about hold-ups, searches and political cases and ponder over my duty in this matter. In short, he provoked us to emulate the Bengali anarchists. He said that it was not possible for the Bengalis to come and work in Bihar. Biharis should take up the responsibility of revolutionary work in Bihar. Revati used to tell me all these things in private and he forbade me to talk about these things to others."

A pupil of Barari English High School told the police: "Revati impressed upon me that the British had ruined us by obstructing the growth of nationalism in India and checking the progress of education and other nation building activities. He said that the British were monopolising all the higher posts. A

few thousand people were taking away all the wealth of the motherland. The British, he said, were trying to perpetuate our slavery. He said that Bihari students should be as active as Bengali students. He told me that a time would come when we 33 crores of Indians by proper unity would be able to free our motherland. Revati also talked of Ramraj and Janakraj."

Revati Nag, according to the police report, was killed by his colleagues for breaking the discipline of the group. Nothing about this aspect is available.

Orissa has always been active and Balasore will be remembered in the history of the revolutionary movement. What Jatindra Mukherjee, Manoranjan Chitta Priya, and Narendra Bhattacharya attained by spilling their blood will be enshrined for ever in the hearts of the people.

Jatindra who became the most important revolutionary after Barindra Ghosh, hailed from Nadia district. He passed his F.A. and was a good sportsman. He was fond of hunting and was called "Bagha Jatin" because once he had an encounter with a tiger. Jatindra had to become a stenographer in a Government office. Once while travelling in a train, he picked up a fight with some British soldiers and gave them a sound beating. A case was filed but sensing that it would be a scandal that one Indian had singlehandedly floored several British soldiers, it was quietly withdrawn. But he got the sack.

Jatindra joined a revolutionary group and took part in many hold-ups of which Garden Reach hold-up became famous. The revolutionaries pounced on the cashier of the South India Jute Mills who was travelling with Rs. 18,000. The cashier was escorted by two peons. The revolutionaries hired a taxi with a Punjabi driver and reached Howrah station where the Garden Reach Circular Road and the Garden Reach Road met, blocked its passage and on instructions from Jatindra, Narendra Bhattacharya (who later became M. N. Roy), Atul Ghosh, Chitta Priya, Patitapawan Ghosh and others jumped in. They took hold of the cash bags and got into the taxi, but the Punjabi driver refused to drive. They pushed the driver out of the taxi and Patitapawan drove the vehicle to Banipur. They abandoned the taxi and reached Joyanagar by a victoria and from there they took a northern route by boat and reached Taki and finally reached 20, Fakir Chand Street, their camp. The police started following the clues

and at last caught hold of the driver of the victoria who had taken the revolutionaries to Fakir Chand Street. Patitapawan and Radha Raman were caught and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, but the others managed to remain at large.

Ten days later the same group robbed a wealthy merchant of Balighat. They too used a taxi and when the taxidriver refused to drive, they shot him.

Jatindra's hide-out at Pathuriaghat was one of the nerve centres of the party, frequented by absconding and other revolutionaries. One stranger who strayed into this den was immediately shot. The entire police force was now in pursuit of Jatindra. They closed in on his hide-out in a jungle. There were only five revolutionaries: Jatindra Mukherjee, Chitta Priya, Niren, Manoranjan and Jyotish, against the might of British imperialism with its countless stooges and the misguided villagers. And they came face to face. Shots were fired and Chitta Priya was the first victim. Jatindra too was badly wounded and when he saw Chitta Priya fall, realised that all would meet the same fate. He instructed them to stop the fight. A profusely bleeding Jatindra collapsed on the ground and asked for water. Manoranjan, who was in a similar state, forgot his own wounds and went to fetch some water from the nearby river; but he could hardly walk. The police looked on and one of them broke into tears over this sight of bravery and patriotism. One policeman stopped Manoranjan and went to get water himself. He too was an Indian. Jatindra was removed to a Cuttack hopsital, where he died. Manoranjan and Niren were sentenced to death. Jyotish lost his senses and was sent to a lunatic asylum where he died two years later.

It was Jatin Mukherjee who had sent M. N. Roy outside India to negotiate with the anti-British powers for arms. M. N. Roy later on became a world figure. He met Lenin and Stalin, played a part in China and fathered the Communist Party of India. He was the declared leader of the Kanpur and Meerut conspiracy cases but could not be arrested. Later on he was arrested in India and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

The Central Provinces woke up when Nagpur was fixed as the venue of the Congress Session in 1909. The conflict between the Moderates and the Radicals had developed to such an extent that at last the venue was shifted to Surat, because the Radicals

were in a stronger position in Nagpur. They never left any opportunity of criticising the Government. They launched a paper called the *Hind Kesari* from May 1, 1907 on the model of *Kesari*. The *Desh Sevak* was another such paper. The student movement developed here to such an extent that the Chief Commissioner complained in an official letter that the manner in which the police had been giving battle to the impudent Nagpur students was very mild, and if things continued this way, all responsible people would flee from Nagpur.

Aurobindo came to Nagpur on December 22, on his way to Surat and he gave a lecture supporting Swadeshi and boycott. He spoke on the same theme when he passed through Nagpur on his way back.

Commenting on the trial of the editor of the *Jugantar* and about the bombs that were discovered at Maniktola, the *Hind Kesari* wrote: "Can it be said that one is committing a crime if one goes against thieves and robbers? Since the British are not the legitimate rulers of India, they easily fall in the category of robbers."

In 1915, at the time when Rash Bihari was planning a revolt in the north, a young man called Nalini Mohan Mukherjee was sent for organising the armed forces at Jabalpur. He did not succeed and was subsequently sentenced in connection with the Banaras conspiracy case.

CHAPTER II

Gathering Storm

OVERSEAS EFFORTS

ACCORDING TO Dr. H. Kruger of G. D. R. who had been doing research on Indian revolutionaries abroad on the basis of German foreign office records, the situation was like this: "In 1907 Madame Cama and S. R. Rana participated as official delegates in the conference in Stuttgart. Cama was a member of the French Socialist Party. In 1910 French newspapers reported that 'la citoyenne Cama' who was called a 'Hindu socialist' had participated in a congress of the Socialistic Federation of the Department Seine".[1] When Cama and S. R. Rana returned from Stuttgart they reported to the other Indian revolutionaries in Paris about Lenin, the Russian socialists and about their attitude towards the problems of war and of the right of self-determination of nations. In this way a group of Indian nationalists, among them Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, became acquainted with Lenin's opinions on important political problems already at that time. But none of them, as Chattopadhyaya later pointed out, understood then the tremendous importance of the split in the international socialist movement and the historic role of Lenin. Chattopadhyaya became a member of the French Socialist Party in 1910. (Unpublished speech by Chatto, delivered on 18-3-1934 in Leningrad -- typed copy).

Again in Copenhagen where the next International Congress of Socialists was held in 1910 the Indian question, especially the case of Savarkar, figured in the discussion.

The contacts between the Indian revolutionaries in Europe and the socialist movement before world war I were confined mainly to the Independent Labour Party (Keir Hardie) and other social democrats like Hyndman in Great Britain. In France is to be

[1] National Archives of India, Home Dept. Poli. Sept. 1910, 51-59 B.

mentioned especially the circle around the newspaper *L'Humanite* with Longuet (son-in-law of Marx) and *Jaures*. In U.S.A. there were contacts with the American Socialist Party and with the labour organisation, Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.).

Of great importance were the various contacts and relations with political emigrants from Russia, Japan, China, Italy, etc. The example of Hem Chandra Kanungo from Bengal who met a Russian socialist in Paris is well-known. Khankoje, a revoluntionary, says that Chinese revolutionaries were the first who explained to him that it was necessary to take up the agrarian question in order to mobilise the peasant masses. Together with the progressive movements in the countries where the Indian revolutionaries were living, the political emigrants coming from elsewhere exercised a profound political and ideological influence on the Indian nationalists. According to the theoretical level and ideological trends prevailing in these conditions various kinds of ideas were passed over to the Indians. Among them were quite often also anarchistic conceptions which appealed to the revolutionaries by their emphasis on direct action, individual terror, opposition against every authority and neglect of an organised mass movement.

Very instructive in this connection is the case of Lala Har Dayal. He belongs to those Indian revolutionaries who became acquainted rather intimately with scientific socialism at an early stage. His article where he is referring to Karl Marx and other socialists published in the *Modern Review* in 1912 is well-known (Calcutta 1912). It is reported that Har Dayal was the Secretary of the Radical Club in San Francisco at that time where "Russians, Poles and Socialists came together frequently." (NAI Home Dept. Pol. June 1913, 5-17).

On January 26, 1913 a meeting took place in San Francisco for commemorating the "Bloody Sunday', an event during the Russian Revolution of 1905. This meeting was announced at a gathering a few days earlier by a member of the Russian Revolutionary Society in San Francisco. On this occasion, Har Dayal gave a lecture on the "Revolutionary Labour Movement in France, its lessons and dangers". In this speech Har Dayal referred to the I.W.W. which was according to him the "closest resemblance to the Anarchist Society of which he was proud to be a member". It should be mentioned here that the I.W.W. had its basis among

foreign workers in the U.S.A. who were generally not admitted to the American trade unions. Because of the extremely difficult situation of this group of labourers which was hard-pressed from all sides the idea of direct action was one of the main ideological principles of this organization. The same report says that one of these labour organizations comprised workers from, Russia, France, Spain and Italy, "the majority of whom are reputed to be political refugees from these countries." We know also that the well-known Japanese socialist Sen Katayama lived in San Francisco at that time.

Bernhardi had expressed a hope in his book called "Germany and the next War" that if the Hindus of Bengal, who had a pronounced nationalist and revolutionary outlook were to come to terms with the Muslims, the very foundation of Britain's control and power would be shaken. In an article in a famous German newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt* (March 6, 1914) it was pointed out that conditions in India were grave and many underground groups were thriving and receiving foreign aid. It was particularly mentioned that there appeared to be an organised attempt at providing India with arms and ammunition. It appears that this referred to the great Ghadr Party. It was revealed during a trial at San Francisco on November 22, 1917 that as early as 1911, Lala Har Dayal had been planning a conspiracy with the help of German agents and Indian revolutionaries in Europe. California, Oregon and Washington were involved in this conspiracy. These revolutionaries realised that Germany alone would be able to destroy Britain's power.

In September 1914 Champakraman Pillay, a young South Indian, the Chairman of the International Pro-India Committee in Zurich, wrote to the German Consul in Zurich asking for permission to publish anti-British literature in Germany. He left Zurich for Berlin in October 1914 to work for the revolution under the German Foreign Office. He formed a group called the Indian National Party attached to the German General Staff. Lala Har Dayal, Tarak Nath Das, Barkatulla, Chandra K. Chakravarty and Heramblal Gupta were members of the Party. Out of these Chandra K. Chakravarty and Heramblal Gupta were implicated in the San Francisco conspiracy.

According to the Rowlatt report the Germans at first wanted to use the Indian revolutionaries only for the creation and dissemina-

tion of anti-British literature. Subsequently they began to be trusted with various other jobs as well. Barkatulla was assigned the job of converting all Indian soldiers captured by the Germans. Thus the foundation was laid for the first I.N.A. or the Azad Hind Fauj.

What was the basis of this agreement between the Indian revolutionaries and the German foreign office? Dr. Kruger, doing research on the subject from secret German foreign office papers writes:

"Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Abinash Bhattacharya discussed the agreement which was to be the legal basis of co-operation between the Indian revolutionaries and imperial Germany. They demanded in one paragraph that the German and Austrian Governments were not to interfere, if after the successful completion of the revolution a socialist republic be established."[2]

Not all of them reached this level, but realised first of all in the socialist working class movement a powerful ally against imperialism. We may quote here Har Dayal who wrote: "Only the socialists are really interested in freedom. All other parties don't care about Asia and the Asiatics.[3]

World War I created a new and favourable situation for the Indian freedom struggle. The Indian revolutionaries endeavoured as it was done also by nationalists from other oppressed countries to utilise the contradictions among the imperialist powers. The struggle between Germany and Great Britain was looked upon, therefore, from the nationalist point of view; the enemy of our enemy is our friend.

German imperialism which had come too late in order to be able to participate in the distribution of the world among the more advanced imperialist powers was looking with jealousy and admiration at British colonialism. English colonial administration in India became the model for German colonial policy. Typical of this rather anglophile attitude during world war I was the battle-cry of the German colonialists: "Central Africa must become Germany's India!"[4]

[2] A. C. Bhattacharya, *On Pursuit of Indian Revolution in Europe* (Calcutta, 1968), p. 146 (Bengali).

[3] NAI (microfilm collection): AA WK 11f. Vol. 42, letter from Vienna of 18-3-1918.

[4] L. Haase 'Economic Dominions' in: *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung*, Vol. 34 (Berlin 1917) p. 183 (German language).

"Imperial Germany was interested in India as a supplier of raw materials and as a market for industrial products, but was hindered in her endeavours of penertation by the superior British power. Before 1914 official Germany had no sympathies for the national freedom movement. But there were certain conceptions lingering about among leading circles in Germany how to oust the British from India at least partially."[5]

But when the war started the German Government tried to utilize national liberation movement of the people of Asia and Africa living under British, French and Russian domination to put pressure on the Entente. The Indian freedom movement began to interest the Germans. It became possible for Indian revolutionaries, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Abinash Bhattacharya to get an agreement with the German Foreign Office which assured the Indian nationalists of material and financial support by the German Government. On this basis the Indian Independence Committee framed various plans to assist a national revolution in India. Without going into details here, we may state that in spite of all heroic efforts these plans failed. But apart from these operations the propaganda carried out by the Indians all over the world became of great political importance. Chattopadhyaya says: "In the course of co-operation with German imperialism, some Indian revolutionaries developed a critical attitude and increasing disillusionment regarding the approach to the Indian question by the German side. Not only that, Indian revolutionaries felt offended by the arrogant behaviour of Prussian officials, but at the bottom of all this were the basic principles of German oriental policy.

"At the same time it became evident that the Indian propaganda which was carried out from Berlin, suffered more and more and became less effective, because it was burdened with the fact of close co-operation with German imperialism. The Berlin Committee established therefore with German financial assistance, a branch office in Stockholm in neutral Sweden."

Many years later Chattopadhyaya said in a speech in 1914: "When I arrived at Stockholm in the beginning of May (i.e. 17th of May, 1917 — H. Kruger) I found there a strong international emigration and I asked whether Lenin was still in Stockholm. I

[5] H. Kruger, 'On the policy of German imperialism towards India during World War I' in *Wiss, Zschr*, Humboldt University Berlin, Ges.— Sprachw. R. XIII, Berlin, 1964, p. 866 (German language).

was deeply disappointed that I could not meet him." (Unpublished speech by Chattopadhyaya).

We should like to mention here that Lenin had passed Stockholm some time before, but he had stopped there only for one day and continued his journey.

Also the British Minister in Sweden reported to his Government in U.K. about the arrival of Chattopadhyaya and Acharya saying "that probably intention was to get Lenin or other anti-English Russian extremists to work for the Indian independence movement in Russia."[6]

Champakraman Pillay was trusted so much that even the Berlin office code of the German Army was revealed to him. He confided the script to his agent in Amsterdam, who was going to Bangkok via America. He was to start a press in Bangkok to print war news to be secretly passed on to Siam and Burma. Heramblal Gupta worked with the Germans in America for some time. In collaboration with Herr Boehm he was to go to Siam and train men for the attack on Burma.

After Heramblal Gupta, Chandra K. Chakravarty began to collaborate with the Germans inside America. He was given the following letter from the Foreign Department at the time of his appointment:

Berlin, February 4, 1916

The German Embassy
Washington

In future all Indian affairs are to be exclusively handled by the committee to be formed by Dr. Chakravarti. Birendra Sircar and Heramblal Gupta, who have been in the meantime expelled from Japan thus cease to be representatives of the Indian Independence Committee.

(Sd.) Zimmerman

The German General Staff had definite plans regarding the independence of India. One plan had for its object the stirring up of the Muslims and was confined to the Frontier Province. Other plans sought the co-operation of the powerful Ghadr Party in San Francisco and the revolutionaries of Bengal. Both the plans were being supervised by the German Consulate-General

[6] NAI: Home Dept. Pol. July 1917, No. 41 (dep.).

in Shanghai. But the German Consulate-General in Washington was the highest authority in this matter. The French police reported in August 1915 that there seemed to be a general belief in India that there would be a revolution in India in a few days' time and Germany would support it with all her might.

The report goes on to state that in November 1914 Pingle and Satyendra Sen came to Calcutta from America. Towards the end of 1914 the police got the information that the partners of a Swadeshi cloth shop called Shramajivi Samavay, Ram Chandra Mazumdar, Amarendra Chatterjee, Jatindra Mukherjee, Atul Ghosh and Naren Bhattacharya (M. N. Roy) were preparing to collect arms on a large scale. These revolutionaries in Bengal decided that a countrywide revolution should be organised with the help of Indian revolutionaries in Germany, Siam and other places. It was planned to resort to forced contributions for collecting funds. The revolutionaries could collect about Rs. 40,000 from two hold-ups at Garden Reach and Belia Ghat. Bholanath Chatterjee went to Bangkok to establish relations with the revolutionaries there. Jitendra Nath Lahiri returned to Bombay from Europe. They suggested to the revolutionaries in India that they should send an agent to Batavia in order to contact the Germans there. An urgent meeting was called and M. N. Roy was sent to Batavia. He changed his name to Martin. In the course of the same month Abani Mukherjee was sent to Japan.

When M. N. Roy or Martin reached Batavia, he was introduced by the German Consul to Theodore Helferich. He was told that a ship containing arms had already left for Karachi to help the Indians in their revolution. Martin suggested that the ship should be diverted to Bengal. The suggestion was accepted after referring the matter to the Shanghai Consul General. Martin returned to Bengal after this, for the ship had to be brought in a place called Rai Mangal in the Sunderbans. It is said that the ship S.S. Maverick contained 30,000 rifles with 400 cartridges for each rifle, and Rs. 2 lakhs in cash. In the meantime Martin sent a wire to a bogus company in Calcutta called the Harry & Sons that business was hopeful. In June, Harry and Sons wired Martin to send the money. Actually there were some transactions between Helferich and Harry and Sons. The sum of approximately Rs. 33,000 had already come into the hands of the revolutionaries.

Martin returned to India by mid-June and along with Jatin

Mukherjee, Jadu Gopal Mukherjee, Bholanath Chatterjee and Atul Ghosh made arrangements to take down the arms from "S.S. Maverick". They also started drawing up plans whereby those arms could be put to the maximum use.

THE "MAVERICK"

In the meantime Jadu Gopal Mukherjee was arranging for the unloading of the "S.S. Maverick". He had arranged with a Zamindar at Rai Mangal that he would provide men and boats to take delivery of the arms. The "S.S. Maverick" was to reach the appointed spot at night. It had to be recognised by a particular manner of hanging lanterns. The arms were to be distributed by July 1. There is no doubt that following Atul Ghosh's instructions the men and the boats had reached Rai Mangal. But the ship did not arrive till the end of June. Nor was there any message from Batavia explaining the delay. While people were waiting at Rai Mangal, a Bengali coming from Bangkok brought the information that the German Consul in Siam was sending by sea 5,000 rifles and a suitable number of cartridges and Rs. 1 lakh in cash to reach Rai Mangal. The revolutionaries thought that this would make up for the gap created by the failure from Batavia. They persuaded the messenger to go to Bangkok with a message to the German Consul General that the original plans should not be abandoned, but other boats should be sent to Sandeep, Balasore and Gokarni.

But by July the British Government got the information about the plan of unloading the arms at Rai Mangal. On August 7, the police raided the premises of the Harry and sons and arrested some people. An August 13, the revolutionaries alerted the German Consul at Bangkok. On August 15, Martin and another colleague left for Bangkok to acquaint the Consul General with the situation. On September 4, the Universal Emporium, a branch of the Harry and Sons and the headquarters of the revolutionaries, was raided. A map of Sunderbans and a cutting from a Penang newspaper containing some information about the cruise of the "S.S. Maverick" were discovered. This resulted in the historical gun battle in which the leader Jatin Mukherjee and Chitta Priya were killed.

There was no news from Martin till the end of the year. At last,

two revolutionaries went to Goa to send him a wire. It was then known that two Bengalis were arrested. One of them was Bholanath Chatterjee who committed suicide in Poona jail on January 27, 1916.

The "S.S. Maverick" and the "S.S. Henry S." had left America for Eastern countries. The former ship was used for carrying the oil of the Standard Oil Company at one time. She had been bought over by a German company and left San Francisco on April 22, 1915, without any cargo carrying a crew of 15 men. Five persons aboard were supposed to be Persian nationals, but were actually Indians. One of them, Hari Singh Punjabi, was carrying with him the "Ghadr" publications in trunks. The ship first went to Lower California from where she was granted permission to go to Java. The ship continued the journey via Sacorro Island, 600 miles west of Mexico, where she was to be joined by a schooner called "Annie Larsen". One Tauscher, a German was on board the schooner carrying the stock of arms. The captain of the "S.S. Maverick" had been ordered to keep the rifles in an empty oil tank and cover them with oil on the top, keep the bullets and other things in another tank, and sink the ship if the situation so demanded. By an accident, the two ships could not contact and after a few days the "S.S. Maverick" left for Java via Honolulu. The Dutch Government in Java found the ship empty. The "S.S. Annie Larsen", after a long journey up and down reached Hoquian in Washington where the entire cargo was confiscated by the American Government. The German Ambassador in Washington said that the cargo belonged to the German Government; but the American Government disallowed the claim.

Helferich warned the crew of the "S.S. Maverick" and sent them back to America so that they should be safe. Then they were sent back to America by the same ship. This time instead of Hari Singh Punjabi, Martin went by that ship. When the ship reached America Martin was arrested.

The "Henry S." was another ship employed in the conspiracy to free India. She was to go to Shanghai; but customs authorities discovered the cargo and they had the ship unloaded before her departure. But now, the ship left for Pontianek instead of Shanghai. By some accident her motor went out of order on the way and she had to wait in a port off the Celebes islands. There were two German-Americans on board the ship. One of them Wehde

and the other was Boehm. They had planned to direct the ship to Bangkok, where some arms were to be unloaded and were to be hidden underground. And Boehm was to give military training to the Indians on the frontier, so that they should be ready to invade Burma. Boehm was arrested at Singapore while coming from Batavia. Following the instructions of Heramblal Gupta, who was in Chicago, he boarded the "S.S. Henry S." at Manila. Apart form this he had been instructed by the German Consul in Manila that our of 5,000 revolvers he should take down 500 at Bangkok and the remaining should be sent on to Chittagong.

The Rowlatt Committee came to the conclusion that when the Maverick plan failed the German Consul General at Shanghai arranged for two other ships to be sent to Rai Mangal and Balasore respectively. One ship was to carry 20,000 rifles, 80 lakh cartridges, 2,000 pistols, hand grenades, and Rs. 2 lakhs and the other one was to carry 10,000 rifles, 10 lakhs cartridges, hand grenades, etc. Martin suggested to the German Consul in Batavia that it would be safer to anchor the ship at Hatia instead of Rai Mangal, for obvious reasons.

It was decided that the ship should come to Hatia straight from Shanghai about the end of December. The ship for Balasore was a German steamer lying in a Dutch port, and was to pick up the cargo of arms on the high seas. Another ship was to go to the Andamans, all loaded with arms to attack Port Blair, free all the revolutionaries and Singapore mutineers confined in its notorious jail, and carry them all to Rangoon and attack the city. To assist the conspirator in Bengal, says the report, a Chinaman was sent to Helferich with 66,000 guilders, but this man was arrested at Singapore along with the money. About the same time, the Bengali youth who had gone to Batavia with Martin had been sent to Shanghai for some negotiations with the German Consul after which he was to come to India by the ship coming to Hatia. With great difficulty he reached Shanghai, where he was arrested. After this the Germans abandoned their plan to send arms to Bengal.

Wehde, Boehm and Heramblal Gupta were tried and sentenced in Chicago and some others were tried and sentenced in San Francisco.

In October 1915, the Shanghai Municipal police arrested two Chinese in the possession of 129 automatic pistols and 20,830

rounds of ammunition. They had obtained these arms from a German named Nielsen and they were to be delivered to one Amarendra Chatterjee in Calcutta.

On his return from Japan, Abani, one of the chief conspirators, was arrested at Singapore. The Rowlatt Committee believed that this or some other similar plan had been hatched under the advice of Rash Bihari Bose who had been then putting up in the house of Nielsen. The pistols which Rash Bihari had wanted to send to India were obtained by a Chinese in the Mai-tah dispensary on Chao-Tung road. This was one of the addresses of Nielsen.

Another revolutionary staying there was Abinash Ray. He was engaged in the Indo-German conspiracy in Shanghai. His object was to send arms to India by secret means. A message was sent to Moti Lal Roy in Chandranagore that all was set for the plan to be executed and arrangements should be made for Abani Mukherjee's safe arrival in India. Apart from Moti Lal Roy's address many other addresses were found in Abani Mukherjee's omnibus notebook. One of these was the address of Amar Singh Engineer, Pakoh, Siam, who was to take charge of the arms carried in the "Henry S." Amar Singh Engineer was subsequently sentenced to death at Mandalay. The Rowlatt Committee after reporting all this concluded that the Indian revolutionaries appeared to have high hopes in the Germans.

Dr. Pandurang Khankhoje, a well-known revolutionary, sent an account of the revolutionary activities in America to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt[7] according to which it seems that in 1907, Khagendra Chandra Das, Taraknath Das, Dr. Pandurang Khankhoje, Adhar Chandra Laskar and other Indian students studying in California formed the Indian Independence Association, to propagate revolutionary ideas among the Sikhs living in California. Dr. Khankhoje and Adhar Chandra had joined the Military Academy at Kamal Pairu as waiters. With the combined efforts of the Indian Independence Association and the Sikh residents a bundle of the copies of the Revolutionary Declaration was sent to Lala Pindi Das. This resulted in his being sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. By 1908, centres of the Indian Independence Association were set up in Salramento and Portland in Oregon. This was followed by propaganda in Canada. The "Koma gata maru" reached British Columbia round about 1912

[7] *Aprakashito Rajnitik Itihas* (Bengali) by Dr. B. N. Dutt, p. 135-178.

to test her entry into Canada. But they were refused permission to land and the ship had to leave and after a lot of adventures the ship reached Budge Budge near Calcutta.

According to Dr. Khankhoje Portland was the headquarters of the Ghadr Party in 1910 and cyclostyled copies of revolutionary pamphlets were sent to all centres. The real leader there was Kashi Ram. This was the time when Sohan Singh Granthi joined the Indian Independence Association. Lala Har Dayal and Bhai Paramanand came to California in 1913. Bhai Paramanand did not join the Association, but Lala Har Dayal did, and he suggested that the name of the Association should be changed to Ghadr Party to give it a greater striking power. This Party had two divisions: Propaganda Division, called Prachar Vibhag and the Aggression Division, called the Prahar Vibhag. Lala Har Dayal was made the secretary of the Aggression Division and Dr. Khankhoje was made the secretary of the Propaganda Division. The party very badly needed a Muslim worker. Hence Professor Barkatulla was requested to come. About the same time Pandit Ramchandra also came to San Francisco and joined the Ghadr Party. Pingle came with a letter of introduction to Dr. Khankhoje. By this time Satyendra Nath Sen also joined the Ghadr Party. Tarak Nath Das was studying in the Barnote Military University and later on he joined a University in West America. But the British Government succeeded in getting him ejected from the University.

While Dr. Khankhoje was preparing for his Doctorate in the Minnesota University, he received an urgent communication from the Ghadr Headquarters to make a dash to California. He was ordered to return to India. Bishan Das Kochha, a Punjabi in engineering accompanied him. The rumour spread then by the British that the German Commander Bernhardi had divulged to Ghadr Party members about the imminent war between Germany and England was altogether unfounded. While in New York, the two met one Agase alias Mohamad Ali, a member of the Maharashtrian Secret Society, who had been sent to Persia for military training.

Dr. Khankhoje and Bishan Das reached the Greek Port of Pireus by a Greek ship and from there Bishan Das was sent to India with a projector and other requisites. But he was arrested and detained as soon as he reached India. Dr. Khankhoje and

Mohammed Ali reached Turkey, where they met Syed (who, according to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, was a Punjabi whom Anwar Pasha had brought from Tripoli and put in charge of "Jahan-i-Islam") and Pramath Nath Dutt alias Dawood Ali. They met Anwar Pasha and Talat Pasha. Dr. Khankhoje told these Turkish dignitaries that in his capacity as the leader of the Ghadr Party he proposed to transfer the headquarters of the Party to Mahamara and Besra and from there the Party forces were to invade India when the time came.

The Pashas were agreeable to the plan of the revolutionaries. The Ghadr Party was informed by a message that everything was all right. This message was sent to California through the Government sources of Turkey and Germany. Then Pramath Nath Dutt and Agase went to Alexandria from Constantinople. By that time Turkey, had joined the fray and declared war. Following this declaration the British forces had shelled the city. The Indian revolutionaries went to Aleppo and then to Baghdad. By this time the Germans had formed an expeditionary force which aimed at doing revolutionary propaganda and assisting the revolutionaries in their work. Dr. Khankhoje and his colleagues formed a group to go towards Persia with a lot of revolutionary literature, but the all-powerful British intelligence was on their heels. They fled to Shiraz. There they met Sufi Amba Prasad. They went to Hareez and Kirman and formed the final groups, consisting both of Indian and Persian fighters. According to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, Kersasp went to Germany to study engineering and there he had become a member of the Indian Independence Committee. He had been sent to Persia by the Berlin Committee for carrying on revolutionary activities. He had helped the Germans in attacking the residence of the British Consul in Shiraz. Later on Kersasp and Basant Singh reached Kabul in search of Raja Mahendra Pratap. Basant Singh was also a member of the Ghadr Party and had been sent to Persia by the Indian Independence Committee of Berlin. As soon as they crossed the Afghan border and stepped on the Persian soil, they were arrested by the British and were shot along with other Indians.

Dr. Khankhoje sent Pramath to find out how things were on Baluchistan borders. Pramath did not find it safe. He escaped with a bullet. Dr. Khankhoje went to Bam to organise the Baluchis, befriended a Baluchi chief, Sardar Jiham Khan, and

with the help of his men, attacked the border area. A provisional Government was set up there and Sardar Jihan Khan was appointed the revolutionary representative.

Dr. Khankhoje returned to Bam where he got the news that Pramath Nath, Agase and some Germans after being defeated in a skirmish had gone to Bast. Khankhoje went with his men to that place. But they were all surrounded by the British soldiers. Khankhoje was arrested in a wounded condition. He learnt later that, Pramath Nath and Agase had gone to Shiraz. Khankhoje escaped to Nepariz disguised as fakir. Sufi Ambadas was killed in a clash with the British. Dr. Khankhoje joined the Persian army and fought against the British till 1919 when the Persian army surrendered. Khankhoje again escaped and came to Bombay in disguise and contacted Tilak, but since none of them was in a position to give him shelter, he had no alternative but to return to Europe. He went to Germany via France; where he met Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt again. He went to Moscow with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt and others and stayed there for three months. An attempt was made by these revolutionaries to rescue Pramath Nath from Persia through the Russian Foreign Department. But Pramath Nath reached Moscow on the day when Dr. Khankhoje and his companions were due to leave the city. Pramath settled down in Moscow, became a professor in the Archaeological Department of the Leningrad University. Dr. Khankhoje, Chattopadhyaya and Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt came back to Berlin and started the Indian News and Information Bureau to help Indian students abroad. In 1924, Dr. Khankhoje went to Mexico and was appointed professor in an Agricultural College there. On hearing about his father's illness Dr. Khankhoje wrote a letter to the British Government to be allowed to proceed to India. But the request was turned down. It was only in 1949, after India became independent that the Madhya Pradesh Government arranged for his return.

The slogan "Jai Hind" of the Azad Hind Fauj occurred in a song which the Ghadr Party soldiers in Iran and other places sang before starting on their march.

The above is Dr. Khankhoje's account of the work done by Indian revolutionaries abroad. But this does not shed enough light on the work done in Europe. Some Indian revolutionaries in America met the German Consul there and proposed that an

Indian volunteer army should be organised and it should be sent to Germany. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt and Dr. Khan Chand Verma sponsored this proposal before the German Government. Ramchandra, the Ghadr Party leader at California, was instructed to enrol the Sikhs. Doctors and ambulance men had to be enrolled from among the students. But Ramchandra thought that no useful purpose would be served by sending volunteers to Europe, for there the Whites would fight the Whites and Indian volunteers would only be used as non-combatants. He was in favour of sending the Indians to India to organise the revolution there. A few days later Virendranath Chattopadhyaya published a small book called "Japan, the Enemy of Asia" which attracted the attention of the German Government. Bhupendra Nath Dutt says that the report of the Rowlatt Commission imagines German responsibility in the "Koma gata Maru" episode. But this is not true. The German Government had nothing to do with the Indian revolutionaries before the formation of the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin. The "Koma gata Maru" had been taken to Canada with the sole purpose of testing the Immigration Act of Canada.

When the revolutionaries got help from the Germans they thought that they were taking a loan repayable by the Government of an independent India. The Germans agreed to give arms and their ambassadors were to help Indian revolutionaries. The Turkish Government was expected to declare a Holy War on the British to stir up Indian Muslims.

This was the atmosphere in which the Indian Independence Committee was set up in Berlin in 1914 and the flag of the Indian Revolution unfurled.

Dr. Abinash Bhattacharya, an important member of the Committee, described the conditions of those days in the Bengali paper *Jugantar* of March 30, 1952:

"No sooner was the War declared, following the example of the emigré Japanese, we published a statement speaking ill of Japan and sympathising with Germany. The German Press noticed it favourably, nevertheless the German Government was not impressed. So I took the initiative and wired to my friend, Ernest Delbroke, that he should arrange our meeting with his uncle Clemence Farnbrook, the Minister for Self-Government in Prussia. In reply we were asked to contact Baron von Baeratheim

in the office. He talked for a while with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya after which he sent him on to Baron Oppenheim. He gave Chatto 500 Marks saying that he should be back to Berlin along with me. After this we were taken to Frau Wesler by one Hernsman, a German who had returned from India and was sent on to us by that Baron. We presented to her a typed copy of our entire plan, which she accepted with a few reservations. And then we plunged into action. Along with Kersasp (who became a martyr in Afghanistan later on), Dhirendra Sarkar, Gopal Paranjpe (later on a professor in the Fergusson College), Marathe, Dr. Sukhtankar, Dr. Joshi, Prof. Shirish Chandra Sen, Sadashiv Rao, Satish Chandra Roy, Siddiki (later on Principal of the Osmania College), Karandikar, Mansoor Ahmed, Dr. Gyanendra Chandra Das Gupta (who later on joined the I.N.A.), Rehman, Subhan and C. Padmanabhan Pillay joined the party. Dr. Das Gupta and Dr. Champakaraman Pillay had independently written letters to the Foreign Office of Germany. Das Gupta was in Basle and Pillay was in Zurich, where he was the leader of the Pro-Indian Society which he had himself founded and he edited a bulletin with the same name. On hearing of the formation of the Committee, he contacted us. The German Committee of Indian Friends or Deutscher Verein der Freunde Indien was the name we chose for the Committee on the advice of Baron Oppenheim, and Albert Bala by Chief Executive of the Hamburg America Company was made its President. He was a personal friend of the Kaiser. Baron Oppenheim and Dr. Sukhtankar were co-Presidents and Dhirendra Sarkar was the first Secretary of the Committee. When Dr. Sukhtankar returned to India, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was made one of the co-Presidents, and when Dhirendra Sarkar was sent to America with Marathe, Dr. Muller who was the Liaison Officer between us and the German Government, was made the Secretary.

"Within two days of our launching our activities we taxied to a bomb factory near Berlin and in no time we ourselves started making grenades, time bombs, landmines and other things. We were taken to the Berlin armoury and there we became acquainted with the latest types of arms. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Kersasp who were familiar with the languages of the East worked among those Muslim soldiers who had been captured by the Germans.

"The revolutionaries worked day and night. Dhirendra Sarkar and Marathe reached America secretly. They sent Jitendra Nath Lahiri, Lala Har Dayal, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt and Tarak Nath Das to Berlin and Kedarashwar Guha (who later on became professor in the Agricultural Department of the Santiniketan) and Birendranath Mukherjee (probably Bhupendra Mukherjee) to India. That was how the Ghadr Party established contact with Berlin.

"Mansoor was probably the first President of the Indian Independence Committee at Berlin. In the initial stages the President used to wield most of the executive authority, but later on the committee began to function on democratic lines. The committee entrusted Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta and Mansoor with the responsibility of framing a constitution for the party. But they could not come to an agreement. The question was whether all those who called themselves Indians should be made members of the Committee. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt was in favour of it, but not Mansoor. According to Mansoor only the Hindu and the Muslims could be regarded as Indians. The Committee accepted Mansoor's point of view and it was decided not to accept Christians as members when the election was held on the basis of the new constitution. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya became the Secretary, and remained in that post for the period 1915-16. He was succeeded by Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt who goes to the extent of saying that without the Indian Independence Committee at Berlin, no serious attempt to have a revolution in 1915-16 would have been made."

In May 1915, the Berlin Committee sent a German, Vincent Kraft, to Batavia for planning an invasion of the Andamans with a view to freeing the political prisoners and bringing them to a neutral country. But before he could actually do anything, he was arrested at Singapore. The Rowlatt Committee does not mention this, and one wonders if the British were aware of the plan at all. Upendra Nath Banerjee, one of the Alipur conspirators wrote in his autobiography that while he was a prisoner in the Andamans, he once came to know that the Government officials were afraid of a possible invasion of the islands. An American correspondent also wrote: "Somebody in America gave the information that when it was learnt that the German Government had promised to help the Indian revolutionaries, the captain of

the "Emden" was instructed by a wireless message to invade the Andamans. But no confirmation of this news was forthcoming. Later on a lieutenant of the "Emden" told a revolutionary in Sumatra that he received no such instruction. The main function of the Berlin Committee was to supply arms to Indian revolutionaries. In order to clear the way for the transit of arms from America, some young men were sent to places like China and Siam."

Meanwhile revolutionary pockets had sprung up all over East Asian countries. The revolutionaries in Japan were able to secure aid from persons like Count Okuma, who had given the assurance that if a revolution started in India, Japan would do nothing to crush it. Indian revolutionaries also were in constant touch with the Chinese leader, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. All these events had led to the formation of an international volunteer corps which included many young men from respectable Japanese families. It was then that Bhagwan Singh was sent to the Philippines to carry on revolutionary activities. But he was exiled and the burden of future work fell on Dost Mohamad. Bhagwan Singh went to China and worked with Rash Bihari and then he went to Bangkok with Atma Ram Kapoor.

According to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, it was planned that the Germans residing in Java should, in collaboration with the Indians, attack Burma and the Germans residing in China would split themselves in two groups one of which would join the group from Siam and the other would attack North Burma.

Apart from the Kraft plan it was also planned that one ship carrying 500 German officers and 1,000 soldiers would free the political prisoners in the Andamans and bring them all to Calcutta. It was also proposed that along with the invasion of Burma a call for revolution would be given in Bengal and the Punjab, and there would also be an invasion of India from the side of Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Unfortunately these plans did not materialise.

In the meantime, Jodha Singh, Chinchaiya, and Sukumar Chatterjee had gone to Bangkok from America and established contact with the German Consul there. The German Consul sent a report to Berlin saying that a Sikh labourer residing in Bangkok had been sent to India to bring the necessary information. This man had returned after seeing some revolutionaries at Chittagong.

The German Consul further reported that he was not happy at the arrival of those three men from America. The British soon got some information about these men and the Siamese police arrested them and handed them over to the British. The report also said that those three revolutionaries blurted out all the secrets after arrest. This was true of Jodha Singh and Sukumar Chatterjee; but Chinchaiya did not speak.

When the South Asian conspiracy collapsed some revolutionaries managed to escape to China. One of them, Phani Chakravarty alias Pine, was arrested in Shanghai and mercilessly tortured for many days. He blurted out everything. And the other revolutionaries fled to Japan. Rash Bihari and Heramblal Gupta were already there.

Under British pressure the Japanese were inclined to hand them over. But some of their Japanese friends came to their rescue, and hid them for many days in a small room outside Tokyo. Heramblal got fed up with all this, came out, donned Japanese dress, and escaped to America.

Dr. Dawood Dekar, leader of the Nationalist Party of Java, who was exiled by the Dutch, was sent by the Berlin Committee to help the Indian revolutionaries in Java. He had met many leaders of the Ghadr Party on his way to India and when he reached China, was arrested. He wrote to his sister in Holland saying that the British were giving him fair treatment and nothing should be done to incur their displeasure. Despite this the Berlin Committee continued to send a monthly allowance to her till the end of 1918. At the San Francisco trial Dawood Dekar appeared as a prosecution witness, revealed all the plans of the revolutionaries, and said on top of this that the Indian revolutionaries were very stupid and gullible.

There was also a Persian Independence Committee at Berlin, which worked under the leadership of Syed Takhjad, and in close collaboration with the Indian Independence Committee. Some revolutionaries reached Turkey in February or March 1915, another group reached Baghdad via Persia and a third group reached Damascus via Suez. Those who went to Siam left for Suez with an Indian. Abdul Rehman; but they could not proceed further.

Nineteen Muslim soldiers of the British Army, who managed to reach the Turkish camp, were given a warm reception and

were absorbed in the Sultan's bodyguards.

Early in 1915, Barkatulla, Kersasp and other revolutionaries met Anwar Pasha in Istambul. When the Pasha was told that in spite of their Muslim names, all of them except one were Hindus, he was very pleased and said: "I keep religion and politics in two separate pockets." He appointed Ali Bay of the Eastern Countries Office, a branch of the Military Office of the Turkish Government, to take charge of these revolutionaries. Propaganda work among the Indian soldiers on the Turkish front was entrusted to Indians and Chait Singh, Basant Singh and others used to meet the soldiers and distribute revolutionary literature. As a result many soldiers deserted their posts, but in the no man's land they often ran into bandits, who mistook them for infidels and killed them.

Kutel Amara fell to Turkish hands in 1916, and propaganda work was started immediately among Indian prisoners. But somehow the Turkish Government did not take much interest. There were many Indian Muslims in Istambul, a few Hajis, Turkish spies, even British spies, and a few Islamic stooges. There were some educated Muslims who were so communal that they resented the coming of Hindus to Istambul. One such person was Abdul Jabbar of Delhi. He denounced the Hindi revolutionaries to Dr. Wese Denk of the German Foreign Office and said that Muslims would rule over India once again.

Abdul Jabbar joined the Berlin Committee but in private he used to say that he would work with the Hindus in order to destroy the power of the British, and once this task was accomplished, he would exterminate the Hindus. He was dismissed from the Berlin Committee and met Anwar Pasha and started abusing the Hindus, but he did not get much response from any quarters.

Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt and Birendranath Das Gupta went to Istambul to look into the charges of discrimination among Hindu and Muslim prisoners. They met 80 Muslim prisoners in Esky who complained that despite their being Muslims they were not being given good treatment. They clamoured for an audience with the Caliph.

At Koniya they met Sikh and Hindu officers and learnt that the leader of the Muslim soldiers who had mutinied when Kutel Amara was besieged, was sentenced to death. Others were sent away to Basra. During that siege racial discrimination was prac-

tised even in the matter of distribution of foodstuffs. The three revolutionaries returned with the conviction that although some Indian Muslims had funny ideas, the Turkish authorities did not interfere in the matter of religion.

Before the fall of Kutel Amara, Major Diaz in South America was happy to know that 11,000 British soldiers had been besieged. He had read Indian history and it was his view that the War of 1857 was unsuccessful for want of proper leadership. He had come to Berlin to give the lead. But when the Turkish Government started using the Indian soldiers merely to win their war, his hopes were shattered. He came to know of the plight of the Indian soldiers who were made to toil in the desert. The Berlin Committee impressed upon the German Government to put pressure on the Turkish Government but without success. The German Committee withdrew itself from Turkey by the end of 1917.

STOCKHOLM COMMITTEE

The Socialist Parties of Holland and Sweden held an International Socialist Convention in 1917. Two representatives of the Berlin Committee who attended the Convention were astounded to find that the allied powers were having the upper hand in it. They published a pamphlet and formed a Committee in Stockholm.

H. Kruger confirms this: "In Stockholm Chattopadhyaya and Acharya had numerous discussions on the Indian question with the leaders belonging to the right-wing of the Second Socialist International. But very soon the Indian revolutionaries became convinced that there was no effective assistance to be expected from that side." One of the letters written by Chattopadhyaya from Stockholm to the Berlin Committee says: "We all have the feeling that the question of subject nationalities is being deliberately ignored or put off by the socialists."[8]

In October 1917 a Russian, Troi Conaski, came there and established contacts with the Indian revolutionaries and on his return, formed an Indo-Russian Committee and also published a booklet. Later, he worked in collaboration with Leon Trotsky. When Trotsky was busy with the talks at Brest-Litovsk, the Indian Revolutionary Committee at Stockholm cabled him saying that he should put up a proposal for India's right to self-

[8] NAI: AA WK IIf, Vol. 38, letter from Stockholm of 30-5-17.

determination. And Trotsky did put up proposals for the right of self-determination to be given to India, Ireland and Egypt.

H. Kruger throws more light on the subject: "Already in September 1917, the Indian branch office had contact with members of the Russian Bolshevik Party. (Unpublished speech by V. Chattopadhyaya). From this time onward the increasing political-ideological influence of the Bolshevists can be traced in the declarations and reports issued by the Stockholm office."

"The reason why the Indian revolutionaries became more and more oriented towards the Russian socialists and after the socialist October Revolution towards Soviet Russia lies in the fact that contrary to the imperialist policies and also contrary to the attitude of the right wing of the Second International, the Bolshevik Party under the guidance of Lenin consistently stood for the right of self-determination of all nations. This principle was firmly resting on the idea of proletarian internationalism and became a stable basis for the alliance between the national liberation movement, the Marxist working class movement and the socialist Soviet Union.

"During the peace negotiations between Germany and Soviet Russia in Brest-Litovsk the Stockholm office sent a telegram to the Soviet delegation with the request to take up the Indian question. This was done by the Soviet delegation which demanded that the allied powers should apply the right of self-determination as Russia had done and that India, Egypt and Ireland should be given freedom."[9]

The German attitude towards the Indians changed with the realisation that quite a few of them had begun to look to the Soviet Union as a possible alternative to German imperialism.

In the beginning of 1918 Chattopadhyaya received an invitation by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to visit Petrograd. At first the German Foreign Office was in favour of his going, but in February 1918 it decided against this proposal. The sudden change in the attitude of the German Government made Chattopadhyaya write to his comrades in Berlin.... "We are constrained to say that this is one of those cases in which we are regarded as pawns in the German game to be used only in the moment of need. It is true that Troi Anowski (i.e. a Russian

[9] B. N. Datta, *All India Old Revolutionaries Conference*, New Delhi, 1958, p. 7.

Bolshevist with whom Chattopadhyaya had close contact — Kruger) is an opponent of German imperialism as well as of every other imperialism. But that is really no reason why he cannot work for the Indian cause and in this way against England. Are we ourselves not against every form of imperialism? .... As it is, the German Government is fighting shy of the question of nationalities in general, as well as of India, in spite of the African Colonies being flung in their face ... it is really a question whether the German Government looks upon us as sincere patriots or merely as tools, and pawns and temporary paid agents. ...[10]

"The German Government took notice of the new orientation of the Indian revolutionaries. In a secret document of the Foreign Office of 19th February, 1918, it said: 'According to his general conviction Chattopadhyaya stands near the maximalists. He will co-operate with Germany only as long as he considers this favourable for India."[11]

"There is another interesting line running from Kabul to Soviet Russia. In this connection the name of Obeidullah Sindhi, Professor Barkatullah and Mahendra Pratap are to be mentioned. Pratap was convinced that the October Revolution would help to awaken India. But when in the spring of 1919 the German Indologist H. V. Glasenapp who worked as an agent for the German Foreign Office reported that Pratap was going to publish a booklet where he exhorted the Germans to join the Spartacists and to co-operate with the Russian Bolshevists the then social democratic German Government called Pratap's opinion an interference in the 'internal affairs of Germany' denounced Pratap as an 'eulogist of Trotsky' and stopped the publication.[12]

"The German officials were greatly disturbed by the new ideological outlook of the Indian revolutionaries. Already in the spring of 1918 the Indian nationalists were called 'anarchistic or very radical socialist' in a confidential document[13] and that Indian patriots might arrive at the conclusion 'that India could expect more by the realisation of the Bolshevist revolutionary ideals in

[10] NAI: AA WK IIf, Vol. 41, Letter of 12-2-18.

[11] NIA: AA WK IIf.

[12] Loc. cit. Vol 47. Glasenapp's report of 15-4-19 and the letter of German envoy in Switzerland, Adolf Mueller of 6-5-19.

[13] Loc. cit., Vol. 42, report of 19-3-18.

the whole world including England than from Germany'."[14]

After the war a telegram was sent from Stockholm to Philip Snowden, the British Socialist, to champion India's demand for freedom. Similar telegrams were sent to many other persons including the American President, Mr. Woodrow Wilson. Surendra Nath Kar also sent such a cable to Mr. Wilson with the result he was always shadowed by the secret police.

Trotsky wanted to invite the Indian revolutionaries to Petrograd after 1917 but none could respond. In 1918 Troi Anowski required some men for the Oriental Department of the Russian Government, but again no Indian could reach for no passports were issued by the German authorities. The same situation prevailed in Sweden. Britain sent one Yusuf Ali to Stockholm to run down the Indian revolutionaries but Yusuf Ali was forced to flee Sweden. Nevertheless the revolutionaries were disillusioned and Lala Har Dayal went to the extent of airing his anti-German views in American papers. According to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt what Har Dayal wrote in his book, "Four Years in Germany", is not correct and the German Government continued to respect him till the very end. This is confirmed by Kruger.

Though familiar with Marxism Har Dayal did not understand the principles of proletarian internationalism but had remained a petti-bourgeois nationalist who worked to utilise the socialist movement. This is obvious from his proposal to publish a socialist journal and "thus join the rearguard of the Socialist parties... Give me one other friend and two socialists from India. This is quite sufficient to get a hearing as 'comrades'. Besides I can write in the regular socialistic style with quotations from Marx, etc. etc."[15]

Meanwhile, Raja Mahendra Pratap had been at the helm of the revolutionary work in Afghanistan. When he went to Berlin, he was warmly received even by high officials and was even introduced to the Kaiser. An Indo-German mission was established consisting of Raja Mahendra Pratap, Barkatulla, some Pathan soldiers of the British army and a German doctor, Herr Hetting.

Some Indian rulers had also indicated to Raja Mahendra Pratap that should there be an invasion on India from the side of Afghanistan they would be all willing to co-operate with him.

[14] Loc. cit., Vol. 42.

[15] NAI: AA WK 11f, Vol. 42. Letter of 18-3-18.

The Kaiser handed over a letter for Amir Habibulla Khan of Afghanistan to Raja Mahendra Pratap and at the same time he also gave a letter addressed to the ruling princes of India and one to the Maharaja of Nepal to declare his independence from the British.

The Indo-German Mission led by Raja Mahendra Pratap reached Istambul in April 1915. Anwar Pasha handed over to the Raja a personal letter to the Amir.

With great difficulty the Mission proceeded encountering spies and turncoats all along the way. A Persian newspaper even published a news about the Mission and a dacoit gang waylaid them and took away most of the letters and money. But the most important letters were still with the Raja. The Mission ultimately reached Kabul. It came for a lot of discussion in the British Parliament and it was even pointed out that Mahendra Pratap was an ordinary talukdar in Oudh but the Berlin anarchists had passed him off as a ruling prince to the Kaiser.

The British pressurised Kabul but the Amir did not agree to throw it out and it was here that Raja Mahendra Pratap formed his Provisional Government. According to Dr. Hetting, Habibulla Khan did not oppose the British for the simple reason that he had with him only 8,000 soldiers and all of them were in their sixties. Captain Nidar Moyar also says that under no circumstances would Habibulla Khan have entered into war against the British. Raja Mahendra Pratap, however, said he did not receive the arms from the Germans which he had asked for. Habibulla felt that the pan-Islamic cry was in reality a move to carve a world empire for the Turks. His relations with the Germans and the Turks became gradually strained and in the end he took a neutral stand. In 1919 he had to pay the price for this with his life. Raja Mahendra Pratap returned to Berlin via Russia in 1918.

The defeat of Germany found the Indian revolutionaries in Berlin in a precarious position. Even then the Berlin Committee insisted that the point of India's freedom should be stressed in the Treaty. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt states: "Had the War ended in the defeat of the so-called allies the Treaty of Versailles would have been written with a different ink and instead of the Indian yesmen there, supposed to represent India, the members of the Berlin Committee would have been called upon to put up the case of India's independence at the time of the Treaty."

The British Government had to keep a whole department to counteract the activities of the Berlin Committee. The Berlin Committee pamphlets were written by Dr. Dutt etc., but British propaganda always dubbed them as written by Germans. Among the many spies employed by the British was Raja Mahendra Pratap's private secretary, Harish Chandra, who amassed a lot of wealth by betraying the Berlin Committee. According to Dr. Dutt this fellow was closely related to Swami Shraddhananda. Thakore Yashoraj Singh Sisodia was another unscrupulous character and even after his death it could not be decided if he had been a British spy or just a rogue.

Let us end this part of the episode in Kruger's words: "In the twenties we find various groups of Indian revolutionaries abroad who worked on socialist lines. Without going into detail we should like to mention only the following: Together with M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee other Indian revolutionaries were active in Soviet Russia. In close co-operation with the Bolshevik Party and with the Third International they took great care in establishing relations with the national movement in India and tried to strengthen its left wing.

"Also Kabul became a stronghold of Indian revolutionaries for some time, and we remember that from this place Mahendra Pratap, Obeidullah Sindhi and Maulvi Barkatulla went to Soviet Russia where they came in contact with socialist ideas.

"In Great Britain there were active Indians like Shapurji Saklatvala who had worked in the revolutionary movement before the war and who became a leading member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. And when the international working class movement rose to defend the first socialist state against imperialist intervention, the Indian Luhani delivered fiery speeches at meetings in Hyde Park in London where the British workers demonstrated under the slogan 'Hands off Soviet Russia!'

"In America the Ghadr Party became affiliated to the Third International in 1922. Members of this party were active in the following years to bring about a revolution in India. They were working from different places in Asia, for instance, Kabul. But China, where Indians worked in close contact with the Chinese revolutionary movement, became of special importance.

"Last but not the least, Germany also became an important centre of revolutionary activities of political emigrants from many

countries. Jawaharlal Nehru gives a vivid account of the situation in Berlin in 1926-27 when he says:

> 'Berlin was at the time a centre which attracted political exiles and radical elements from abroad; it was gradually catching up Paris in that respect. The Communist elements was also strong there. Ideas of some common action between oppressed nations *inter se* as well as between them and the labour left wing, were very much in the air. It was felt more and more that the struggle for freedom was a common one against the thing that was imperialism, and joint deliberation and where possible, joint action were desirable.' (J. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London 1936, p. 161).

"The increasing importance of Berlin as political centre was facilitated by the fact that Germany was not a colonial power any more. But the imperialist circles were still dreaming of a German colonial empire. At the same time there was a strong working class movement active there.

"Before this background, we have to see the activities of the Indian revolutionaries in Berlin. There were different groups, various organizations, which co-operated with each other or acted independently. The Hindustan Association played a very important role in bringing together most of the growing number of Indian students and the political emigrants. There was an Indian Trade Office and an information Bureau which did useful work in various fields. The towering personality among the Indian revolutionaries was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. But there are many others to be mentioned here: M. N. Roy of course, although he did not stay permanently in Berlin; A. C. N. Nambiar who was active mainly among the students; and Nalini Das Gupta as the proprietor of the "Hindustan Hotel". Others like Barkatulla who published in Berlin his journal *El Islah* stayed there only for some time. In close contact with the Indian movement was Agnes Smedley, the wife of Virendranath. Apart from her work as a journalist — we find articles written by her in the *Modern Review* — she acted as an interpreter when leading socialists gave lectures on problems of Marxism. It was she who read papers at the Anglo-American Institute of the Berlin University on problems of modern India."

MUSLIM ATTITUDE

Soon after 1857 a sort of blood feud existed between the British and Muslims and long after 1857 many persons with beard were hanged from neem trees. The British soon started on a quest for allies. At first the Hindus were their favourites, but gradually, by a long process of trial and error and with a view to dividing the people into two warring communities, they began to favour the Muslim elite.

Sir W. W. Hunter spelt out this trend in British thinking in his book, *Indian Mussalmans* in 1871 where he pleads for reorientation of British policy towards Indian Muslims. He accused the British of "want of sympathy, want of magnanimity and great public wrongs spread over a century."[16] This was followed by other sympathisers such as Beck and Blunt. In *India under Ripon* published in 1909 Blunt says: "I told them, if the Mohammedans only knew their power, they would not be neglected and ill-treated by the Government as they now were. In England we were perpetually scared at the idea of a Mohammedan rising in India and any word uttered by a Mohammedan was paid more attention to than of twenty Hindus. But if they sat still, thanking Providence for all the favours, which were denied them, the English public would be too happy to leave them as they were."[17]

Thus the foundation of Pakistan were laid long ago. This intrigue spearheaded by British civil servants and professors succeeded because of other developments in the political field. Nationalism in India developed with so much Hindu content in it that it was almost impossible for Muslims to stomach it. In spite of this the strange thing is that so many Muslims sincerely joined the Hindu-dominated national movement. Muslim intellectuals, however, were not indifferent onlookers. With the help of British agents like Prof. Beck of Aligarh they started a sort of Muslim nationalism, which saw its salvation in the continuance of British rule. Beginning with Sir Syed Ahmed all these ideologues were against democracy, because it was very successfully dinned into their ears that democracy meant Hindu rule. Many Muslim writers opposed Home Rule and democracy for the same reason.

To quote from the official *History of the Freedom Movement*

[16] *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, 2nd Vol. p. 366.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

in India: "In India some Muslims belonging to the old aristocratic families were not quite reconciled to the idea of living as equals with Hindus in a country over which men of their faith had ruled for over six centuries. Their claim for special treatment by the Govenment was partly based on what they called political importance as inheritors of traditions of dominance." (p. 368)

There were economic reasons too. When middle class Muslims saw the advantage accruing to the Hindus from English education and the acceptance of the establishment they also took to it. Sir Syed Ahmed, a retired Government servant, sponsored this new trend, which ultimately led to the formation of the Aligarh University and organisations like the Muslim League. It also led to a rise of a feeling of loyalty to the Brtish among the Muslims. Gradually the Muslim middle class became the hot favourite of the Government. Thus it is not surprising that the Muslim middle class remained cold towards the Bengal partition agitation. This was even severely criticised at the Muslim League Session of 1906. In March 1912, Nawab Salimullah, who presided over the Muslim League session at Dacca, condemned the annulment of the partition of Bengal. He also condemned the Aga Khan that in spite of Muslim opposition, annulment of the Bengal partition was declared by him to be good for the Muslims.

This, however, does not imply that they were satisfied with the British rule. They approved the Bengal partition, but it happened that most of the international policies of the British were a source of tension to them. The educated Muslims sympathised with their Muslim brethren in other countries and whenever the British did something against Muslim powers outside India, they forgot their pledge of loyalty. Pan-Islamic sentiments were so powerful that Sachindra Nath Sanyal comments that the Indian Muslims were not paying as much attention to India as to countries like Turkey, Arabia, Afghanistan and Persia.

The educated Muslims sided with Turkey from the time of the Crimean war. When Turkey had to bear the brunt of the troubles in the Balkans, the Indian Muslims criticised British indifference, for on earlier occasions, the British had come to the rescue of Turkey. But they did not realise that all that was done not out of a desire to help Turkey, but to maintain the balance of power.

In the North-West Frontier Province a group called Mujahideen

was formed by Syed Ahmed Shah of Rai Bareilly, a staunch Wahabi. Syed Ahmed arrived in Peshawar to set up a colony to start a war to prevent the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab. This attempt, however, failed. But the colony lingered on attracting students and the inmates acquired dubious fame for their fanatic views. The colonists declared India Darul Harab or a country unworthy for the settlement of Muslims. They also proclaimed a holy war in which they were off and on supported by the Muslims. During the rising of 1857 they joined hands with the revolutionaries, and tried to seize the Frontier Provinces, but failed. They clashed with the British army in 1915 and were defeated. Despite all this they were a great source of trouble to the British Government.

In 1916 the Government got the information that a widespread conspiracy was afoot to overthrow the British Government. They wanted that India should be invaded from the North West and in response, the Muslims in the rest of India would also rise in revolt.

Maulvi Obeidullah Sindhi crossed the Frontier in August, 1915, along with Fateh Mohammed and Muhammadali. Obeidullah was a Sikh convert. While he was being trained to become a Maulvi in the Muslim University at Deobund, he placed his views before his co-trainees. He was ardently anti-British and believed in pan-Islamism and his views found a ready acceptance, so much so that the seniormost professor of Deobund, Maulana Mohammad Husain Madni, also came under their influence. Obeidullah wanted that pan-Islamic ideas should be spread in the country with the help of the Maulvis, and anti-British feeling should be aroused among the people. This plan was not approved by the managing committee of the institution and along with some of his colleagues he was rusticated. Obeidullah smuggled himself out of India. As Maulana Mohammad Husain continued to be in the institution, Obeidullah maintained a close touch with him.

Once outside the country, Obeidullah and his colleagues continuously spurred the leaders of independent Muslim countries to invade India. This invasion was to be supplemented by a rising of the Muslims. Obeidullah had already established a school in Delhi to spread his ideas. Obeidullah first met Mujaheeds, then went to Kabul where he met the ambassadors of Turkey and Germany. The first world war was on and the anti-British countries

and their ambassadors encouraged him. Maulavi Muhammed Mian Ansari also met them then. In 1916 Maulana Mohammad Husain had got hold of copies of the proclamation of the Holy War written by Ghalib Pasha. He distributed it all along his way to India and in the Frontier Province.

By this time Obeidullah's pan-Islamism had cooled down and he was ready to make common cause with non-Muslim Indians. Thus Raja Mahendra Pratap was to be the President of Independent India after the revolution. He started touring Italy and other countries toward the end of 1914, in the course of which he met Lala Har Dayal at Geneva. He went to Berlin and joined the revolutionary group.

It would not be out of place to mention the work of Sufi Amba Prasad here. He was born without his right hand, and used to say that in his previous birth while fighting the British he had lost his hand, and even in this birth he was reborn with that hand still missing. He was a fiery writer and was sentenced to a year and six months of imprisonment in 1897. After his release he resumed his anti-British tirade. His property was confiscated and he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. After the release he started political work with Sardar Ajit Singh. When the Punjab was in turmoil the Government was scared; and along with Sardar Kisan Singh (Ajit Singh's brother) and Mehta Anand Kishore, he fled to Nepal. He was arrested and brought down to Lahore. After his release he wrote a book which was banned immediately. In the end Amba Prasad, Sardar Ajit Singh and Jiya-ul-Huq went away to Persia where they preached revolution.

In Persia Sufi Amba Prasad published a paper called the *Aabe Hayat* and he participated in the national movement there. During the first world war when the British strove to establish their authority in Iran Sufi Amba Prasad happened to be in Shiraz which was besieged by the British forces. He fought with his left hand but was arrested in the end. He was court-martialled and ordered to be shot. But the following day when his cell was opened he was found dead. He was a popular figure in Persia and was called Aqua Sufi. A tomb was built in his honour and to this day homage is paid.

The Indian Muslims in Kabul continued their activities. The Provisional Government was sending out letters and circulars, some of which reached even Russian Turkistan and the Czar. In

these letters they were asked to end their alliance with Britain and employ all their energies for the overthrow of the British rule in India. These letters were signed by Raja Mahendra Pratap. This Provisional Government naturally desired to build an alliance with the Turkish Government. In this connection Obeidullah wrote a letter to Maulana Mohammad Husain. This letter was sent to Sheikh Abdul Rahim at Hyderabad (Sind) along with another letter addressed to Mohammad Mian Ansari. Sheikh Abdul Rahim was entrusted with the task of taking the letters to Mohammad Husain in Mecca. Written neatly on yellow silk they contained references to *Ghalibnama*, the Provisional Government and the liberation army. Mohammad Husain was asked to pass on all this information to the Turkish Government. Obeidullah's letter gave a detailed description of the liberation army whose headquarters were proposed to be in Medina and Mohammad Husain was to be the Commander-in-Chief.

These letters fell into the hands of the British Government and the movement was nipped.

In 1916 Maulana Mohammad Husain and his four colleagues were arrested and held as detenus by the British Government. Ghalib Pasha also was rounded up.

The *Ghalibnama* was a very important document in which the Muslims of the world, especially those of India, had been called upon to rise in revolt against the unjust Christian Government. But despite the circular very few Muslims joined the fray.

Indians played a rather shameful role in bringing Burma under the Imperial heel. Even after Burma was deprived of its independence, some Burmese generals attempted to regain their power, but they were all crushed with the help of Indian mercenaries. Whatever help the Indian revolutionaries were securing from Germany and other anti-British countries through the German Consul in the Far East, very largely depended on the help of the Indians in Burma. The new generation of Indians were not stooges.

Revolutionary activity here followed three lines: those connected with Germany were pursued via the high seas; the Ghadr Party had its links via Siam; and a third type of activity was to spread disaffection among Indian regiments stationed there. According to the report of the Sedition Committee these activities succeeded to a great extent.

During the war between Turkey and Italy, a medical mission was sent to Turkey on behalf of the Indian Muslims, similar to the one sent by Indian patriots to China in the thirties. A young man, Ali Ahmed, who had gone with the mission, stayed with Anwar Pasha for four months and was very much influenced by his experiences. He also learnt how the Young Turks gradually arose and ultimately threw overboard a wayward sultan like Abdul Hameed.

One Abu Syed had also gone from Rangoon to Egypt and to Turkey. It is said that at his request a Young Turk leader, Tewfill Bay, was sent to Rangoon in 1913. Tewfill Bay appointed Ahmed Mulla Dawood, a Muslim businessman, as the Turkish Consul.

Ali Ahmed returned to India when the Balkan War ended. But having breathed the free air of a free country, he did not feel at home. He flung aside the comforts of family life, sold away his wife's jewellery and started for Rangoon, then a centre of the Young Turks carrying on pan-Islamic propaganda. Faham Ali, a young man, was the representative of the Young Turks there and under his leadership conspiratorial activities started. These activities were hardly revolutionary for it claimed the entire world for the hegemony of a religion.

It was during this period that the Ghadr Party also started its activities in Burma. This was welcome as it nullified the poison of pan-Islamism preached by the Young Turks. This new programme was so effective that the tide turned and Lala Har Dayal started writing the *Jahan-e-Islam* editorials. In addition to this, Fareed Bay and Mansoor Arifat of Egypt also wrote strongly against British imperialism. One of the articles quoted this excerpt from Anwar Pasha's speech: "Now, revolution should start in India. The armouries of the British forces should be ransacked. The Britishers should be disarmed and killed with their own weapons. The Indians number 320 million whereas the British at the most are only two lakhs. In the case of a revolution in India the Suez Canal would be promptly closed by the Turks. Freedom-fighters would become immortal. The Hindus and the Muslims are brothers. The British are their common enemy. Let the Muslims declare a Holy War against the British and they should help to free India."

In November 1914, the rebellious No. 130 Baluchi Army was sent to Burma as the soldiers had killed one of their officers in

Bombay. As soon as they reached Burma, copies of the "Ghadr" were circulated among them and by 1915 they were all ready to join the revolution. But before anything could happen, they were crushed and 299 rebels were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

In December 1914 a letter from a Gujarati businessman in Singapore to his son in Rangoon fell into the hands of the police which mentioned that the regiment called the Malay State Guides (in Singapore) was ready to rebel.[18] This letter appealed to the Turkish Consul to send a Warship to Singapore. The Malay State Guides were transferred to a distant place.

Two members of the Ghadr Party, Sohan Lal Pathak and Hussein, came to Rangoon and made their headquarters in that city. They hired a house at 16, Dufferin Street and started getting their letters at P. O. Box 240, Rangoon.

Sohan Lal Pathak had been sent to Rangoon from San Francisco as the representative of the Ghadr Party. He became busy in spreading revolutionary ideas in the Indian army. Once, while addressing an artillery regiment he said: "Brothers! Why should you unnecessarily give your life for the British? If die you must, then die for the motherland. Which is better — winning freedom with your own strength or dying for the British?" A jamadar was staring at him unmoved by the fiery words. Pathak had been moving among the soldiers without any fear. When Sohan Lal had finished his speech all the soldiers went away; but the jamadar approached him. Sohan Lal thought be must have come to reveal some secret. For a long time they stared at each other. But the jamadar's eyes became bloodshot and he started trembling. He suddenly caught hold of Sohan Lal's hand and said in a choked voice: "Come to the Saheb." Sohan Lal was taken aback, but he did not try to free his hand or run away. He was carrying three automatic pistols and 270 cartridges. He said: "You will have me arrested, is that so? Just imagine! You are my own brother getting me arrested? What sort of a brother are you? Do you find this slavery enjoyable?"

All this was of no avail. Sohan Lal had on him also a copy of the *Jahan-e-Islam* which contained an article by Lala Har Dayal and a call for religious war against the British. He also had on him a remarkable formula for manufacturing bombs and

[18] *Sedition Committee Report* (1918), p. 170.

also an issue of the "Ghadr". He was arrested.

In prison he refused to observe any of the regulations, his argument being that when the British authority itself was not acceptable, why should he follow its regulations? He refused to stand up even in the presence of the provincial governor but used to stand and talk when a man talked to him standing.

The governor talked to Sohan Lal for two hours and offered to withdraw the death sentence if he asked to be pardoned. This offer made Sohan Lal burst into laughter. He said: "Well, this is wonderful. Actually, it is you who should ask my pardon, for you are responsible for all this oppression and tyranny. India is ours. You are holding her by force, we only want to make it free. Justice demands that you should ask my pardon."

The usual hangman refused to put the noose round Sohan Lal Pathak's neck. He was persuaded and threatened, but to no purpose. Other jail officials also were unwilling. At last, one William agreed to do it. It is said that later on the revolutionaries killed him and exterminated his family.

Mujtaba Hussain was another revolutionary who had been sent to Rangoon as an emissary of the Ghadr Party. He hailed from Jaunpur and was employed in the court of wards at Kanpur from where he went to Manila and was subsequently involved in the rebellion in Singapore. But as the revolution fizzled out, he escaped and was later arrested in China. He was sentenced to death in connection with the Mandalay conspiracy case, but the sentence was later commuted to transportation for life. He was released after serving 17 years in jail.

The Muslims of Rangoon had decided to start the revolution on Bakr-Id day in 1915. It is said that the date was changed to December 25 for want of sufficient preparation. It is said that instead of offering goats they had decided to offer Englishmen as the sacrifice on the day.

Two Indian regiments were stationed in Singapore, of which one was in league with the Young Turks. This regiment was promptly transferred to another place, since the information about the revolution was leaked out. But the other regiment did revolt. The rebellion of Singapore was not apparently related to any revolutionary movement outside. The rebellion did not materialise on February 21, 1915 in the Punjab, but in Singapore it did.

The South had been on the whole quiet. The Sedition Committee

report says that revolutionary sentiments had found their way into Madras as a result of the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal. During this tour in 1907 he lectured about Swaraj, Swadeshi and boycott. It is said that the strike of the students of the Government College of Rajahmundry was the result of his visit there.

Subramanya Shiva and Chidambaram Pillay are supposed to have emulated Bipin Chandra Pal and they were sentenced for these speeches. In one of those speeches Bipin Chandra Pal was described as the lion of Swaraj. In a speech at Tinnevelly Chidambaram Pillay praised Bipin Chandra Pal and called upon the people to boycott foreign goods. He also said that if people did so, India would be free in three months' time. According to a police report Government property was damaged to a considerable extent and almost all Government building were stoned quite heavily.

In March 1908 one Krishnaswamy exhorted the people of Karur to follow the Tuticorin example. He also said that the Indian soldiers were very ill-paid and called upon them to take up arms to help their motherland. The *Swarajya*, the Telugu weekly edited by T. Prakasam, wrote a very strongly worded editorial against the arrest of Chidambaram Pillay. A host of revolutionary journals came into being. Neelakanta Brahmachari had been touring the South along with Shankar Krishna Iyer asking people to adopt Swadeshi and plunge into revolutionary activity. In 1909 Shankar Krishna introduced Neelakanta to Vanchi Iyer. V. V. S. Iyer also appeared on the scene in 1910. He had stayed in England for some time, and was on intimate terms with Vinayak Savarkar, Shyamji Krishna Verma, Madame Cama and other revolutionaries. He went to Pondicherry. In January Vanchi also went to Pondicherry for three months where he learnt how to use pistols. According to police reports Vanchi had been telling people that freedom could be won only by killing the British.

He is supposed to have said that the sacred task should be begun by assassinating the District Magistrate, Mr. Ashe, and arms could be obtained from Pondicherry.

In the course of the searches in connection with the Tinnevelli conspiracy case, two papers were discovered; one was "A word of advice to the Aryans" and the other "Oath for Admission into the Abhinav Bharat Samaj". The names indicate Vinayak

Savarkar's influence in planning the Tinnevelli conspiracy.

This was followed by the assassination of Mr. Ashe. It appears that Vanchi Iyer shot him while he was inside a railway compartment in a junction at Tinnevelli. Vanchi Iyer's brother-in-law, Shankar Krishna Iyer happened to be with him when he shot. Vanchi was arrested and a letter in Tamil was recovered in which it was said: "Every Indian is trying to drive out the English and restore Swarajya and the Sanatan Dharma. Rama, Sivaji, Krishna, Guru Govind and Arjun ruled over the land protecting all religions, but now the English were preparing to crown in India George V, an infidel (Mlechcha) who ate the flesh of cows. Three thousand South Indians had taken a vow to kill George V as soon as he landed in the country. To make known their intention to others, I, Vanchi, the most unimportant in the party, had done this deed on this day."

The four wise men on the Sedition Committee linked this murder with Madame Cama, sitting at Paris. How they did so is most interesting. The report says:

"In the April number of Madame Cama's paper called 'Bande Mataram' which was published in Paris about the end of May, there was some indication in one of the articles that a crime of this nature was in contemplation. It concluded with these words 'In a meeting or in a bungalow on the railway or in a carriage, in a shop or in a church in a garden or at a fair, wherever an opportunity comes, Englishmen ought to be killed. No distinction should be made between officers and private people. The great Nana Sahib understood this and our friends the Bengalis have also begun to understand. Blessed be their efforts, long be their arm, now indeed we may say to the Englishman Don't shout till you are out of the wood.' In a subsequent article dated July 1911, Madame Cama tried to show that the recent assassinations were in accordance with the teachings of Bhagavat Gita, stating 'When the gilded slaves from Hindustan were parading the streets of London as performers in the Royal Circus and were prostrating themselves like so many cows at the feet of the King of England, two young and brave countrymen of ours proved by their daring deeds at Tinnevelli and at Mymensingh that Hindustan was not sleeping.' "[19]

The reference to Mymensingh alluded to the murder of Sub-

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Inspector Rajkumar Ray while he was walking home. The august members of the Sedition Committee came to the following conclusion: "This article and the letter found on the murderer seem to show that the murder was designed to take place on the day of the Royal Coronation ceremonies."

It is not surprising that the members of the Sedition Committee thought that it was owing to the visit of Bipin Chandra Pal and the article written by Madame Cama that Mr. Ashe was murdered. It is, however, true that after the Tinnevelli trial in which nine persons were sent up for trial, no new attempt at revolutionary conspiracy was made in these parts. During the trial one phenomenon surprised the court very much namely "the oath taken by the conspirators had overcome the caste prejudices which are often a bar to intimate association in South India." Thus the South Indian revolutionaries were revolutionaries in more than one sense. Had they been backed by a mass movement like the Swadeshi movement in Bengal they would have been more successful.

Revolutionary Vows

Many underground revolutionary groups existed in India and it is interesting to note how they functioned. Prominent among them was the Bengal Anushilan party led by Pulin Das, an able leader thoroughly conversant with the use of all types of arms. A member had to take the following vows:

Initial vow; final vow; first special vow; and second special vow.

By the first he has to pledge: (1) I will never break away from the group; (2) I will always follow the rules of the group; (3) I will always obey the orders of the leaders without question; and (4) I will conceal nothing from the leader and will speak to him nothing but the truth.

In the final vow the member has to agree: (1) I will never divulge to any outsider the secrets of the group; (2) I will never move from one place to another without informing the organiser; and I shall always keep him informed about my whereabouts and if I come to know of any conspiracy against my party, I will at once inform him; (3) I will present myself the moment I receive the organiser's orders; (4) I will not pass on the things I

may come to know in the group.

The first special vow, taken in the name of the father, mother, preceptor and the Almighty, began with "Om, Vande Mataram" and bound the member to the organisation till the final objective was achieved. He vowed not to be bound by any domestic tie whatever, and agreed to carry out all the activities of the group without putting forward any excuse. He agreed to avoid loquacity and fickleness and pledged that "If I fail to keep this vow in any way, may the curse of the Brahmin, father, mother and patriots of all countries reduce me to ashes."

The second special vow which also began with "Om, Vande Mataram" was taken with God, fire, mother and the leader as witnesses. The member thereby vowed to do everything, indeed lay down his life if needs be, for the advancement of the group and sacrifice everything he possessed. He agreed not to discuss the inner secrets of the group and not to be inquisitive about names and addresses of even the colleagues, unless it was necessary. And, he pledged that "should I fail to keep this vow may the wrath of the Brahmin, the mother and the patriot of every country speedily destroy me."

For enrolment no uniform method was followed. The formalities of the prescribed worship were performed in front of the Goddess Kali. A priest was not considered necessary. Arms and the Gita were the inevitable items.

Great emphasis was laid on the moral character of the members. Obeying the leader and holding back nothing from him were inevitable conditions.

There is evidence to prove that serious attempts were made to gather statistics about the census of villages and other local information worth knowing.

On September 2, 1909, the police raided a place in Jorabagan Street in Calcutta and seized documents among which was also a paper called the "General Principles".

As described in the Report of the Sedition Committee this paper pointed out that the history of the Russian revolution taught that those who prepare the masses for a revolution should bear in mind the following general principles:

1. A solid organisation of revolutionary elements in the country allowing the concentration of forces of the revolutionary party where they are most necessary.

2. A strict division of the different branches or departments of the party so as to avoid unnecessary knowledge of the activities of other parts.

3. A strict discipline especially in the military and the terroristic sections, even of self-sacrificing members.

4. A strict keeping of secrecy of the party, so that each member knew only what he needed to know and there was no more talk between two members than what may be strictly necessary.

5. A skilful use of signs and code language.

6. Instead of launching activities on all sides at the same time the group should proceed gradually. It should first create revolutionary nuclei among educated people, then to proceed to influence the masses. After this, the military and terrorist sections should be organised. Then they should all start functioning together and finally there should be an uprising which should take the form of a revolution.

A paper, *Bhavani Mandir*, was distributed in 1906, and it threw light on the ends and means the revolutionaries had in mind. It appealed to the people in the name of religion and nationalism. According to the Rowlatt report it glorified Mother Kali and people were instructed to worship *Shakti* for the attainment of political freedom. It also advocated the building of a Bhavani temple. The creation of a religious sect was suggested in a paper, but it was not incumbent upon each member to be an ascetic. Revolutionaries as a rule were to be celebates, but they were granted permission to settle down in family life once the objectives of the revolutionary group were achieved. The plan of action was not very clear, though the aim was the attainment of independence. It seems that this concept was taken up from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel "Anand Math", based on the rising of the ascetics in 1874.

It is apparent that the Bengal revolutionaries of 1905-1916 did not conceive of the revolutionary party for people of all denominations. It was too Hindu to appeal to Muslims. This was deplorable since Bengal consisted of over fifty per cent Muslims.

From this point of view the Ghadr Party born in the U.S.A. with a lot of Sikhs as founder-members, was superior to these Bengal parties and was free from sectarian elements. It was, however, only under the leadership of Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad that the revolutionary party was able to divest

itself of all religious paraphernalia. They changed the name of the party from Hindustan Republican Association to Hindustan Socialist Republic Association, but as Sachindranath Sanyal pointed out to me in 1938, Bhagat Singh and Azad had changed the name only, they had not altered a single sentence of the constitution of the party as written by Sanyal. In reality this party and all the revolutionary groups had started partially ridding themselves of sectarian ideas a few years before Bhagat Singh. The Kakori group consisted of some incipient atheists. There is one thing that however needs clarification. Even those revolutionary groups that insisted on initiation of a member in front of the image of the Kali, did not conceive of independence as Hindu Raj. Savarkar, who after the formation of Pakistan, is supposed to have toyed with the idea of a Hindu counterpart, never thought of Hindu dominion in India when he was a revolutionary. In his history of 1857 Muslim heroes are treated in the same manner as Hindu heroes.

As the revolutionary group were always at war with the British, their multiplicity proved often a boon rather than a handicap. Even if the chief leader of a group turned traitor he could only wipe out his group, the others remained intact. That is why not many serious attempts were made to unify the groups under one command. Even when the groups agreed to have a sort of loose federation, they could not keep it up for long.

Despite all this, the revolutionary movement made a lasting impact. All the constitutional reforms that were introduced up to 1921 can be attributed to a bid to soften the movement. This has been admitted by some English writers even. No chapter on the revolutionaries is complete without mentioning the martyrdom of Nalini Bagchi.

An extremely bright student Nalini had been sent to Bihar as an emissary to carry on revolutionary propaganda. He joined the Bhagalpur College and soon the police came to know of his activities and he had to go underground. Disguised as a Bihari he continued to live in the State. But in the end he was discovered and he thought it best to go to Bengal.

The situation in Bengal was very ticklish. It was decided to send the revolutionaries to the safety of Assam. Each one of them had passed through the most rigorous training and could remain safe in their hide-outs but restless as they were, they

would not keep quiet. So Nalini Bagchi, along with Nalini Ghosh, Narendra Banerjee and others began to spread the message of revolution in Gauhati. They always kept loaded revolvers.

On January 7, 1917 the police got scent of their hide-out from a person whom they happened to arrest. Immediately the house was raided. The person on watch duty alerted the revolutionaries and they all fell on the police party. The police did not expect such stiff resistance and immediately disappeared. This gave the revolutionaries breathing space and all of them escaped to the hills. The police followed on their trail and surrounded the hill. A gun battle followed in which some revolutionaries were wounded and fell into the hands of the police.

Although wounded and disabled to a great extent, Nalini managed to dodge the spies and crawl out of the hilly region. But some hill worms stuck to him and he could not get any medical help. In this condition he reached Bihar, but the police could easily spot him because he was already wanted. He went to Bengal where also, as ill luck would have it, he could not stumble on any of his friends. Thus frustrated, he decided to lie in the open space in front of the Fort. He got an attack of small pox. A sympathiser recognised him and took him home, but he was not a man of much means. Bagchi's eyes were swoollen and so was his face, and the tongue became inert. For three days he could not speak.

Nalini recovered but could not regain his health. He again began to build up the organisation from scrap. He went to Dacca. Another revolutionary, Tarini Majumdar, was living with him in this hide-out. The police was able to trace this den. They duly raided the place on June 15, 1918. Another gun battle followed in which Majumdar was killed. Nalini was wounded. This time also he made a bid to escape, but another bullet felled him to the ground. He was arrested in this condition. The police asked him, "Now let us know your name."

But he did not tell his name. He only said, "Don't disturb me, let me die peacefully."

He lived up to the ideal of dying unsung and unwept.

Nalini Bagchi's death almost marked the end of the revolutionary attempt to free India by taking advantage of Britain's involvement in the war.

CHAPTER III

The Volcano Erupts

JALLIANWALA BAGH

The British Government had been following a dual policy; it set up the Rowlatt Committee to inquire into conspiracies on December 10, 1917, and started negotiations for political reforms.

The Rowlatt Committee prepared a 226-page report. Almost everything, within the knowledge of the Indian Police was included in it. It made astounding recommendations. It aimed at curbing all types of political activities by dubbing them seditious. There was no distinction between violence and non-violence and the entire national movement was one indivisible whole.

The Sedition Committee made a number of recommendations. The executive was to be empowered to arrest, detain, search and demand surety from any person. The police was to be given full powers to deal with all situations. Many changes were suggested even in the court procedures to facilitate convictions. It caused a furore and the whole country rose to protest against the recommendations. Even the Congress, so far very docile, came out saying that the report dealt a severe blow to the fundamental rights of the people of India and Gandhi declared that widespread satyagraha would be launched if the Bill was passed. A protest day was planned for March 30, 1919 but without sufficient notice the date was changed to April 6. But in Delhi the strike began as scheduled with Swami Shradhananda leading a procession. When some impudent Englishmen threatened to shoot him the Swami bared his chest. At Delhi railway station it took a serious turn with police firing resulting in the death of five men, and some 20 men were injured. The most important aspect about this movement was that there was complete amity between the Hindus and Muslims.

At this time the Indian Muslims were agitated over the treatment meted out to the Sultan of Turkey, who was also the Caliph. Gandhi took up the cause of the Caliph. This movement was known as the Khilafat movement, the object of which was to restore the Caliph to his old glory. I think the Muslims were misguided because this meant that the Arabs should continue to be under Turkish rule. Before putting up such a demand they or their leaders did not care to ascertain whether the Arabs were willing to continue under the yoke of the Turks. The Indian Muslims took everything for granted and Gandhi without giving proper thought to the question led it and Khilafat was made one of the two planks of the non-co-operation movement.

Meanwhile Kitchlu and Satyapal, who were making necessary arrangements for the Amritsar Congress that year, were suddenly arrested and transported to an unknown destination. A crowd which collected to represent the matter to the district magistrate was stopped, and brickbats were hurled. The Manager of the National Bank, an Englishman, was killed. In all five Europeans were killed and many buildings were set on fire. There was trouble in Gujranwala and Kasur also and a notice was served on Gandhi not to visit Punjab. He refused to obey, was arrested at the Palwal railway station and was sent back to Bombay.

On April 13, the Hindu New Year Day, a meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh. The Bagh is surrounded by walls on all sides with only one narrow exit. It was a peaceful meeting where about 20,000 men, women and children were present. Suddenly General Dyer came there with 50 British soldiers and 100 Indian soldiers and started shooting. According to the statement General Dyer gave before the Hunter Committee, he first asked the people to disperse and started shooting only after two or three minutes. It is clear that 20,000 people could not have passed through that narrow gate in that time. Even if the people did not obey Dyer's order, it is incomprehensible why it was necessary to kill nearly thousand persons. It would be a mistake to throw the entire blame of this incident on General Dyer, for he was only carrying out the British policy. It was mainly from the Punjab that the British recruited its army and it did not wish that near-rebellious conditions should prevail there. The Government had decided to nip the trouble in the bud and Dyer was just a cog in the wheel. He proudly confessed before the Hunter Commission that he

continued to shoot as long as the bullets lasted. Some 1,600 rounds were fired. According to official estimates only 400 persons were killed and 1,200 injured. But this is an underestimate. At least double this number was killed and injured. This was confirmed by the report prepared by the Congress.

As if this was not enough, Dyer cut off water and electricity connections in Amritsar. Pedestrians were grabbed on the roadside and flogged without any charge being levelled at them. People were made to creep on their bellies. Bicycles were snatched away. Shopkeepers were compelled to sell things at prices decided by the soldiers. Martial law was imposed and hundreds were pushed behind prison bars. That all this was not the whim of a general run amuck is proved by the fact that the then Punjab Governor sent him a telegram endorsing the actions: "Your action correct. Lieutenant Governor approves."

Atrocities were committed in other parts of the Punjab also. In some places Indians were ordered to salaam every passing Englishman; Hindus and Muslims were tied up together and taken out in a procession to mock at Hindu-Muslim unity. The officer-in-charge at Kasur built a cage in which 150 persons were put up for public view. Colonel Johnson had a whole marriage procession rounded up and each member flogged. All school children were asked to salute the Union Jack thrice a day and take a pledge that they would do nothing against the flag and the King. Some were forced to make amends for the offences they were suspected to have committed. Thus, Rs. 4 lakhs were confiscated from Lala Harkishen Lal and he was sentenced to transportation for life.

When Gandhi heard all this, he said that he had made a Himalayan blunder in raising the slogan of civil disobedience, for the people were not aware of the meaning of it. The massacre of Jallianwala Bagh was strongly condemned by the Congress session of 1919 which met under the presidentship of Pandit Motilal Nehru and it set up a committee to enquire into the atrocities. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Abbas Taiyabji, Fazlul Huq and K. Santhanam were the members. Later, Dr. M. R. Jayakar replaced Motilal Nehru.

The report of Montague-Chelmsford Committee was published around this time. But the reforms proposed could satisfy only a few moderates. It is interesting that Tilak who had gone to

England to fight the case against Sir Valentine Chirol, was supposed to have said that whatever was being offered should be accepted and the struggle should continue. But on returning to India he declared that the proposals were very highly disappointing. In spite of this he sent a wire of congratulation to the British Emperor and showed his willingness for conditional co-operation. Madan Mohan Malaviya and Gandhi were of the opinion that India should co-operate with the Government only to the extent that the Government co-operated with the people. Chittaranjan Das was completely opposed to the proposals and even placed a resolution in the Congress session urging that the proposals be summarily rejected. Gandhi proposed an amendment which modified the original resolution to a great extent. At last, the resolution was recast to satisfy both the sides.

A special Congress session was held at Calcutta in 1920 under the presidentship of Lajpat Rai and it passed the resolution in favour of non-co-operation in spite of great opposition. The regular Congress session met in Nagpur in December 1920 and it was presided over by Chakravarty Vijayaraghavachari.

Non-co-operation was started in 1921 under the leadership of Gandhi who put before the country the programme of enrolling one crore members, collecting one crore rupees and of making a bonfire of foreign clothes. He assured the country that if these programmes were carried through, India would be free by the midnight of December 31, 1921. A wave of enthusiasm swept the country.

The movement was gradually gathering momentum. In the meantime imperial advisers sent the Prince of Wales to India hoping that at his sight the Indians who had been misled by agitators and trouble-makers would be cured of their disloyalty and prostrate themselves before the Prince. But the visit instead angered them. The cult of non-co-operation spread even to the remotest villages.

One such sleepy village that hit the headlines was Chaurichara in Gorakhpur district of U.P. A peaceful procession of peasants was fired on without any provocation resulting in the death of 11 persons. Fifteen more died later. After perpetrating this action the police party withdrew to the police station. The mob, now enraged, challenged the policemen to come out. On their refusal they set fire to the police station and some 21 policemen were

burnt alive. When Gandhi learnt of this, he stopped the movement without even consulting his colleagues. All his colleagues like the Nehrus, C. R. Das and others, who were in jail disapproved of the action. As for the revolutionaries who were watching his experiment, it is needless to say they were completely disillusioned. Over a hundred people were given the death sentence in this arson case but due to the agitations and legal battles waged by Madan Mohan Malaviya, only 20 people were sent to the gallows.

Subsequent events were to show the folly of this step. As soon as Gandhi withdrew the agitation, the Government swooped on him and put him behind bars and this action caused no ripple in the country. It was time for the revolutionaries who had been lying low, to stir into action again.

The Congress almost split on the issue of working for the reforms with the slogan mend or end. C. R. Das and Motilal led the revolt. Scattered revolutionary groups now began to be brought together. Sachindranath Sanyal took up the task of organising the revolutionaries in the North and the Anushilan started work in Bengal.

Some youths attacked the Shankhari Total post office at Calcutta on August 3,1823 to secure funds for thier group, but on entering the post office, they became nervous and shot the postmaster and fled. A youth, Narendra, was arrested and he became a confessor. All the same, the judge passed death sentence on him but the High Court changed it to transportation for life. The Government soon realised that ordinary law was not sufficient to carry on the policy of suppression.

In the meantime on September 9, the death anniversary of the martyr, Jatindra Mukherjee, was observed in Calcutta. The Government did not approve of this, but could do nothing. In December a group of revolutionaries organised a hold-up in Chittagong and escaped with Rs. 18,000. The police inspector who was deputed to handle the investigation was shot down.

A shaken Government requisitioned the services of Sir Charles Tegart, who had worked in Ireland against the revolutionaries, to deal with Indian revolutionaries here. His *modus operandi* consisted of torturing the arrested youths, beating them up, making them lie on slabs of ice, and hanging them upside down.

One of Sir Charles's assistants, Basant Chatterjee, was killed in broad daylight. The revolutionaries now planned to kill Tegart.

Gopimohan Saha frequented the area where Tegart lived and one day shot an Englishman coming out, mistaking him for Tegart. Saha was arrested. He had to pass through the whole gamut of torture, but they failed to make him speak. He was sorry that he had shot the wrong man, he told the court. The case received great publicity and he became a legendary figure. In court as well as in jail his behaviour was exemplary. He mounted the gallows bravely. It was found later that he had written on the wall of his cell in Bengali: "Bharatiya Rajnikshetre ahinsar sthan nei", (non-violence has no place in Indian politics.)[1]

The Congress session at Sirajgunj passed a resolution praising the courage and self-sacrifice of Gopimohan Saha. This created a stir. Gandhi, who was released on medical grounds, condemned the resolution in strong terms and C. R. Das supported it. There was a prolonged controversy. The British Government was quick to take advantage of it. Henceforth whenever the question of releasing political prisoners came up, the Government released only the satyagrahis. And when the Bengal Ordinance, to suppress the revolutionary movement was introduced, it did not meet with stiff opposition. It was a shrewd move by the British Government that by enforcing the Bengal Ordinance it put into operation the Rowlatt Act. Thanks to Gandhi's attacks on the revolutionaries the country took this step rather calmly. There was no threat of direct action from any quarter.

An attempt was made on the life of one Mr. Bruce in April 1924. The police came across a bomb factory in Faridpur and two persons were arrested for possessing revolvers. One Shantilal was found dead near the Beliaghata station because he was suspected to have given out information to the police while in prison. Another person was also found dead near the Khadi Bhandar in Calcutta because he too was supposed to have turned a traitor. In October 1924 Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee was arrested at the Howrah station while he was returning from the U.P. Some papers found in his possession revealed that the revolutionaries had strong centres in 23 districts outside Bengal. All this led to the Bengal Ordinance. The very same night the Ordinance was promulgated, hundrers of houses were searched and the offices of the Congress and the Bengal Swarajya Party in Calcutta were also raided. On that day alone 40 Swarajya Party men were

[1] *Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan ka Itihas* (6th edition, Hindi) p. 228

taken into custody.

Subhash Chandra Bose was one of those arrested, along with Anil Baran Ray and Satyendra Mitra, both members of the Bengal Council. Bose was then the Executive Officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. Almost all the important leaders of Bengal with the exception of C. R. Das were arrested. It is important to note that the police could not find anything incriminating at any place.

The Bengal Ordinance was condemned all over the country and even Gandhi had to join in. Nearly a thousand people found themselves in jail without trial. This did not deter the revolutionary movement.

KAKORI CONSPIRACY

Sachindranath Sanyal was sentenced to transportation for life as leader of the Banaras conspiracy case. He was sent to the Andamans where he met many famous revolutionaries of Maharashtra, Punjab and Bengal. He was released in February 1920 in the amnesty that followed the British victory in the first world war. He married and to all appearances settled down in life. He saw the 1921 movement come and go. He did not feel like joining it. But when the movement ground to a premature halt, Sanyal began to have restless nights. His wife found him leaving the bed and walking up and down in the room.

He sounded his old comrades and some like Sureshchandra Bhattacharya agreed to join him. Others like Ramprasad Bismil had also started along these lines. Some Bengal revolutionaries were already on their feet and sent emissaries to Northern India to set the organisation in motion. Thus several groups became active at the same time. When the merger in Northern India was effected, the combined group was called the Hindustan Republican Association which aimed at establishing the "Federated Republic of the United States of India", through an armed revolution. Its constitution was described as the "Yellow Paper" as it was printed on yellow paper. The Association envisaged a system of society in which the exploitation of man by man would be impossible. Long after the new party came into existence, a paper called the "Revolutionary" was distributed throughout the country. It certainly mentioned Soviet Russia as an ideal State, but

evidently the writer did not fully realise the implications. For, although Soviet Russia was placed as an ideal to be attained, it also called for the revival of the days of the ancient Rishis.

Rajendra Nath Lahiri, Sachindra Nath Bakshi and Rabindra Mohan Kar were active in Banaras and Suresh Chandra was looking after the affairs in Kanpur. Ramprasad Birmil, an absconder in the Mainpuri conspiracy, emerged in public when he was pardoned by the Government. His ancestors hailed from Gwalior, but they came to live in Shahjehanpur. Born in poverty he was a devout Arya Samajist and when he was underground, lived a peasant's life for several years.

Shahjehanpur became one of the centres of the revolutionary movement. When Bismil came out of his hide-out and began to organise a party, several youths joined him. One of these, Ashfaqulla, a sturdy young man, was known to Ramprasad since childhood. He was also a poet like Bismil. Premkishen Khanna, the son of a very celebrated engineer, who proved to be a useful member, who in addition to other services, also began to supply cartridges of Mauser pistol for which he had a licence.

In Banaras the revolutionaries of Bengal and North India met more often. Rajendra Lahiri first came in contact with the Sanyal family there. He belonged to Sanyal's group, but after the marger Lahiri was appointed the District Organiser at Banaras. Later, he became a member of the provincial committee which had Vishnu Saran Dublis, Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya and Pandit Ram Prasad as members.

Among the organisers at Banaras were Sachindra Nath Bakshi and Manmathnath Gupta. Young men joined the group in large numbers. The subscriptions from persons like Shivprasad Gupta, the proprietor of the *Aj* proved inadequate and forced contribution was carried out. In the first instance it was decided to carry out the operation in the villages so that the Goverpment would not easily come to know of it. It was subsequently found that even from the monetary point of view these were not worth the effort.

It was the dream of the organisers like Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee to flood the country with revolutionary literature, but very few pamphlets could be produced. The ordinary presses would not touch revolutionary literature, so they had to be brought round by offering higher charges to compensate for the possible losses due to detection. Even then few presses volunteered

to do the job. Some idea of the literature that a would-be revolutionary was supposed to read can be derived from a list of books which Sanyal had prepared. His list included of course the history of the French, Russian and the Chinese revolution of 1911, the history of the Italian freedom movement which was a *sine qua non* those days and the history of 1857 and the clandestinely circulated biographies of Khudiram, Kanailal, etc. which were banned. The list also included speeches of Swami Vivekananda, the history of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, biographies of Kemal Pąsha, Zaghlul Pasha, books of general history including those of Europe and Asia and the history of all old civilisations. Revolutionaries were neither asked to take any kind of oath nor was there any initiation ceremony. Youths were judged and given work according to their taste and capability. Selected persons were trained to handle small arms as far as possible without actual target practice.

Now to introduce some of the key men of these groups. Thakur Roshan Singh hailed from a village, Navada, in Shahjehanpur District. Among those arrested in connection with the Kakori conspiracy case, he was physically the strongest. He had been sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonmet in connection with some shooting incident in Bareilly earlier.

Roshan Singh knew very little of English, but was well versed in Hindi and Urdu. He went to the gallows very bravely.

Sachindra Nath Bakshi first worked in Banaras and then he went to Jhansi and Lucknow. Vishnu Saran Dublis did wonderful work at Meerut. He had been formerly Superintendent of an orphanage in Meerut and had courted imprisonment during the Congress movement in 1921. Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya with his headquarters in Kanpur brought Batukeshwar, Raj Kumar Sinha and Vijay Kumar Sinha to the Party. These three men were later to become famous.

Ram Dular Trivedi was an efficient revolutionary worker in Kanpur. He was sentenced to Six months' imprisonment during the non-co-operation movement and was flogged in jail for being rude to an English official. Mukundilal had worked with Gendalal Dixit during the days of the first world war. He was sentenced to six years' R. I. and had to do his full term, although all his co-convicts were released in the amnesty that followed. The Mainpuri convicts, however, were not released unconditionally. Mukundilal joined the H. R. A. after his release.

Rabindra Mohan Kar was one of the most important of the revolutionaries working in Banaras. He participated in the non-co-operation movement, but was not jailed. He was arrested at the time of the publication of the *Revolutionary* in 1924. But since it could not be proved that he was involved in its distribution, he was imprisoned under Section 109, i.e. vagrancy. Sachindra Nath Bakshi, Rajendra Lahiri and others tried to get him released on bail, but they did not succeed. When arrests were made in connection with the train hold-up at Kakori, near Lucknow, he was already rotting in prison. Subsequently, he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in connection with the Sukia Street Bomb case in Calcutta. After his release, his family discarded him and he died of tuberculosis unwept and unsung.

This brings us to the most colourful of all revolutionaries, Chandra Shekhar Azad. Azad had gone to Banaras from his village of Bhabhra, Madhya Pradesh to study Sanskrit. He was among the first to join the non-co-operation movement and was sentenced to be flogged.

A number of young boys were arrested during this movement and when the magistrate asked one of the boys his name, pat came the reply, "November".

"Your father's name?"

"December!"

The magistrate did not ask for more.

Azad was also questioned similarly and he answered that his name was Azad and his father's name was *Swadhin* and his home was the Prison. Thus little Chandra Shekhar overnight became Azad. His father was Pandit Sitaram and mother Jagrani Devi. He was a very obstinate child. Once while playing with his friends with sticks of matches that gave a red glow, he said that if one matchstick could emit so much of red light, how wonderful it would be to light a hundred sticks together. His friends jumped up at the idea. But his friends were scared of holding all the matchsticks. When Chandra Shekhar saw that his friends were hesitating, he undertook to take the risk of holding the matchsticks himself. He burnt his hand.

In his home village he had opportunities of mixing with the Bhils and learnt from them the art of archery, and became an expert. When Azad became famous, many apocryphal stories were attributed to him. One story is that one day when one

of the Bhils was being punished for some misbehaviour along with others, Chandra Shekhar, who was still a mere boy, was asked to aim his arrow at the man. All other boys failed, but Chandra Shekhar's arrow hit him in the eyes. The Bhils did not mind it at all, but his uncle immediately packed him off to Banaras. This Brahmin boy stayed on in Banaras and studied Sanskrit grammar with other scholars. But he was not able to concentrate. It was not his nature to remain in the same place for long. He was just ten years old when the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh shook the country. Chandra Shekhar also heard about it and after that, instead of swimming in the Ganges for hours on end and listening to the sermons on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, he started reading the newspapers in the library. When the non-co-operation movement started and educational institutes were sought to be boycotted, he plunged headlong into it. The police arrested him. He was ordered to be given 15 stripes on his buttocks. At every stroke he shouted "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". The *Maryada*, a paper edited by Sampurnanand, published his photograph with the caption: "Fearless Boy Azad". He was given an ovation at a mammoth meeting at Gyanbapi at Banaras. After release he was working among Sanskrit students when suddenly the non-co-operation movement was called off after the Chaurichara incident. Like thousands, Azad too was disappointed. He could not pursue his Sanskrit studies. Babu Shivprasad Gupta offered to educate him in the national school but Azad could not live with the great Gupta. He very soon found his way into the revolutionary party. Since the day he joined the movement he poured all his heart into the work and as long as he lived, he remained in the forefront of their activities.

Ramkrishna Khatri was another important member from Banaras. He was Brahmachari Govind Prakash prior to joining the revolutionary movement. As the party was desperately in need of funds he suggested that the party should sponsor a youth for the place of the chief disciple of a Mahant, that had fallen vacant. The idea was to capture the Mahantship after the death of the Mahant. The party agreed to this and Azad, a Sanskrit student, was adjudged the best candidate. Azad agreed and with the blessings of Brahmachari Govind Prakash, who happened to be the secretary of the provincial Udasi Mahamandal, was duly installed as the heir-apparent of a not very rich Mahant at

Ghazipur. Azad bravely started fulfilling all the onerous functions of the chief disciple, but after some six months when he found that the old Mahant was still going strong, he got tired and fled to Banaras. He told his friends: "The Mahant is quite hale and hearty. He takes a lot of milk as well as plenty of exercises. At this rate he may not croak for another twenty years. I am not going to waste my life waiting for his death." Thus ended the programme of capturing the Mahantship.

Apart from these members there was Ram Nath Pandeya, who served as a letter-box for the party, Pranabesh Chatterjee, a student, Bhupendranath Sanyal, the younger brother of Sachindranath Sanyal, and Damodar Swarup Seth, a teacher in the Kashi Vidyapeeth.

This revolutionary party was spread from Calcutta to Lahore in the sense that it had the support of other revolutionary groups. The "Revolutionary", a pamphlet of the party written by Sachindranath Sanyal, was distributed from Peshawar to Rangoon and there was hardly a city in North India where the leaflet did not reach.

Kakori is an obscure village in Lucknow District, but when the revolutionaries stopped the 8-Down train and looted the railway cash bags near this place, it shot into eminence overnight.

Several thousands of rupees were urgently needed to purchase arms and ammunitions that had arrived by a ship. The party decided to loot railway cash. Ashfaqulla Khan, when told about the project, opposed it tooth and nail. He felt that it would amount to throwing a direct challenge to the Government. But most revolutionaries approved of this plan for the very fact that it constituted a challenge to the Government. The majority view prevailed and it was decided to carry out the hold-up.

The plan of action was hazy at first. There was a proposal to relieve the train of the railway cash when it steamed into some small station. But on second thoughts this was abandoned as impractical and it was finally decided to stop the train by pulling the chain and then take away the cash bags. Ten persons were involved in this plan. Of these, Rajendra Lahiri, Bismil, Roshan Singh and Ashfaqulla were sentenced to death. Murarilal died a natural death and Banwari Lal became a confessing accused. Sachindranath Bakshi, Mukundi Lal and Manmathnath Gupta served various terms of imprisonment. Keshab was not arrested

and six years later Chandra Shekhar Azad was killed in a gun battle at Allahabad.

These 10 persons boarded the train at Shahjehanpur in the evening. Some other cash was also being taken in the train which was being guarded by an armed guard. Some armed Englishmen were also travelling by it. When informed of this, the revolutionaries were undecided for a while. Ashfaqulla once again tried to plead against such an action, but the others were all resolved to go ahead. When Ashfaqulla saw that his view did not prevail and all were determined to carry out the plan, he joined the others whole heartedly. His big gleaming eyes brightened up and he did his best. He had not opposed this action out of any fear, but his was the only voice of prudence as subsequent actions proved.

Ashfaqulla, Lahiri and Bakshi got into a second class compartment. Ashfaqulla was the leader. The remaining seven were travelling by a third-class compartment under Bismil. The revolutionaries had four brand new Mauser pistols with more than 50 cartridges with each pistol.

When the train reached the right spot, the revolutionaries in the second class compartment pulled the chain. The guard went towards the second class compartment. There was still a little of daylight. The guard was pinned down and four revolutionaries kept watch on the rail track. The rest rushed for the cash bags and pushed one huge box out of the guard's compartment. They had difficulty to opening the box. Ashfaqulla, one of the four on guard duty, saw the situation and gave his pistol to Manmathnath and he rushed to take charge of the hammer. He was the strongest of the lot. The cash bags were removed and tied up in a bedsheet.

Just then they saw a train from Lucknow side approaching. Everybody held his breath. But the train sped past. The job was finished in record time and the revolutionaries rushed into the bushes. From there they walked to Lucknow. The money and the arms were taken to safe places. One by one all of them went to their respective towns.

The train hold-up got tremendous publicity and even the Lucknow papers carried sensational stories that were later proved to be false. No European was killed, but the papers gave out that one to three Europeans were killed.

Although only ten persons were involved in the hold-up over 40 persons were arrested. These included Govind Charan Kar, who had been a revolutionary during the first world war and had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in connection with the Pabna shooting case and had been to the Andamans. He was staying in a hotel in Lucknow.

Banarsi Lal and Indu Bhushan Mitra of Shahjehanpur became the Crown witnesses. Gopi Mohan of Kanpur also became a Crown witness. The trial was held in Lucknow. Not many people were arrested from Banaras, because the police could not get even one confessor or King's witness from that city.

Ashfaqulla, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Sachindranath Bakshi could not be arrested. Damodar Swarup was arrested but was released because of serious illness. The case against Shivcharanlal of Mathura was withdrawn although there was as much proof against him as against, say, Suresh Bhattacharya. The same may be said of Birbhadra Tiwari's unexpected release.

The accused were charged under Sections 121A (waging war against King Emperor), 120 (conspiracy) and 302 (murder). The prosecution secured the services of Jagatnarain Mulla at Rs. 500 a day and the defence was conducted by B. K. Chowdhury, a barrister from Calcutta, at the nominal honorarium of Rs. 500 per month. Gobindballabh Pant, R. F. Bahadurji, Mohanlal Saxena and Chandrabhan Gupta assisted the defence.

The Government spent more than Rs. 10 lakhs on the trial. Ashfaqulla and Sachindranath Bakshi were arrested so late that they could not be included in the main case. They were tried in a supplementary case.

The trial lasted 18 months and in the end Ramprasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh were given death sentence. Sachindranath Sanyal was sentenced to transportation for life. Manmathnath Gupta was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Mukundi Lal, Govind Charan Kar, Raj Kumar Sinha and Ram Krishna Khatri were each sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Vishnu Saran Dublis and Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya got seven years' imprisonment each. Bhupendra Nath Sanyal, Rama Dulare Trivedi and Prem Krishna Khanna were sentenced to five years' imprisonment and Pranavesh Chatterjee received four years' imprisonment. Although Banwari Lal became a confessor he was sentenced to five years' imprison-

ment as he had retracted his confession. On release he committed suicide. In the supplementary case Ashfaqulla was sentenced to death and Bakshi was sentenced to transportation for life. The Government, not satisfied with the sentences, appealed for enhanced punishment.

There was public agitation against the death sentences. Members of the Central Legislature signed a memorandum which was put before the Viceroy and twice the dates of execution were postponed.

It was decided to hang them on December 19, 1927. Ramprasad was lodged in Gorakhpur jail, Ashfaqulla in Allahabad jail and Lahiri in Gonda jail. Lahiri was hanged on December 17 in Gonda and the rest on December 19, 1927 in their respective jails.

Why Lahiri was hanged two days ahead was never explained. Monmohan Gupta of Manmad case thinks that the revolutionaries had made preparations to break the jail and rescue Lahiri on December 18, which the local authorities came to know.

This seems plausible, but so far I have received no corroboration of this fact from an independent source. Three days before his hanging Lahiri wrote this letter: "I was told yesterday that the Privy Council rejected my appeal. You did a lot to save us from the gallows, but it appears that the altar of the motherland needs our blood. After all what is death? It is but the other side of life. So why should one be afraid of or grieved at death? It is as natural as the sunrise. If it is true that history changes its course, then I think our sacrifice cannot go in vain. Namaskar to everybody ... Namaskar for the last time."

Ramprasad Bismil used to drink a glass of milk, the last thing in the night. He was allowed a glass of milk in the condemned cell also. When he was offered his usual glass of milk on the night of December 18 he refused it and said, "No! Now I shall drink the milk of my mother." He firmly believed that he would be born again. Efforts were made to turn the great Ashfaqulla, a staunch Muslim into a prosecution witness, but failed. The Muslim official who was assigned this job, was a tall, handsome fellow and could be taken for an Arab chief. He could speak Arabic. He was sent to the Middle East to help people like Lawrence and make the Arabs rise in revolt against the Turks.

This official had served his masters well and was rewarded with

the post of Police Superintendent. His main line of attack was that the revolutionaries were Hindus and they wanted a Hindu raj. Ashfaq gave him a patient hearing and then said something which sent the official scurrying. "What you say is not true, I know; but even if it were true, I would prefer a Hindu raj to British raj."

Ashfaq was a poet. While mounting the gallows in Faizabad jail he recited the verse in Urdu:

"Tung akar hum bhi unke
julm aur bedad se
Chal diya sue adam zindane
Fyzabad se."

(Being disgusted of their tyranny and injustice I am departing to the land of death from Faizabad prison.)

Some of his poems have been published in my book *Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan Ka Itihas.*

Like Khudiram who carried the Gita, Ashfaq ascended the gallows with a copy of the Quran.

Roshan Singh also boldly mounted the gallows in Allahabad.

When large-scale arrests were made inside the country and the police was on the trail of revolutionaries outside India, Narendra Bhattacharya or M. N. Roy fled to America. He started writing about India in American journals and this shocked the U.S. Government. He was held and released on bail. He went to Mexico and organised a group of Communists in 1917 and also became its secretary. Roy met the famous Russian Communist, Borodin, with whose help he went to Russia via Germany to work under Lenin. He started doing propaganda for Communism, particularly in the Eastern countries. In 1920 he met some young Indians who had escaped as religious refugees. Out of these young men, Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffer Ahmed and Fazal Ilahi returned to India and worked for Communism. S. A. Dange, Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffer Ahmed and Nalini were later on tried. Narendra Bhattacharya, the chief accused, could not be arrested. Those arrested were charged with planning a conspiracy for the overthrow of the British Government and were sentenced to four years' regorous imprisonment. Known as the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case it was the first of its kind in India.

There were other revolutionary movements too. The Babbar

Akalis started as a peasant movement. Kishan Singh Gadgajj from Jullundur was the leader of this movement. He had served as a soldier in the Indian army but from the very beginning he hated the British because of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the subsequent martial law attrocities. When however the Nankana tragedy occurred, he threw away his job and joined the Akali agitation and started organising an underground group. He toured the villages extensively. Karam Singh and Uday Singh from the Hoshiarpur District were doing similar work. Kishan Singh's group was known as Charavati group. The two groups merged, and the organisation was called Babbar Akali group. A paper, the *Babbar Akali*, was edited and published by Karam Singh. This group aimed at bringing about the revolution by subverting the army. They felt that the previous attempts had failed because of traitors and decided not to spare any black sheep.

They killed the Diwan of Haiyatpur in February 1923 and Hazara Singh of Baibalpur in March, both known informers. They also cut the ears and noses of several others suspected of spying. The police were on the look-out for Dhanna Singh and Vanta Singh who killed Vishan Singh, Banta Labha Singh and a number of other spies. In an encounter with the police at a Gurudwara in Bomeli, Uday Singh and Mahendra Singh were killed. Karam Singh carried on the unequal fight but was killed after some time. This incident in September 1923, instead of giving a blow to the Babbar Akali movement, strengthened it. Gallant Sikh youths started joining the movement in large numbers.

Dhanna Singh was betrayed by one Jawala Singh, an informer. When Dhanna Singh realised his mistake, he wanted to pull out his dagger, but before he could do it he was overpowered. Dhanna Singh had concealed a bomb round his waist. He gave such a violent jerk to his body that the bomb exploded blowing himself up along with five police officials.

Some 91 persons were sent up for trial and Kishan Singh Gadgajj and five others were sentenced to death. Three persons died during the undertrial period.

The Deoghar conspiracy was part of the Kakori conspiracy and leading accused belonged to U.P. and were camping in Deoghar with Tejesh. Their rooms were searched in October 1927, as a result of which two Mauser pistols, cartridges, some books and a note book written in code language were seized. The note

book contained names and addresses of a large number of revolutionaries and this led to police raids all over North India. Shailendra Chakravarti of Allahabad was arrested and was found in possession of some arms and a copy of the rules and regulations of the Hindustan Republican Association. He was sentenced to 7 years' R.I.

The Banaras revolutionaries were subdued now as they felt that any overt act would go against their comrades in jail. But when in the Kakori case four revolutionaries were hanged, Manindranath Banerji an associate of Sanyal, could no longer keep quiet. He managed to get a pistol with only two bullets and shot at Deputy Superintendent of Police, J. Banerjee on January 13, 1928. He aimed at his head saying in Bengali: "Here is your reward for getting Rajendra Lahiri hanged", but the bullet hit his abdomen. Mani Banerjee was sentenced to 10 years' R.I. He died as a result of a hanger-strike in Fatehgarh jail on June 20, 1934. The strike was undertaken for the rights of the C class prisoners, although he himself was a B class prisoner.

Markandeya, Man Mohan Gupta and some other young men formed a small group. Markandeya, who had lived in Siam, was a good mechanic. When the Simon Commission came to India, they decided to blow up the train by which the members of the Commission were travelling near Bombay. Markandeya and Harendra Bhattacharya left for Bombay but their bombs exploded near Manmad. The explosion was heard up to 40 miles and derailed the train. Many were burnt to death in the compartment in which the bomb had burst, including Markandeya. Harendra became unconscious and confessed later. This led to the arrest of Man Mohan Gupta. The case dragged on for a long time and Harendra and Man Mohan were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Rajendra Lahiri could not be arrested along with other revolutionaries of the Kakori conspiracy case on September 26, 1925 because he had gone to Calcutta to take training in manufacturing bombs. He was arrested there later along with nine other persons. Lahiri was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment which was subsequently reduced to 5 years. Later he was sent to Lucknow to stand trial in the Kakori case and given the death sentence. Anant Hari Mitra and Pramode Chowdhury were given death sentence for the murder of Bhupendra Nath Chatterjee, a

police official. Chatterjee's main function was to visit revolutionaries in jail and to pump information out of them and the Dakshineshwar bomb convicts were aware of his misdeeds. One day when he came to the prison and was going towards the detenus quarters, the revolutionaries attacked him with mosquito curtain poles and killed him on the spot.

BHAGAT SINGH[2]

One of the charges against the revolutionaries involved in the Kakori conspiracy was that after the train hold-up a meeting of important revolutionaries was held at Meerut. Two special invitees were Bhagat Singh from Lahore and Jatindra Nath Das from Calcutta. Bhagat Singh, who hailed from a family of patriots, joined college after matriculation and came in touch with Sukhdev, Bhagvati Charan and Yashpal, all important collaborators in the days to come. Bhagvati Charan Vohra belonged to Agra. His father had left some property behind, and he was married to Durga Devi, while still young, but all this did not stop him from becoming one of the most ardent revolutionaries. Durga Devi also later on became a revolutionary. Sukhdev belonged to Lyallpur and Yashpal came from a town near Dharmashala.

Jaichand Vidyalankar, a Hindi scholar, who was influenced by Sachindranath Sanyal, was one of the professors at the National College of Lahore.

Bhagat Singh finished his F.A. examination and when his people pressed him to get married, he refused and promptly left home. He went to Delhi and worked as a reporter in the "Arjun" and then went to Kanpur and joined the "Pratap". He had acquired good mastery over Hindi by that time and he had been writing in Hindi under a pen name. He probably taught in a school at Kanpur. His father, Kishan Singh, wired a friend to inform Bhagat Singh that his mother was seriously ill. Bhagat Singh soon left for the Punjab where the Guru Ka Bagh agitation was in full swing. This was no doubt a religious movement, but it had sought to reform religious practices. Satyagrahis were coming to the Guru Ka Bagh, but the conformists among the Akalis were not in favour of this movement and decided that

[2] *Bhagat Singh Aur Unka Yug* (Hindi) by the present author has been summarised in this chapter.

the resisters passing through Vanga village should not be accorded a welcome. Some people from Vanga did not like this and requested Sardar Kishan Singh to come and oppose this. Kishan Singh wrote back saying that Bhagat Singh who was on the spot would do the needful. The marchers were welcomed and feted under his leadership.

Bhagat Singh delivered a speech in Lyallpur praising Gopi Mohan Saha, the youth who had tried to shoot Sir Charles Tegart. The police filed a case against him, but it could not be pursued further. Bhagat Singh also worked in the editorial of the "Akali" and the "Kirti".

After the Kakori conspiracy leaders were hanged, Chandra Shekhar Azad took up the responsibility of organising the revolutionary forces in the North. Organisational work was in the full swing in the Punjab in 1926. Sukhdev was a capable organiser. Yashpal introduced Jay Gopal from Bihar and contacted key people. Kamal Nath Tiwari from Bihar also came. The Kanpur group of Bejoy Kumar Sinha, B. K. Dutt and Ajoykumar Ghosh, as well as the Jhansi group, including Bhagvandas Mahore, all became active.

Bhagat Singh, Kundanlal, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bejoy Kumar Sinha thought that to begin with they must rescue experienced revolutionaries like Shachindranath Sanyal, Jogesh Chatterjee and Ramprasad Bismil from jail. A plan was prepared to stop the police vans taking the prisoners from jail to the court or back from the court to the jail. Bhagat Singh took the risky step of coming in disguise to the court where the prisoners were being tried. The police got the scent and more guards were posted. Another plan of escape chalked out was by cutting the gratings. Out of the Sixteen revolutionaries locked in barrack number 11 of the Lucknow district jail only four were selected to escape in this way. Chloral, a soporific, was smuggled in to be mixed with sweets and fed to convict watchmen and warders on the fateful night, but the drug when tested on the youngest revolutionary, Manmathnath Gupta, was found ineffective. Meanwhile, one of the gratings had almost been cut, but fortunately the prisoners had gone on hunger strike and were removed from this barrack. Thus when the cut in gratings was detected, the responsibility was fixed on others.

In October 1926, Bhagat Singh was hauled up for a bomb

explosion in Lahore on the Dussehra day, but he was acquitted. He had formed the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, which developed into a powerful organization with branches even in big villages. One of its member, Kailaspati, who was employed in Kural Gunj post office, robbed Rs. 3000, the earnings of the post office, to hand over to the Sabha.

A meeting of leading revolutionaries in India was held on December 8, 1928, which was attended by Jayadev, Shiv Verma, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Sukhdev, Brahma Dutt, Surendra Nath Pandeya, Fanindra Nath Ghosh and others and it formed a central committee with Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukhdev, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma, Fanindra Nath Ghosh and Kundan Lal.

It appointed Fanindra as the organizer in Bihar, Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh in the Punjab and Sinha and Shiv Verma in charge of the U.P. Chandra Shekhar Azad, who was the overall leader of the entire group was given the job of organising the "military affairs". The party's name was also changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. The leaders then proceeded to their business; factories for making bombs were set up at Lahore, Saharanpur, Calcutta and Agra. Subsequently, the factories at Lahore and Saharanpur were raided.

It was at this juncture that Simon Commission was sent to India. All parties, including the Congress, decided to boycott it. In the Punjab the opposition was spearheaded by Lajpat Rai who started as a revolutionary but gravitated towards the Congress. He had however received the shock of his life when Gandhi stopped the movement in 1922 and people who were in jail with him say that he abused Gandhi. He even wanted to sign an apology and got out of jail to be able to give a bit of his mind to Gandhi, but his friends in jail somehow appeased him. After his release, he drifted further and further from the Congress.

In spite of all this, he was a force to reckon with in the Punjab and he was called upon to lead the procession at Lahore boycotting the Simon Commission. While leading the procession, he was beaten up in a lathi charge and was carried home on a stretcher. The injuries proved fatal and he died on November 17.

His death sent a wave of indignation throughout the country and the revolutionary party readily responded to the public demand for revenge. Nehru wrote of the event:

"The anti-Simon Commission demonstration there (at Lahore) was headed by Lala Lajpat Rai and as he stood by the roadside in front of thousands of demonstrators, he was assaulted and beaten on his chest with a baton by a young English police officer. There had been no attempt whatever on the part of the crowd, much less on the part of Lalaji, to indulge in any method of violence. Even so as he stood peacefully by he and many of his companions were severely beaten by the police. The manner of the assault, the needless brutality of it, came as a shock to vast numbers of people in India. To find that even the greatest of our leaders, the foremost and most popular man in the Punjab, could be so treated seemed little short of monstrous and a dull anger spread all over the country, especially in North India. What effect his physical injury had on his death a few weeks later it is hardly possible to say definitely, though his doctors were of the opinion that it hastened the end.

"It was this sense of national humiliation that weighed on the mind of India and when Lalaji's death came soon after, inevitably it was connected with the assault and sorrow itself gave pride of place to anger and indignation. It is well to appreciate this, for only so can we have some understanding of subsequent events, of the phenomenon of Bhagat Singh and of his sudden and amazing popularity in North India. Bhagat Singh was not previously well-known, he did not become popular because of an act of violence. Bhagat Singh thus did not become popular because of his act of terrorism, but because he seemed to vindicate, for the moment the honour of Lala Lajpat Rai and through him of the nation. He became a symbol, the act was forgotten, the symbol remained and within a few months each town and village of the Punjab and to a lesser extent in the rest of India, resounded with his name. The popularity that the man achieved was something amazing."

The revolutionaries decided to kill Scott, the chief police executive. But later they decided to kill Saunders, the deputy. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Shivram Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Jaya Gopal were assigned the job. On December 15, 1928, they reached the police station at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and laid an ambush. When Saunders emerged from his office along with Head Constable Chanan Singh, Rajguru fired. Saunders was shot at over and over so that there could be no mistake. After this Bhagat

Singh tried to escape, but Chanan Singh and one Fern pursued the revolutionaries. Bhagat Singh shot at Fern, who stopped. But Chanan was still pursuing. Bhagat Singh and Rajguru entered the D.A.V. College through the wicket gate. But Chanan was bent upon pursuing them. Azad, the crack shot, who had kept quiet so far, shot dead Chanan.

The police were alerted all over the Punjab. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Azad had escaped from the D.A.V. College premises, but they were still inside Lahore, a dangerous place. Bhagat Singh shaved off his beard and escaped to Calcutta travelling by first class. Durga Bhavi and the infant child, Shachi, travelled with him as his wife and child and Rajguru accompanied them as a peon. Azad sneaked out of Lahore with a group of pilgrims disguised as a holy man.

Bhagat Singh returned to Agra and started a bomb factory there. Many such factories were started about the same time and to a large extent, Bhagvati Charan Varma, Yashpal and Kishori Lal were associated with these. The party decided that Bhagat Singh should go to Russia and Sukhdev and Batukeshwar Dutt should carry out the programme of throwing bombs in the Central Assembly. But there was a sharp difference of opinion between Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev. Sukhdev even went to the extent of accusing Bhagat Singh of moral turpitude to drive home his point. This was too much for the sensitive Bhagat Singh and he decided to throw a bomb in the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

It now appears that there was considerable difference of opinion between people who were in the know of things as to what transpired between Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh. When preparing the revised sixth edition of my Hindi book, only Dr. Bhagavandas Mahore's account was available. According to this account Sukhdev wanted Bhagat Singh to throw the bomb, because in his opinion he was most fitted to propound the party objectives in the course of court statements. There is no doubt that the motive in throwing a bomb (two bombs were thrown ultimately, one by Bhagat Singh and the other by Batukeshwar Dutt) was simply to catch the eye of the public and proclaim the socialistic ideas. Had they wanted to kill, they could have kiled the whole Government Treasury Benches. According to Dr. Mahore the object of the action being only ideological propaganda it was Sukhdev's idea to send the best ideologue. Bhagat Singh himself wanted to do

it, but the Central Council wanted to spare him. In reality, a decision was taken to send two other revolutionaries. At the time, Sukhdev was out of station. When he came and heard of this he was furious. He told Bhagat Singh: "You think that you are indispensable and the party cannot thrive without you. You think too much of yourself. When you know that nobody can represent the ideology of the party better than you, why did you allow the Central Committee to spare you?" He quoted the judgment of the Lahore High Court about Bhai Paramanand in which the judges said that although Bhai Paramanand was the brain and source of the conspiracy, he was personally a coward and he spurred his friends to action, while keeping his own skin intact. He said: "Bhagat Singh, the same would be written of you."

According to Mahore, Sukhdev forced Bhagat Singh to convene another meeting of the Central Council to revise its decision. The Council met, and the previous decision was changed. Sukhdev is supposed to have wept bitterly after the decision. But recently Sukhdevraj has written his momoirs in which a substantially different story is given. Sukhdev is shown as jealous of Bhagat Singh's achievements and his influence in the party. In order to drive his point home he accused him of being in love with Durga Bhavi, knowing full well that this was completely wrong. I think Mahore was also aware of this as he writes in an enigmatic manner, "The greater the force with which Bhagat Singh resisted his charges, the greater became his vehemence." But Mahore does not take his readers into confidence. He simply says, "Bhagat Singh said, 'my dear fellow, you are insulting me.' At this Sukhdev said very sternly, 'I am doing my duty towards my friend.' " At last Bhagat Singh left the place saying "Please never talk to me."

Thus it can be seen that very personal reasons made Bhagat Singh take a political decision. Life is so strange. I am not surprised that Bhagat Singh was impelled by the calumny of Sukhdev.

The ultimate decision was that Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt should throw bombs and leaflets in the Central Assembly and Chandra Shekhar Azad and others were to escort them back. But Bhagat Singh did not approve of the latter part of the decision. He argued that his supreme sacrifice was called for to awaken the masses.

At last it happened on April 8, 1929. The so-called Public Safety Bill was under discussion in the Central Assembly. A tense

battle was raging between the Government Benches and the popularly elected members. The Trade Desputes Bill had been passed by the Government and the Speaker was on the point of giving his ruling on the Public Safety Bill. The atmosphere was tense. Suddenly one after another two bombs were hurled from the Visitors' Gallery of the Assembly Hall. Sir George Schuster, Sir Vaman Dalal and some others received minor injuries. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were arrested on the spot. They did not resist and soon their names became household words in India and their photographs appeared everywhere.

They could have easily escaped. But they remained standing there shouting "Long live revolution" in English and "Down with Imperialism". While shouting slogans, they also dropped some leaflets. These leaflets were on behalf of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. It began with a quotation from a French revolutionary that an explosion was necessary to make the deaf hear.

As usual this act was condemned by many public leaders including Gandhi. The slogan — Long Live Revolution — uttered by these two revolutionaries for the first time was translated, *Inquilab Zindabad* and became the war cry of all types of revolutionaries. The freedom struggle threw up many slogans — *Vande Mataram, Inquilab Zindabad, do or die* of Gandhi, *Delhi chalo* of Netaji. All these have become obsolete except *Inquilab Zindabad.*

B. K. Dutt told me on his death bed that Bhagat Singh was the first to throw a bomb and he followed with a second bomb. A relative of Bhagat Singh has since claimed that Bhagat Singh threw both the bombs and she has quoted Asaf Ali, their defence counsel, in support of her statement. According to this version, B. K. Dutt is supposed to have wanted to share the guilt as he was afraid that he would be released. Such was his love for Bhagat Singh. This makes little difference. I am inclined to disbelieve the relative.

Dutt told me that from the Assembly house he was taken to the Raisina lock-up. Tasadduq who was sent to turn Ashfaqulla a King's witness was dispatched to convert Dutt. He did not ask Dutt any direct questions but took out a cigarette and said that life is a passing show. Then he led the conversation to films and asked if he had seen the film "Eleventh Show" in which there

was a similar bomb explosion. Then he remarked that Dutt was shabbily dressed. Next morning Dutt's clothes were exchanged. Thus he secured his clothes for forensic examination.

Many attempts were made to win over one of the two, but they refused to talk. At last, on May 7, 1929, their trial began and on June 12, 1929 the trial at the Sessions Court was over. They gave a joint statement in which they threw light on the aims and objectives of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. They said that their party aimed at establishing the dictatorship of peasants and workers. This statement meant a good publicity for their objectives. Many revolutionaries before them had issued many statements in courts and outside courts and they had created some stir and had won public acclaim, but the statement of Bhagat Singh and Dutt, apart from appealing to sentiments, also appealed to reason. They used the court as a platform to publicise the socialistic aims of the party. Bhagat Singh's statement made it clear that the Hindustan Solialist Republican Association was, in a true sense, fighting for the masses. It was clear that he had completely and unequivocally accepted the Russian ideal. He also specified that he intended to bring about a classless society. Bhagat Singh and Dutt were sentenced to transportation for life in the case.

On October 23, 1928, a bomb had exploded in the Dussehra fair killing 10 persons and injuring 30. Two students were arrested and through them it was learnt that Bhagat Singh was involved in the murder of Saunders and Bhagvati Charan was a leading revolutionary. On April 28, 1928, the police raided a house and arrested Sukhdev, Kishori Lal and Jay Gopal. A little later Hansraj Vohra was also arrested. Within a few days of arrest, Jay Gopal turned approver and before long Hansraj Vohra. They were both released. On May 23, 1928, the police arrested Shiv Varma and Jayadev in Saharanpur. On June 7 a rich man's house was robbed in a village called Maulania in Bihar and the landlord was killed. Fanindra Nath Ghosh, who spilled information later on was also arrested in connection with this robbery. All these incidents were linked together and the following persons were sent up for trial: Sukhdev, Kishori Lal, Shiv Varma, Gaya Prasad, Jatindra Nath Das, Jayadev Kapur, Bhagat Singh, Batukeshwar Dutt, Kamal Nath Trivedi, Jitendra Sanyal, Asharam, Deshraj, Prem Dutt, Mahavir Singh, Surendra Pande and Ajoy

Ghosh. Bejoy Kumar Sinha was arested in Bareilly, Shivram Rajguru in Poona and Kundan Lal in the U.P. The trial became known as the Lahore conspiracy case.

Bhagat Singh was brought from Delhi to stand trial. B. K. Dutt was spared because in his case the police were satisfied with transportation for life. He could not be implicated in the murder of Saunders.

While in Delhi jail, Bhagat Singh and Dutt had gone on hunger strike demanding special treatment for political prisoners. Their comrades in Lahore jail immediately announced that if the demands of these two comrades were not accepted, then they would join the hunger strike on July 13. The strike received tremendous publicity. The Government was by now ready to conspiracy undertrials were offered special treatment on medical grounds, but he refused to accept this. He knew that the Kakori conspiracy undertrials were offered special treatment on medical grounds, but this was withdrawn as soon as they were convicted. The strike went on and the Lahore undertrials joined the strike. Motilal Nehru, Ganeshshanker Vidyarthi and ultimately Jawaharlal Nehru issued statements condemning the criminal apathy of the Government. On August 6, the Government came out with a communique expressing its inability to concede the demands because it said that would amount to putting a premium on terrorism. This only worsened the situation. The communique did not daunt the valiant hunger-strikers. Three days after this, the Government published another communique which was much mellowed. In the second week of August, a jail enquiry committee was constituted. Its chairman went to the strikers and assured them that he would do justice. At first he failed, but later on all the prisoners except Jatindranath Das broke their fast on September 20. Das refused. The sub-committee of the jail committee that was dealing with the strikers recommended that Das be released on medical grounds. But the Government was adamant. The condition of Das went from bad to worse and the doctors were of the opinion that he could not be kept alive. Das was aware of the approaching death. Apart from this he was having all sorts of aches. The relatives of Jatin Das were asked to offer security for him and get him released. But Das refused. At the instance of the Government some unknown persons offered security for Das, but the law required that Das should put his

signature to this offer. Das refused to sign and this strategy also failed.

Public anxiety was at its highest. The Government apprehended trouble after the death of Jatin Das. They feared a riot at Lahore, and reinforcements were rushed from neighbouring districts. Subhash Bose sent Rs. 600 for his corpse being carried in a special compartment to Calcutta. When Bombay people heard of this, they wanted to stand the expense.

On September 13, Jatin Das expired in Borstal jail. Death had come to him inch by inch. His body was carried by a special train from Lahore to Calcutta and at every station there were thousands of mourners. When the funeral pyre was lit in Calcutta there were 600,000 mourners. This was a record.

The Lahore prisoners became impatient. It was apparent that the leaders who had advised them to suspend their strike, were unable to persuade the Government to do something about the classification of political prisoners. The trial was also coming to an end. After due notice Bhagat Singh and his friends in jail resumed the hunger-strike with the same demands for which Jatin Das died. Four long-term Kakori convicts — Rajkumar Sinha, Mukundilal, Shachin Bakshi and Manmathnath Gupta, confined at that time in Bareilly central jail — also joined the hunger-strike. It received extensive coverage in the press. A large number of meetings and processions were conducted throughout the country to back the revolutionaries. The Government was perturbed and came out with a long communique in which it was asserted that it had not been sleeping over the problem. The communique said that the problem of the classification of prisoners was a difficult one and it had to be referred to the Provinces and had to be channelled through various committees and sub-committees. The communique did not mention Jatin Das nor the current hunger strike. A new classification of prisoners came into operation. Jatin Das had demanded two things:

(1) Recognition of political prisoners as political prisoners;
(2) Abolition of racial discrimination in the treatment of prisoners.

The first demand was not conceded, but the second was accepted. Bhagat Singh and his colleagues took it for granted that they would be automatically included in the higher classes and terminated their strike. The three Kakori prisoners (one of them

had broken his strike, unconditionally) were also requested to end their strike, but they refused saying that there was no guarantee that they would be given better class. Bhagat Singh sent them a message to break the strike and they complied with the request. The three Kakori prisoners broke their strike only when they were classified as 'B' class prisoners. A tragic tailpiece to the episode was that the Lahore prisoners were not given better class treatment till the very end. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged, but the rest of them were sent to the far-away Andamans, and there in spite of hunger strikes nothing happened.

Now to come back to the Lahore trial. The judgment was pronounced on October 7, 1930. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were sentenced to death, Bejoy Kumar Sinha and Mahavir Tiwari were sentenced to transportation for life and Kundanlal and Premdutt were sentenced to 7 years' R.I. and 3 years' R.I. respectively. This was greeted with general strikes and demonstrations throughout the country. An appeal was made in the Privy Council to commute the death sentences, but it was of no avail.

Bhagat Singh knew that he could be hanged any time any day, but he continued his studies as usual. People outside were alert, as they were certain that there would be some foul play. A vigil was kept around the jail. An advocate, Prannath, met Bhagat Singh on March 23, the day the three revolutionaries were hanged. He found Bhagat Singh cheerful and walking in the cell like a tiger in a cage. As soon as Prannath entered the cell Bhagat Singh asked: "Have you brought the book?"

Prannath immediately handed him the book "Lenin". He had been nagging Prannath for quite some time. Bhagat Singh had long ago read the life of Lenin and he was acquainted with at least a good part of his works. Why did he want to read about Lenin on the last day of his life? Of course he did not know at that time that they were going to hang him that very evening, but he knew that death was round the corner.

He was very pleased. Prannath asked him for some message to the country. At this he said: "Down with imperialism, long live Revolution."

When Prannath asked him how he was feeling, he said "I am quite happy."

Another advocate, Baljit Singh, who met him, was so shaken that the assistant jailer told him: "You are not going to be

hanged. Bhagat Singh is going to be hanged. You look badly perturbed but he remains calm."

Baljit Singh appeared to have a scared look and Bhagat Singh scanned him and said: "Being hanged is a part of the game. I am happy and I am at peace. My duties have ended and now your duties begin."

The friends in barrack No. 14 were having sleepless nights. They smuggled a slip to him. "Sirdar, you tell us as a true revolutionary if you would like to be rescued. Maybe, something could be done even at this late hour," to which Bhagat Singh replied:

"I do not wish to make a secret of this fact that it is natural for me to desire to be alive. But I can only live under certain conditions. I refuse to rot in prison or live on parole. My name has become the focal point of the revolutionary party of India. The party and its sacrifices have placed me on a high pedestal. The pedestal is so high that if I am spared, I will not be able to live to that standard. My weaknesses are not known to the public. If I manage to cheat the scafflod, then they will be exposed. Maybe, the revolutionary fire in me will cool down. It may even be extinguished. But if I am hanged like a brave man with a smile on my face, Indian mothers will coax their children to emulate me. Our hangings will substantially add to the number of marytrs in the cause of the freedom of the motherland, so much so that it will no longer be possible for the satanic powers of imperialism to resist the revolution. Of course, there is one thing that even today leaves me uneasy. I have not been able to accomplish a thousandth part of what I aspired to do for the country and humanity. Could I but live, I could fulfil some of these tasks and be happy. It is only out of this desire to be able to serve that I wanted to be saved from the gallows. Otherwise, I consider myself the most fortunate man. Really now I am very proud of myself. I have got the better of all my desires. Now I am feverishly waiting for the last test. I desire that it may be expedited.

Yours for ever
Bhagat Singh"

Bhagat Singh asked the man who brought the chit to bring rasgullas. He said: "Tell them that we have had words galore, now let me have some rasgullas." The rasgullas arrived and he munched them with relish. It was his last meal.

Virendra, who later became editor of a famous Urdu daily and

who was in the same prison, narrates this episode: "The chief warder was one ex-soldier Hawaldar Sirdar Chatar Singh. At 3 p.m. he was informed that three Lahore prisoners would be hanged this evening, so he should make all the necessary arrangements. Chatar Singh was a sweet-tempered and God-fearing man. He was in the habit of numbling passages from Sikh scriptures while doing his daily chores in the mornings and the evenings. When he came to know that Bhagat Singh had only a few hours to live he rushed to him and said: 'My son, your last hours have come. I am of your father's age, may I make a request?'

"The Sirdar smiled and asked him what he wanted. Emboldened by this the chief warder said, "I have only one request to make. Please recite passages from the scriptures. Here is a pocket volume of our scriptures for you.

"Bhagat Singh greeted this request with a gentle laughter. He said: 'Had you requested me earlier I would have done so with great pleasure. Now that my last hours have come, if I pray to God, he will consider me a coward. During my whole life I did not pray, now if I were to pray he would think that I am doing so out of the fear of death. Seeing all this it will be better if I leave this world without prayers, as I did all these years. Then nobody would blame that I was an atheist and out of fear I became shaky and I was converted to theism."

When they came to escort Bhagat Singh on his journey to the gallows, he was engrossed in reading a book. An officer said, "Sirdar, we have come to lead you to the gallows." Without so much as raising his eyes from the book he said, "Just a moment, please, a revolutionary is busy meeting another revolutionary." Something in his voice made the officers hold their breath. Bhagat Singh read a few paragraphs and then tossed the book and said, "Let's go". His face was flushed. He had been reading Lenin's life.

Bhagat Singh and his two associates asked the jail officials not to handcuff them and not to make them don the red cap. Bhagat Singh was in the middle and Sukhdev was on his left. They stopped for a while and Bhagat Singh burst into a song and the others followed:

"Dil se niklegi na markar bhi watan ki ulfat Meri mithi se bhi khushbue watan aegi."

(When we are dead there would be still patriotism left in us. Even my corpse will emit smell of the motherland.)

To the British Deputy Commissioner who was there to witness the hangings, as enjoined by law, Bhagat Singh said: "Well, Mr. Magistrate, you are fortunate to be able today to see how Indian revolutionaries can embrace death with pleasure for the sake of their supreme ideal."

The three young men were hanged at 7.33 p.m. It was the desire of the Indian people that their bodies should at least be handed over to them. But the Government did not want the revolutionary fervour of the masses to mount. The reception given to Jatin Das after he died on the 63rd day of his hunger-strike was too fresh in their minds. The extent to which the mighty Government was panic-stricken can be imagined from the unheard of steps it took to cover its trails. Even before the bodies had become cold, they were dragged hurriedly from the gallows, sliced into pieces and packed in sacks. Like thieves they smuggled these sacks through a back wicket gate. According to another version there was no such wicket gate and they had to break the wall and those sacks were loaded on trucks provided for the purpose. The truck was rushed to Kasur where two priests, one Hindu and another a Sikh, were picked up and they reached a place in Ferozepur on the banks of the Sutlej. There the sliced bodies were put on a funeral pyre and even before the bodies were burnt, the pyre was extinguished and the charred pieces were consigned to the water of the Sutlej from Post No. 201.

When I went to that place some 30 years later, old villagers showed me the place where the pyre was lit and the post from which the charred remains were thrown into the river. When the policemen and priests went away, the villagers, who already guessed that these were the bodies of the martyrs, salvaged the charred remains and cremated them properly. With due ceremonies the ashes were then consigned to the Sutlej.

According to another version when the policemen were busy with the pyre they got the news that people from Lahore were already on way there. They extinguished the pyre and hurriedly threw the charred remains in the Sutlej and they covered the ashes of the pyre with sand and dust.

Both versions agree that the policemen threw the half-burnt

remains of the bodies into the river. So that they do not in any way clash with the story given to me that later on the villagers salvaged them and disposed of the ashes in a decent manner. The spot where the funeral pyre was made is some 400 yards from the Sutlej when it is not in spate. This spot became part of Pakistan on account of some allotment, but Kairon managed to get it back in exchange for some other spot. A memorial is being built on the spot where Bhagat Singh's dear friend B. K. Dutt died and we carried his body for cremation on that very spot where the bodies of the three martyrs were consigned to fire.

Congress Reaction

As a tailpiece this is how the *History of the Congress* written by Sitaramayya, Gandhi's disciple, records the event:

"Another subject which had greatly agitated the Congressmen at Karachi was the wild and vague report that the remains of the late Sirdar Bhagat Singh and Sriyuts Rajguru and Sukhdev were mutilated and were not properly cremated and were otherwise dealt with in an insulting manner. Accordingly, the working committee appointed a committee to report to the W.C. on or before the 30th April. We may at once state that Bhagat Singh's father, who was largely responsible for the step taken was not able to produce any evidence in that behalf nor did he appear before the committee to help it in any manner. Accordingly nothing resulted."[3]

What evidence could Bhagat Singh's father or friends produce? It was naive on the part of the Working Committee to expect that Bhagat Singh's father could, even if he liked, bring the witnesses to Karachi, Allahabad or Delhi. What evidence could Gandhi produce about the indignities heaped on him by the Whites in South Africa, while he travelled on the railways there? Had the Working Committee so desired, it could have sent a commission to Husseinwalla, the village near which the two cremations took place. When I could find evidence and even the number of the post from which the policemen threw the charred remains after 30 years, certainly the Working Committee's commission could have found proper evidence if it had visited the scene. Of course, after independence people readily came forward

[3] *History of the Congress* by Sitaramayya, p. 783.

to give evidence about the atrocities committed during the British regime, but even in 1931 at least some of them who had salvaged the charred remains of the martyrs would have come forward to give evidence.

The Karachi Congress was forced to pass a resolution on Bhagat Singh and his comrades:

"This Congress while dissociating itself from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form, places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of the late Sirdar Bhagat Singh and his comrades Sukhdev and Rajguru, and mourns with the bereaved families the loss of these lives. The Congress is of opinion that this triple execution is an act of wanton vengeance and is a deliberate flouting of the unanimous demand of the nation of commutation. This Congress is of further opinion that the Government has lost the golden opportunity of promoting goodwill between the two nations, admittedly held to be essential at this juncture and of winning over to the method of peace the party which being driven to despair, resorts to political violence."[4]

Sitaramayya adds: "The reservation made by the Congress was but the minimum that the Congress could have made consistent with its cult of non-violence, but it must be remarked that the phrase gave occasion for the younger section, inclined unfavourably to Gandhism, to move amendments for its omission. The volunteers conference passed the resolution with the phrase omitted and the phrase became the bone of contention subsequently at provincial conferences. Gandhi and Patel had been already shown the black flag when they came to Karachi."

Why was Gandhi shown the black flag? Sitaramayya says that Gandhi did his very best to save Bhagat Singh. He says: "The Karachi Congress which should have met under the radiance of universal joy met really under the gloom cast by the news of the execution of the three youths, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. The ghosts of these three young men were casting a shadow over the assembly. It is no exaggeration to say that at the moment Bhagat Singh's name was as widely known all over India and was as popular as Gandhi's. Gandhi, in spite of his best efforts, had not been able to get the sentences of these three young youths commuted."

Here Sitaramayya is completely wrong. He can even be charged

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 768-69.

of misleading his readers with a deliberate falsehood. When Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were in the condemned cells, a political negotiation between the Congress leaders, headed by Gandhi, and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India was going on. Gandhi could have stipulated the release of all the prisoners along with Congress prisoners as a condition for the compromise. This would have constituted a sort of acid test of the sincerity of the British. Here is Nehru's version: "Nor did the Government agree to Gandhiji's hard pleading for the commutation of Bhagat Singh's death sentence. This also had nothing to do with the agreement, and Gandhi pressed for it separately because of the very strong feeling all over India on this subject."

Rajendra Prasad throws further light on the episode and writes: "The sentences of death awarded to the revolutionaries created a furore in the country. The Mahatma asked Lord Irwin for commutation of the death sentence. Lord Irwin was to leave India very soon. He could not comply with his request. He had signed the pact against the best counsel of the officialdom. Hence he was unable to entertain this additional request against their express wishes. The matter hung fire for a long time so much so that people began to hope that, maybe, the death sentences would not be carried out. At last Lord Irwin expressed his inability to Gandhiji to commute the sentences, but he said he could stay the executions till after the Congress session. Perhaps the Lord thought that the Congress session would reject the pact or become sore with Gandhiji because of the commotion created by the executions. Lord Irwin wanted to stave off this contingency, but Gandhiji did not agree to this. He said that if they could not be released, it was better that they should be hanged before the Congress, otherwise it would be perpetrating a fraud on the country and the Congress. Thus they were hanged just before the Congress session."

It was rumoured that the Karachi resolution of the Congress advocating nationalization of key industries was accepted by Gandhi as a concession to Nehru. Nehru has tried to show that it was his original idea and that only he was responsible for the resolution. He conveniently forgot that just before he declared himself a socialist and a republican at Lahore, he had been to Europe and had met all the chief revolutionaries in exile. He was, on his own admission, impressed by two of them only. He writes:

"Of the few (revolutionaries in exile) I met, the only persons who impressed me intellectually were B. Chattopadhyaya and M. N. Roy." He also says in continuation that both of them were not regular communists, but were communistically inclined. Add to this the glamour and ideological impact of Bhagat Singh. The Karachi resolution was a mild one, but whatever it was, it bore the impact of Bhagat Singh.

In the meantime the Congress was forced to act. The Swarajya Party founded by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru failed to move in the matter. In this atmosphere of gloom and despair the Congress had met in Madras in 1927 and in a half-hearted manner passed the independence resolution. In 1928 at Calcutta the Congress welcomed the Nehru report, which meant even less than dominion status. It said that although not swerving from its declared goal of complete independence it accepted the Nehru report on the pattern of Government to be installed because it had been prepared by the consensus of all the parties. The resolution said that unless the British Parliament concedes the reforms envisaged by the Nehru Committee by December 31, 1929, it will be forced to embark on a scheme of no-tax campaign.

The British Government did not succumb to this threat and the Congress at the Lahore meeting under the presidentship of Nehru had no option but to pass the 'complete independence' resolution. It also called upon the people to prepare for a struggle.

As a preliminary step the Congress resolved to boycott the Legislative bodies at the Centre and in the Provinces. It further warned the partymen and other people who joined the freedom struggle to keep away from all direct and indirect elections and called upon members of Legislatures to resign. It also empowered the All India Congress Committee to start a civil disobedience movement against any of the regulations it deemed suitable. Over 170 members resigned from the Legislature by February 1930.

The Working Committee met at Sabarmati in the middle of February 1930 and resolved to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement. A few days later, when the AICC was in session it was declared banned. Gandhi then started his Dandi march to break the salt law. Gandhi was arrested. The movement was now gathering momentum and nearly a lakh of people had courted imprisonment. At the instance of the Government, Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar met Gandhi in the Yerawada prison in

July and Gandhi wrote to Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, who were both in the Naini Central Prison. Regular negotiations started on January 25, 1931 and the ban on the Congress was lifted. The leaders were released and on February 19, the Gandhi-Irwin talks began. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was announced in March.

As a result Satyagrahis were released. The pact was silent on the hundreds of revolutionaries rotting in Indian jails. Gandhi did not insist on the release of even such people as Chandan Singh Garhwali, who although belonging to the British Indian Army refused to shoot down satyagrahis. The case of the Garhwali soldiers had come up for discussion, but Lord Irwin refused to interfere and Gandhi capitulated.

Here is Sitaramayya's account of the incident: "An incident of importance took place in the Frontier Province which deserves to be described here. In the course of the repression adopted in the province, some Garhwali soldiers were asked to fire upon a meeting. They refused to board the lorry brought to take them, in order to fire upon a peaceful and unarmed crowd. These soldiers were, therefore, court-martialled and given long sentences, ranging from ten to fourteen years. The release of these prisoners became the bone of contention between the Congress and the Government in the final negotiations of March 1931."[5]

It is obvious that Lord Irwin did not agree to release them or even to commute their sentences. On the contrary Section 13(3) of the past said: "Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders — in the very few cases that have occurred — will not come within the scope of this amnesty."[6]

It is a moot question why Bhagat Singh and his comrades were executed on March 23 in the evening though death sentences are carried out in the mornings. On February 2 a letter from Bhagat Singh was smuggled out. It was published in the *Punjab Kesari*. It said:

"Dear comrades,

At present our movement is negotiating an important bend. A year of hard struggle has forced the Round Table Conference to sit up and advance some definite proposals regarding constitu-

[5] *History of the Congress*, p. 710.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 742.

tional changes and it has invited the Congress to participate in spelling out these changes. Under the circumstances it is but natural that the leaders of the Congress should like to call off the struggle. The present movement is bound to end in some sort of compromise. It is, therefore, immaterial whether the struggle is called off today or some more time is taken in the take-down.

Actually all compromises are not wrong, because they are compromises as one may fondly think. On the contrary it is through compromises that we may advance towards the goal in the initial stages. But one should go on consolidating one's position all the time. The final assualt on the enemy must be so overpowering as to wipe it off. It is quite possible that the movement may be delayed because of the sloth of leaders, but the rising strength of the masses will ultimately brush aside all compromises and will themselves lead the movement to victory. The leaders lag behind and the movement marches forward. This is the great lesson of history.

Yours
Bhagat Singh"

The last letter from Bhagat Singh read as follows:

"My dear Kultar.

It hurt me to see tears in your eyes today. Your words were sad. I can't stand your tears. Be courageous and look after your health. What else should I say, take care.

In Urdu poetry the beloved is imagined as the enemy par excellence and is ever on the look out to invent new methods of oppression. I also long to see the length to which oppression can go.

Why should I alienate the family and mind the cost?

Even if the whole world enlists as my enemy, I shall fight on.

Friends of the tavern, I am here for a few fleeting moments. Like the lamp in the morning about to be extinguished, the atmosphere will be surcharged with the electricity of my thoughts.

After all this is but so much dust liable to perish any moment.

Your brother
Bhagat Singh"

After Bhagat Singh was executed, Nehru wrote: "During the

last five days of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues, I kept quiet lest any of my words should, in some way, remove the possibility of the sentence being commuted. I kept mum although I felt like bursting out. We could not save him though he was so dear to us and his sacrifice and courage were and still are a source of inspiration to the youth of India. People will lament our helplessness. At the same time, we are proud of his martyrdom. When Britain comes out for a settlement, let us not forget the dead body of Bhagat Singh."

This statement differs substantially from what Nehru wrote in his autobiography. The *Bharat*, a revolutionary bulletin published from London, commented that the executions were made the occasion for fireworks of demagogy on non-violence and sacrifice and Jawaharlal Nehru, taking advantage of the situation, once more emerged as a leader of the youth. In the Karachi Congress Nehru moved the resolution on Bhagat Singh. The resolution is a monument of opportunism and hypocrisy. Years later the same leaders brought a similar resolution on the I.N.A.

The *Bharat* had this to say on the resolution: "Here for those who have eyes to see, is an example of the work of those 'disciples of truth'. Western damagogues never exploited more cynically individual heroism and the sentiments of the public for their own ends. Bhagat Singh was sung up and down for two days in Congress Nagar, the parents of the dead men were exhibited everywhere. Probably their charred flesh, had it been available, would have been thrown to the people. Anything to appease the mob! And, to cap it all, no uncompromising condemnation of the Government that carried out the act, but a pious reflection that the Government had 'lost the golden opportunity of promoting goodwill between the two nations'."

The archives have to say something more damaging. On March 20, i.e. 3 days before the hangings, Emerson, the mouthpiece of the Viceroy, requested Gandhi to restrain Subhash Bose from holding a meeting on the evening of the same day. Gandhi wrote:

"1 Dariagunj
Delhi, March 20, 1931

My dear Emerson,

Thank you for your letter just received. I know of the meeting

you refer to. I have taken every precaution possible and hope that nothing untoward will happen. I suggest that there should be no display of police force and no interference in the meeting. Irritation was likely to be there. It will be better to allow it find vent through meetings, etc.

Yours sincerely,
sd. M. K. Gandhi."

This letter was not published.

STRUGGLE IN JAILS

Meanwhile in jails the repression went on with unabated fury. V. D. Savarkar writes in his "Autobiography":

"Among the revolutionaries sent to the Andaman islands, there were conspirators and revolutionaries from Bengal and Maharashtra. Five or six more persons involved in political hold-ups joined us later on. Out of these, three revolutionaries from Bengal and two from Maharashtra were on life term. Other revolutionaries had sentences ranging from three to ten years. When I reached there four editors of the *Swarajya* were already there serving their terms. They were not accused of conspiracy to bring about a political revolution, but were only charged with sedition. But these people were absolutely ignorant of the methods of revolution and their behaviour also was at variance with revolutionary methods. But as soon as these people were kept with the revolutionaries, they too became imbued with revolutionary ideas and started behaving like revolutionaries. Since most of the people who had come earlier were from Bengal, political prisoners were known as Bengali prisoners. But, when hundreds of revolutionaries began to pour in from the Punjab and other provinces, we became known as bomb-makers.

"Political prisoners were employed in making coconut fibre. Once an official visitor from Calcutta came to have a look at us and noticed that political prisoners sat round their work and chatted. At once the order came that we should be handled strictly. We were put on hard labour. And for a mere casual chat, we had to be in handcuffs for a week. The jail doctor never approved hard labour for prisoners unless they were in excellent health. But now all political prisoners, irrespective of the condi-

tion of their health, were invariably put on hard labour. Thus medical science became a puppet in the hands of British imperialism. Locked in cells, these prisoners worked at the oil press. In between, they were only allowed to have their meals. If any unfortunate prisoner dared to have a wash, he incurred the wrath of the warder, and abuses were heaped on him. Water was not available for washing. Even for a drink of water, a special request had to be made to the warder. And it was a crime even to think of a bath, except during the rains. And as for meals, nobody bothered if the prisoners ate at all. If the quota of work was not finished by the evening, the prisoner was beaten and given other punishments. There was hardly one in a hundred who could extract 30 lbs. of oil even after working hard for the whole day. And those who could not fulfil this quota were victims of the warders' kicks and blows. Many of the college students and professors put on hard labour fell ill naturally. During Barry's regime, even running a temperature of 102°C was not considered fever and no treatment was given. If any political prisoner happened to have some ailment not registering any external symptom such as temperature, he was supposed to be malingering.

"One day Ganeshpant developed a severe headache and the doctor ordered that he should be sent to hospital. Ganeshpant was about to leave but in the meantime Barry came. He shouted at the doctor and demanded why his permission was not taken. 'Who is the jailer here, I or that doctor?', he asked. Ganeshpant was not sent to hospital. It was not so hard with the ordinary criminals. In their case the doctor freely exercised his judgment. Doctors did not wish to arouse suspicion in the minds of the authorities that they were sympathetic to political prisoners.

"In addition to these hardships there were restrictions on urination and answering the call of nature. The prisoners were allowed to visit the lavatory and urinate only during fixed hours. If anybody broke this rule, the sweeper complained and the offenders were handcuffed."

Thus there was no end to their hardships. Even exchange of books led to trouble. Barry was amazingly allergic to books. He used to say, "What nonsense! I don't want to give them books by Kant and all those blokes. It is after reading such books that they become assassins. And these books on Yoga and Theosophy are worse than useless. Prisoners should never be given these

books, but unfortunately the Superintendent allows them books. I have never read a book during my life, and yet I am a responsible man. Reading books is the job of a woman."

"A political prisoner had jotted down in his notebook 'Pliocene, Miocene, Neolithic', and such words. When Barry came across it, he demanded: 'What is this cypher?' Savarkar was consulted and he explained what they meant. The next day the prisoner was deprived of his books for a fortnight. On some provocation Paramanand and Ashutosh Lahiri knocked down the jailor, for which they were flogged. Sardar Prithvi Singh was locked up in a cell for several years. A political prisoner named Ram Rakha resorted to hunger-strike on the question of donning sacred thread, and died.

"The jailors wanted to take up the work where the police had left it, but they failed miserably. Most of the prisoners came out with flying colours."

In 1925 the Kakori prisoners demanded special treatment. The younger section were in favour of a hunger-strike but the older revolutionaries counselled patience. After some time even the elders were fed up with the treatment they had been receiving and they all resorted to hunger-strike. Never before had the political prisoners, and particularly revolutionaries, gone on hunger-strike demanding special treatment as political prisoners. They were immediately put in separate cells and every attempt was made to break it.

The Lahore Conspiracy prisoners joined in the hunger-strike by July 13. Batukeshwar Dutt's condition had been serious from the very beginning. When Jatindra Nath Das joined the hunger-strike his condition also became serious within a few days. Even Motilal Nehru could not keep quiet. He could not go and meet the striking prisoners personally, but sent Nehru to meet them. In a press statement Nehru said: "The condition of Jatindra Nath Das is very serious. He has become very weak and he speaks in a feeble voice. Really speaking he is on the brink of death. It was painful to see them going through such hardships. It seems that they have staked their lives in this struggle. They demand that political prisoners should be treated as political prisoners. I hope and trust their efforts will be crowned with success."

After the martyrdom of Jatin Das the Government came out

with a new classification. According to this some political prisoners became entitled to classes A and B, but the majority, being poor, did not get any benefit. The Lahore prisoners who had shown more shrewdness than the Kakori prisoners, were duped on this point. The three Kakori prisoners, however, did not call off their strike this time. Bhagat Singh, Nehru, Sampurnanand and others kept on sending telegrams to them, but they did not come around. Even Chandra Shekhar Azad asked them to give up the fast on the ground that he had come to know for certain that they would be given special treatment. In his characteristic way he added: "If they do not give you special treatment, I pledge my word that we shall retaliate by liquidating a few jail officials". Govind Vallabh Pant, leader of the Congress Legislature Party, wired that he had learnt from reliable sources that they would be given special treatment and he requested them to break the fast. Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi also came and tried his best. But the hunger-strike went on.

On the 53rd day of the strike a communication from the Government said that all the Kakori prisoners had been classified as B class prisoners, but Raj Kumar Sinha, Sachindra Baxi and Gupta would be given B class as and when they broke their fast. They ended the hunger-strike.

This, however, did not end the struggle in jail against British imperialism.

Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee began a fast demanding concentration of all revolutionary prisoners in one jail. He broke his fast on the 141st day on the assurance of the I.G. of Jails. But it turned out to be a false assurance and he started his fast again which lasted for 111 days. Of course, he was forcibly fed. As a result all political prisoners in the Naini Central Prison were kept in one special ward and they were given daily newspapers to read.

Later, the agitation assumed a different form when Sachindra Nath Baxi resorted to fast demanding release of revolutionary prisoners. Most of the Kakori prisoners had been in jail for nearly 12 years. In the Andamans too, political prisoners carried on an agitation and after a couple of hunger strikes they compelled the Government to repatriate them.[7]

[7] This chapter is based on the book *They Lived Dangerously* by Manmathnath Gupta.

AZAD'S MARTYRDOM

The revolutionary spirit among the masses had reached an all-time high and the Naujawan Bharat Sabhas, i.e. youth organisations, were doing a wonderful job. But the Government succeeded in breaking them up. All the important leaders were in jail. Only Chandra Shekhar Azad was free guiding and inspiring the youth. Bhagwati Charan, an old hand, also joined Azad and, the activity gained momentum. Many women also entered the party; Sushila Devi and Durga Devi (Bhagwati Charan's wife) and Prakashwati, who later married Yashpal. Bhagwati Charan and Yashpal came over to Delhi after the first Lahore Conspiracy and from then on Delhi became the centre of revolutionary activities. It was planned to blow up the Viceroy's train on October 27, 1929, but due to some reasons it was postponed to December 23.

Elaborate preparations were made to effect this. Indrapal, disguised as a sadhu, stayed in Nizamuddin near Delhi, to reconnoitre. It is said that Yashpal had a hand in this action, but Sukhdeoraj, in his memoirs, is inclined to give credit to others and dismisses Yashpal's account. The Viceroy was returning to Delhi from Kolhapur and bombs were buried along the railway track several days in advance. These were connected by a wire with a battery kept at about 100 yards away. When the Viceroy's train came near the bombs detonated. They had exploded a few seconds too soon with the result that instead of the Viceroy's compartment a third class compartment was blown up. This rattled the Government badly. Widespread raids and witchhunt followed. The Congress leaders went out of their way to condemn this act. The Lahore Congress under Nehru's presidentship, passed the resolution on complete independence, but it also passed a resolution condemning the attempt to blow up the train. Sitaramayya says: "It was not without some difficulty that the resolution on the bomb outrage was passed. The resolution was stoutly opposed by a certain section of the delegates and it was passed by a narrow majority." It congratulated Lord and Lady Irwin on their providential escape. This was the type of independence that Gandhi envisaged.

On the evening of May 28, 1930, Bhagwati Charan went to the bank of the Ravi to test a bomb. It suddenly exploded injuring

him fatally. He could not be given medical help though he was alive for four hours. At the moment of his death Bhagwati Charan had no one by his side. Born of a wealthy family he joined Chandra Shekhar Azad in his youth and took up the path that led to this sad end.

After this, a few more bomb blasts occurred; some more hold-ups and assassinations were planned, but with little success. Jehangir Lal, Rup Chand, Kundan Lal and Indrapal were arrested in 1930. In all some twenty-six persons were arrested in connection with these conspiracies. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Yashpal, Durga Devi, Sushila Devi, Prakashwati and Hansraj remained underground. The trial began on December 5, 1930.

One of the revolutionaries the police had been looking for was Sukhdeoraj. The police learnt on May 3, 1931 that he was in the Shalimar Bagh, Lahore, with a young revolutionary, Jagdish. A police party surrounded the place and Jagdish was killed while offering resistance. A college student, he was arrested some years before for violating Section 144. He was twenty-two or twenty-three at the time of his death.

Sukhdeoraj was tried by a special tribunal. The second Lahore Conspiracy case lasted three years and involved Amrik Singh, Gulab Singh and Jehangir Lal. They were sentenced to death, but the sentences were commuted to transportation for life.

The Delhi centre had been functioning for a long time. Vimal Prasad Jain, Nanda Kishore Nigam, Kashi Ram, Bhavani Sahay and Bhawani Singh were associated with it. There were also Yashpal, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sadashiv, Gajananda, Sadashiv Potdar, Vatsayan and Prabhavati. Sushila and Durga were also active in Delhi. Yashpal, although wanted in this case, was sentenced at Allahabad.

Kailashpati, one of the accused in the Delhi case turned approver. Credited with a prodigious memory, he mentioned scores of persons from Calcutta to Lahore. Even a person who had given the revolutionaries some water found himself being interrogated as a consequence. He did not even spare Nehru. Kailashpati had been recruited in the Postal Department. Here he met M. B. Avasthi and Shivram Rajguru and was taken in the revolutionary party. He was then transferred to Barhalganj post office from where he disappeared with a sum of Rs. 2,300. He handed over the sum to the revolutionary party at Kanpur. He also came in

contact with Sukhdev, Dr. Gaya Prasad and Chandra Shekhar Azad. His colleagues started having faith in him, and he was accepted into the inner circle. Gradually he came in touch with Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Yashpal, Kashi Ram, Nanda Kishore, Bhavnani Sahay and others. A plan to liquidate Horton and Khairatnabi of Kakori prosecution fame also could not be carried out.

Meanwhile, Bhagwan Das and Sadashiv, who went to Bombay in connection with some work, were arrested on the way for illegal possession of arms. During their trial, known as Bhusawal bomb case, Bhagwan Das shot Phanindra Nath Ghosh, who had become a King's witness. Ghosh did not die and Bhagwan Das was sentenced to transportation for life. Later on Phani was killed by Baikunthanath Shukla in his own place.[8]

According to Kailashpati, the revolutionaries had set up bomb factories in a number of places. On June 6, 1930 a store was robbed in Delhi. This became known as the Gadodia store dacoity. Chandra Shekhar Azad led the raid with Kashi Ram, Dhanvantari and Vidya Bhushan joining him. The revolutionaries gained Rs. 13,000 by this action. It is said that when the owner of the store learnt that the hold-up was done by revolutionaries, he did not pursue the matter.

Kailashpati was arrested in October 28, 1930 and on October 30, he confessed. On November 1, Dhanvantari was arrested while he was walking leisurely with Sukhdeoraj, but not before promptly firing at the constable. In the confusion, Sukhdeoraj escaped. When Jagdish was shot dead in the Shalimar Bagh at Lahore also Sukhdeoraj had escaped. Later on when he was accompanying Chandra Shekhar Azad, he escaped but Azad was shot dead. Vidya Bhushan of the Banaras Hindu University was arrested about the same time as Dhanvantari, Vatsayan and Vimal Prasad.

In Kanpur the Police were on the look-out for Gajanan Potdar, but they came across Shaligram Shukla. They tried to arrest him, but he shot and killed one constable and one Hunter was injured. Shukla was shot dead in the gun duel on December 2, 1930.

On December 6, Nand Kishore Nigam was arrested in a reading room with some arms. Then followed the arrest of other revolu-

[8] Bhagavandas Mahore has written all facts about himself in *Yash Ka Dharohar*, (Hindi).

tionaries. All were bundled together and a conspiracy case was filed and the trial began on April 15, 1931. Kashi Ram, who was arrested in Kanpur in August in connection with a shooting, was sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment. Rajendra Dutt Nigam was also arrested in this connection and sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment.

The Delhi conspiracy case dragged on for a number of years. After spending Rs. 3.5 lakhs and finding that much time and money would be required to conclude the case, the Government withdrew it on February 9, 1933. The arrested persons were tried individually. Dhanvantari was sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment. It was found that there was not much evidence against Vaishampayan. Vatsayan, Vimal Prasad and Babu Ram Gupta were tried but only Vimal Prasad was sentenced to 3 years' R.I. Vaishampayan and Bhawani Sahay were held in detention.

Meanwhile Azad was active again. Although an orthodox Brahmin and vegetarian like Ramprasad Bismil he had agreed to take eggs at the instance of Bhagat Singh. He also readily accepted the whole philosophy of socialism. He not only allowed himself to be dominated by younger men, but imbibed the new ideology. It was at his instance that Bhagwati Charan wrote the 'Philosophy of the bomb'. This was an exposition of socialism in simple terms. Once more the people were reminded of the objectives for which the party stood.

Chandra Shekhar Azad was killed in a gun-fight in Alfred Park, Allahabad on February 27, 1931. Almost all authorities are agreed that the police had prior information and they suddenly surrounded the Park. At that time Sukhdeoraj was having a chat with him. Sukhdeoraj managed to escape as he had on previous occasions. Later on the revolutionary party held Birbhadra Tiwari guilty for his death. All the persons, who have a first hand knowledge of the affair have accused Birbhadra in their memoirs. Azad had been an absconder since September 26, 1925, when he was wanted in connection with the Kakori hold-up. Born in abject poverty he was also academically the least qualified. But the ideological and military type of discipline to which he had been subjected and the training which he had received during his association with the Banaras and Shahjahanpur branches of the party, stood him in good stead and in the new set-up he was easily accepted as the unquestioned leader. Few revolutionaries

had eluded the clutches of the police for such a long time excluding, of course, the revolutionaries who escaped from the country. During these hectic years Azad was always ready to lay down his life and readily associated himself with most risky assignments.

Azad and Sukhdeoraj were sitting in Alfred Park when a police officer, Bisheshar, accompanied by one Dalchand, who could identify Azad, reached the Park. Dalchand recognized Azad and he went away to give the good news to the police chief Nutt Bower, who came immediately. He parked his car ten yards from the place where Azad was sitting. Shots simultaneously rang out from both the sides. A bullet from Nutt Bower hit Azad on the thigh and Azad's bullet hit Nutt Bower's wrist and his pistol fell. Other policemen came to Nutt Bower's rescue. Bisheshar Singh and others started shooting at Azad. Nutt Bower hid himself behind a tree. Azad also managed to limp behind another tree — a jamun tree according to a letter by Raghavdas. This tree was later cut by the police because it became a place of pilgrimage. Afterwards a new tree was planted by Raghavdas and others in 1939. The gun battle went on for some time, as Azad, as usual, had ample ammunition. Despite being alone (Sukhdeoraj had given the slip) he carried on the unequal fight and shot Bisheshar Singh in the jaw.

Azad was hit by a bullet and he died. Some think that seeing the hopelessness of the situation Azad shot himself as he had taken a vow never to be arrested alive. But one cannot be too sure.[9]

Even when Azad had been dead for some time, the police party did not dare to go near him. They shot him again on the leg to make sure that he was really dead. He was photographed after his death, two policemen holding him in a sitting posture. This was later published in an English book by Nutt Bower's boss. This and also the photographs by Rudranarain are cent per cent genuine. All his other photos are more or less fake.

It appears that Kamala Nehru, wife of Nehru, sent a message to Shinvinayak Mishra, an old Congressman of Banaras about Azad's death. Mishra came to Allahabad and after great difficulty reached Rasulabad, where on the bank of the Ganges the funeral pyre had already been lit. He along with Padmakant extinguished

[9] (1) *Chandra Shekhar Azad* (Hindi) by Manmathnath Gupta and (2) *Balidan* (Hindi) by Nandkishore Nigam.

the pyre, but could not recognise Azad as the fire had already charred his face. The pyre was again lit by Mishra according to Hindu rites and they waited till the body was reduced to ashes. They collected the bones and immersed them in the Ganges. Mishra took some ashes with him, a portion of which was handed over to Acharya Narendra Deva, who according to Mishra, probably placed it at a place where a memorial of Azad stands in Kashi Vidyapeeth.

Mishra stayed with Purushottamdas Tandon at Allahabad after the cremation. There was general strike in Allahabad and there was general mourning. Mishra writes: "In the evening people clad in black took out a procession of the ashes of Azad in the city. A meeting was held in the Purushottam Park under the presidentship of Mohanlal Gautam. The meeting was convened by the student association. Some Congressmen did not like the idea of a general strike or a meeting to celebrate the martyrdom of Azad. In the meeting Purushottamdas Tandon, president, P.C.C., Smt. Kamala Nehru and I spoke. The report of this meeting, specially my speech on Azad's life, appeared in detail in the Hindustan Times dated March 6, 1931. I was asked a variety of questions in this meeting."

A meeting was to be held under the auspices of the youth league at Banaras, but Mishra was held under Section 144. Shivprasad Gupta, an old friend of revolutionaries, advised the youths not to defy the ban.

Azad's indomitable courage, his dedicated life and ultimately his death made him one of the immortals of our fight for freedom.[10]

Chittagong Raid and Surya Sen

Seen from any point of view Chittagong Armoury raid and the Jalalabad gun-fight constitute episodes of very great magnitude in the history of India. It is certainly as important as the Dandi march of Gandhi. For Gandhi the fight for freedom was not a unit, but in the eyes of the common man it was one and indivisible. Judging in the pragmatic manner neither the Dandi march nor the Jalalabad gun-fight ending in the shooting down of 49 revolutionaries brought freedom. The Congress movement of

[10] *Yash Ka Dharohar* (Hindi) by Bhagavandas Mahore.

1930 ended in a compromise, in which the wily Lord Irwin bamboozled Gandhi in such a manner that the forces released by the Dandi march and the Chittagong martyrdoms were frittered away. This time also Gandhi repeated the mistake he had committed in 1922 by calling off the movement. On this occassion, he was simply outwitted by a Viceroy, who wanted just to gain time so that the spirit of upsurge might die away. Had Gandhi allowed the movement to take its natural course, it would have ended in a revolution because the Chittagong revolutionaries had shown the way. At least a 1942-type of upsurge could have been brought about 12 years earlier. As no world war was going on in 1930, there could be no danger of the communists leaving the struggle in midstream because of the involvement of Russia. The Pakistan idea was then as yet the daydream of a few idle minds and could not be whipped into a powerful psychological compulsion.

Gandhi began his historic march accompanied by 79 satyagrahis to break the Salt Act. This was to set the pace for the movement. In an article Gandhi said: "This time, on my arrest, there is to be no mute, passive non-violence, but non-violence of the active type should be set in motion, so that not a single believer in non-violence as an article of faith for the purpose of achieving India's goal should find himself free or alive at the end of this effort to submit any longer to the existing slavery." It is clear that Gandhi wanted this to be a different type of movement and also wanted it to be a fight to the finish.

The revolutionaries under the leadership of Surya Sen fixed the Chittagong raid for April 18, a day sanctified in Irish history as the day of the Easter Rising. Six young men, Nirmal Sen, Lokenath Bal, Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Ambika Chakrabarti and Upendra Bhattacharya were to lead the attacks on the various key points of the district. Anant Singh and Ganesh Ghosh were to spearhead the attack on the police line and armoury, Nirmal Sen and Lokenath Bal were to attack the railway armoury and Ambika Chakrabarti was to lead an attack on the telegraph and telephone exchange. Most of the youths were below 20, some even in the age group 16-17. The vehicle carrying Singh and Ghosh was followed by the vehicle carrying Surya Sen. The revolutionaries were able to surprise and capture the armouries and a huge amount of arms and ammunition came into their hands.

A few guards and an English officer were killed. All the tasks were carried out according to schedule and Surya Sen was given a guard of honour. When the Europeans heard of the shooting and the bomb blasts, they left their houses and fled to the banks of the Karnfuli.

The revolutionaries, however, could not forestall the enemy advance. Some were wounded and four persons, including Anant Singh and Ganesh Ghosh, were sent to escort them to a secret hide-out. When they did not return, Surya Sen decided to retire to the hills. Ambika Chakrabarti who was familiar with the terrain, led them up the hills.

On April 22 the revolutionaries reached Jalalabad hills. The Government side, right on their heels, had reorganised and surrounded them from all sides. Surya Sen knew a gun duel was inevitable and their only chance was to break through the enemy ranks. He collected all his youths, told them of the situation and at 4-30 the gun-fight started. Four revolutionaries were badly wounded in the British machine-gun attack. They managed to escape but one Ardhendu Dastidar was taken a prisoner. This young man was tortured and killed, but he refused to speak.

The casualties on the British side had been kept a guarded secret, but one source has it that 160 soldiers were killed. When Ganesh Ghosh was arrested later, the police chief Tegart blurted out in a fit of anger: "For you people, we lost 64 people".[11]

At the end of the night Surya Sen managed to escape. Anant Singh, who had gone to the city with the wounded, could not contact Surya Sen. He walked to Feni, a nearby station, where the police arrested him on suspicion, but he whipped out his pistol, fired a few shots and disappeared. The police had let loose a reign of terror in the district and every youth was under suspicion and arrested, interrogated and tortured. Anant Singh found this atmosphere very trying and in a fit of unreasonable sentimentalism he surrendered to the police.

Some of the revolutionaries escaped to Chandernagore, a French territory, but the French police colluded with the British and their hide-out was surrounded in September 1930. A gun duel followed and in the end they were all arrested. French officials assisted the British in this raid.

Thus all the revolutionaries except Surya Sen were arrested.

[11] *Surya Sen* by Nripendra Krishna Chattopadhyaya, p. 34.

Meanwhile the revolutionaries got the information that the police chief, Crane, was to pass through Chandpur station. Two young men were sent to kill him as he was responsible for many atrocities. Crane was not found, but another notorious police officer, Tarini Mukherjee, was shot dead. Both youths were captured and later hanged.

Police terrorism, however, continued unabated. The police were on the trail of Surya Sen. They always found they had arrived a bit late. This annoyed and irritated the bosses and hell was let loose on the people. One police chief, Asanulla, distinguished himself as a great perpetrator of atrocities. Haripado, a 14-year-old revolutionary, was sent to kill him in a football field while he was seeing a match. Haripado, to be sure, shot him. He was arrested on the spot and tortured and his parents beaten. All this was normal in Chittagong those days, but the police did something which exceeded all this. At Haripado's house the police party saw his two-year old brother in the lap of his mother. They snatched the infant from the mother and threw him on the floor with such force that he was killed on the spot. Haripado himself was tortured to a skeleton, but he refused to speak. He was sentenced to transportation for life. The police tried to start a communal riot on the murder of Asanulla and it is regrettable that they succeeded to some extent.

The revolutionary movement was not the exclusive concern of men alone. It could boast of such brave women as Pritilata, Suhasini and Kalpana.

Pritilata came of a poor family. She was preparing for her B.A. examination when her father lost his job and she accepted the job of a school teacher. Secretly she worked under the guidance of Surya Sen. When the police raided the hide-out of Surya Sen, Pritilata, Nirmal Sen and Surya Sen were there. In the gun fight Priti shot Cameron dead. Pritilata and Surya Sen escaped to the jungle. Later Pritilata was sent, dressed as a boy, to lead a commando party of 9 revolutionaries on the European Club on September 24, 1932. At 9 p.m. when a party was in full swing with dance and music, they raided the place and started shooting. All the Englishmen carried arms. The sentries threw hand grenades at the revolutionaries. Priti was wounded by a flying splinter. She took potassium cyanide and committed suicide, but not before ordering the eight youths to retreat, which they

did. Priti's lifeless body came into police possession.

The hunt for Surya Sen was intensified. Another hide-out was surrounded by the Gurkhas. A youth staying with Surya Sen wanted to be sure they were surrounded. He was about to strike a match, but Surya Sen caught hold of his hand. He crossed a few walls and disappeared in the forest.

Surya Sen was busy manufacturing bombs and reorganising the party. His factory was situated in Dakshineswar and he was staying in Shobhabazar. The police raided this place but Surya Sen once again gave them the slip.

Thirty-two youths were arrested on different occasions and tried in a case known as the Chittagong Armoury Raid case. Surya Sen could not be arrested. The judgment was delivered on March 1, 1932. Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Lokenath Bal, Sukhendu Dastidar, Lalmohan Sen, Anand Gupta, Phanindra Nandi, Subodh Chowdhury, Sahayram Das, Faquir Sen, Subodh Roy and Randhir Dasgupta were given transportation for life. Nand Singh was given 2 years R.I. and Anil Dasgupta was sentenced to 3 years in a Borstal prison. Sixteen accused were acquitted, but they were immediately arrested under the Bengal Ordinance.

It is in this rather sombre and tragic background that the great Surya Sen was carrying on his last-ditch battle. Most of his comrades had been shot, hanged or imprisoned. He himself became rather careless and began to meet all and sundry in an effort to infuse new blood in the party. One day Surya Sen was going along with Kalpana Dutt. Shots were fired at him from all directions and he realised that he had been betrayed. He managed to duck and disappear in the bushes, from where he went to a pond and lay submerged. But a spy followed him and had him arrested. Surya Sen, Tarakeshwar and Kalpana Dutt were tried in one case. A room in the vicinity of the jail belonging to the secret police was turned into a make-shift court and the case was rushed through. Surya Sen and Tarakeshwar were sentenced to death and Kalpana Dutt was given transportation for life. The two were hanged on January 12, 1934 with the cry of Vande Mataram on their lips.

Luxmikant Shukla, a young man from Kanpur, was arrested inside the bungalow of the Commissioner of Jhansi, Mr. Flowers, with a bomb on August 8, 1930. He had intended to kill the

Commissioner because he had insulted some women satyagrahis. Shukla was sentenced to transportation for life. He was sent to the Andamans with his wife Basumati accompanying him there.

Jogendra Shukla of Bihar was a member of the Gandhi Ashram of Banaras since its inception. He was jailed in the non-co-operation movement where he came in contact with Azad and was gradually drawn into the vortex of the movement. He did not become active until the arrest of the Kakori group of revolutionaries. To help the absconders of the Lahore conspiracy a dacoity was committed at Maulani, a village in Champaran on June, 1929. A villager was killed. In the arrest that followed Phanindra, an old revolutionary, was arrested. He was recently married and became an approver. This man was in touch with Manindra Banerjee. Jogendra Shukla was arrested with 3 pistols. He was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

Some time after this they framed a case called Patna conspiracy. The accused were in touch with Azad, made some bombs and wanted to attack the Europeans in a church, but it did not materialise. Ramlagan, a suspected traitor was killed. While following some trail the police came upon a hide-out in which Surajnath Chaube and Hazarilal were living. They hurled a bomb at the police but ultimately were arrested. Hazarilal was sentenced to transportation for life and Chaube was given ten years. Hazarilal spilled some information and a lot of people were arrested and 11 people were sent up for trial. Chaube was again in the dock and he was sentenced to transportation for life. Kanhailal Mishra and Shyamkrishna were also sentenced. Phanindra Ghosh appeared as prosecution witness in this case as well. At his instance a case was started at Motihari ending in the conviction of a few people. A case known as Hajipur train dacoity also started. The station master had been attacked and fired at while he was depositing the day's earnings in a standing train on June 18, 1931.

On June 12, 1930, the Mechhuabazar bomb case was taken up in which 17 persons were implicated. Dr. Narayan Banerjee was declared to be the leader and was given ten years transportation.

On August 25, 1930, when the old enemy of the revolutionaries, Mr. Tegart, was going to his office in the afternoon, Anuj Singh Gupta and Dinesh Majumdar threw two bombs on his car. Anuj

Singh was shot down on the spot and Dinesh Majumdar was sentenced to transportation for life. Subsequently Majumdar escaped from prison and made another attempt on Mr. Tegart. This time he was sentenced to death.

Mr. Lowman who had spent his entire life trailing and crushing down the revolutionaries — had tortured Jogesh Chatterjee and a number of other revolutionaries during 1916 — became the Inspector-General of Police in Bengal in 1930. On August 29 while he was coming with Superintendent Hudson, a youth, Binay Krishna Bose, suddenly fired at them. Lowman was hit by three bullets and he died two days later but Hudson who received two bullets survived. Bose shot his way to escape.

A veritable reign of terror was let loose by the Government now. It made the life of revolutionaries very difficult in the Punjab. Bomb factories were discovered and arrests made. A conspiracy case was started in Amritsar ending in the conviction of two persons. On November 4, 1930 a gun duel took place somewhere between Lahore city and Cantonment and Bisheshamath was killed. Tahal Singh was sentenced to 7 years R.I.

On December 23, 1930 while the Governor was delivering the convocation address in the hall of Lahore University, he was shot at by Harkishen and injured. Inspector Budh Singh was injured and Chanan Singh who received a bullet on his jaws succumbed to his injuries by the evening. A full-fledged trial for conspiracy followed. Harkishen admitted that he intended to kill the Governor, a symbol of British Raj. He was sentenced to death and was executed on June 9, 1931. Three others were also sentenced to death in the conspiracy, but the High Court quashed the sentences.

The Lamington Road (Bombay) shooting can be considered a sequel to the hanging of Bhagat Singh. It is said certain revolutionaries, specially Durga Bhavi, became so excited over the hangings that they wanted to shoot any English official they came across as a measure of revenge. On October 1, 1931 they shot at Sergeant Taylor and his wife and wounded them. They also shot at some other police officers. Durga herself took part in the shooting. The police could not get evidence for a case.

On July 22 Vasudev Balwant Gogate, a student, shot twice at the Governor, Ernest Hudson, who was on a visit to the famous Ferguson College Library in Maharashtra. Gogate was arrested

on the spot and given 8 years R. I.

This was followed by an attack on two military officers who were travelling by train. Two persons entered the compartment, shot the dog and then they shot at the officers and jumped to safety. G. R. Hext succumbed to his injuries, but the other man survived. Later on two youths, Yashwant Singh and Dalpatrai, were implicated and they were sentenced to transportation for life.

Here is an account of the impact of the terrorists' activities in Bengal by Nirad Chaudhary:

"In 1930 I saw another outburst of fear and ferocity after some terroristic outrages by the Bengali revolutionaries. The British community in Calcutta and the districts of Bengal went into an unbelievable hysteria. The Anglican clergymen, who were supported in India by the military budget, justified their share in military expenditure by being some of the fiercest heroes in words. One of them never slept without a revolver under his pillow. In Calcutta British editors would not see a Bengali without keeping their hand on the butt of the pistol in the right hand drawer, and without two Gurkha guards sandwiching the visitor on two sides."[12]

On August 30, 1930 a bomb exploded in the house of Police Inspector Pavitra Bose at Mymensingh. The Inspector was not at home, but his two brothers were injured. The same day a bomb exploded in the house of Inspector Tejesh Chandra Gupta, which did not cause any damage. A girl, Shoba Rani Dutt, was arrested in this connection. Taruni Mukherjee, a police Inspector, was shot dead by two youths while travelling by train. Rama Krishna Biswas and Kalipad Chakravarty were arrested at Chandpur and the former was sentenced to death and hanged on August 4, 1931. Chakravarty was sentenced to transportation for life.

On August 29, 1930 the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Lowman was assassinated. On December 8 some impeccably dressed young men rushed into the Writers' Building and shot dead the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Simson, pushing aside the orderly. They also shot at every English officer who came their way on the road. The Calcutta Secretariat was one of the safest buildings, connected with the police and the army. The youths shot at the Judiciary Secretary, Mr. Nelson, also. But they

[12] *The Continent of Circe* by Nirad Chaudhary.

did not attack their Indian orderlies.

The police had surrounded the building. Escape being out of question they attempted suicide and only Sudhir Kumar Gupta succeeded in this attempt. The other two were removed to hospital. Benoy Krishna Bose who died in the hospital said that death had no terror for him and that he had assassinated Inspector-General Lowman earlier. News of his death spread like wild fire and thousands collected at his cremation place. Doctors rescued the third youth, Dinesh Gupta, so that he could be executed. He was tried and was ultimately hanged on July 8, 1931. A large number of arrests and detentions followed.

According to the report of the Government of Bengal, there were ten successful assassinations during 1930. But the same report states that 51 revolutionaries were executed. Even if it is granted that the life of one revolutionary was equivalent to one hired servant of the Government, this 5 to 1 ratio indicated the attitude of the Government.

More assassinations followed. In March 1931 Sub-Inspector Shashank Bhattacharya of Chittagong was shot in the abdomen and killed. On April 7 District Magistrate of Midnapur James Peddy, while visiting an exhibition, was shot. He was taken to hospital and operated upon, but he died the next day. A dozen youths were arrested, but nothing could be elicited from them and they were let free. This was followed by the assassination of two other magistrates.

Mr. Garlick, the Sessions Judge of 24-Parganas, was shot by Bimal Das Gupta, the revolutionary who had killed James Peddy.

In August Alexander Cassels, the Commissioner of Dacca Division was shot at and wounded, but the assailants escaped.

Some 800 youths were detained without trial in Hijli, an out of the way place. Santosh Kumar Mitra and Tarakeshwar Sen were killed and 18 detenus were badly injured. The Government issued a press note saying that a group of detenus had assaulted the sentries in an organised manner and the guards had to fire at them in self-defence. J. M. Sen Gupta and Subhash Chandra Bose started an investigation, but they were not allowed to meet the detenus. They only met those injured prisoners who were in a hospital. They issued a statement that the Government press note failed to mention the truth. The Government refused all investigation and 175 detenus resorted to hunger-strike. The

hunger-strike was called off when the Government agreed to allow a probe.

The Hijli investigation started on October 6, and the investigation Committee came to the conclusion that Sentry No. 1, sensing danger, rang the alarm bell. The guards rushed to the spot at the order of havildar Rehman Bakshi and beat up all the detenus. This led to exchange of hot words and the sentries shot dead two prisoners and wounded many.

On October 28 the magistrate of Dacca, Mr. L. G. Durno, was shot at by two young men. The revolutionaries escaped and Durno was taken to Calcutta where he lost an eye and a bullet had to be extracted from his jaw.

Meanwhile the European Association had been clamouring for more stringent measures. The Association wanted a full-fledged reign of terror to be let loose. The revolutionaries, however, were tried by tribunals consisting of hand-picked bureaucrats and tried henchmen. The European Association thought even this was superfluous.

On October 29 the President of the European Association, Mr. Villiers, was shot at in his office. Villiers received minor injuries and the assailant was arrested. He was suspected to have been involved in an earlier murder but this could not be proved. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

Nirad C. Chaudhary writes of "how the Bengalis of this period were drawn towards military art and science.

"The so-called Indian renaissance had also a militaristic aspect. If, the Bengal novel which came into being then had love in the European sense as its theme, it also had war as an accompaniment, which, too, was European. Seven out of the fourteen novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who is the first true Bengali novelist and still remains the greatest, depend for the unfolding of their plots on fighting.

"Apart from this emotional satisfaction there was also some intellectual effort to understand the science and art of war. In Chatterji's novels are to be found allusions to Austerlitz and Salamanca. All this made Bengalis born during the last quarter of the nineteenth century dabble in military history and follow the contemporaneous wars with keen interest. Thus it was that even before I was ten I had learnt from my father about all the wars of modern times from the Franco-Prussian War to the Boer

War. Before I was sixteen I had studied the campaigns of Napoleon and of the Russo-Japanese war myself in some detail.

"This vicarious militarism gave a strong military colour to the first outburst of the nationalist movement in Bengal in 1905, and the Bengali revolutionary movement in its ideological inspiration was wholly military. It was at first conceived of as an incipient military uprising. But it soon degenerated into a terroristic movement of political murder, which was due to two reasons: first, the impossibility of organising a military revolt in the existing conditions, and, secondly, the existence of a tradition of private murder for revenge among the Bengali gentry, which necessarily influenced the revolutionary activity.

"None the less, the military concept remained dormant, and asserted itself from time to time. In none was this more clearly seen that in the Bengali political leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, who was also a figure in the terroristic movement. I have in my possession the pre-war manual of infantry training of the British Army which belonged to Bose and is even annotated by him. The first expression of Bose's militarism was seen at the session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1928. For it Bose organised a volunteer corps in uniform, its officers being even provided, so far as I remember, with steel-chain epaulettes. Bose designated himself as its General-Officer-Commanding, G.O.C. for short, and his uniform was made by a firm of British tailors in Calcutta, Harman's. A telegram addressed to him as G.O.C. was delivered to the British General in Fort William, and this was the subject of a good deal of malicious comment in the Anglo-Indian Press. Mahatma Gandhi, being a sincere pacifist vowed to non-violence, did not like the strutting, clicking of boots, and saluting, and he afterwards described the Calcutta session of the Congress as a Bertram Mills circus, which caused great indignation among the Bengalis.

"But Bose gave a serious expression to his militarism afterwards, though he began only with play-acting. During the second world war he organised his Indian National Army in Malaya with the help of the Japanese, and some thousands of Indian soldiers drawn from the prisoners of war in Japanese hands, though not a majority of them, furnished the bulk of his troops. His mind must have been working in secret on such a scheme after the military disasters for Britain and France in 1940. About that time

I one day told a friend how Masaryk had organised an army of liberation out of Czech soldiers of the old Austrian army who were prisoners in Russia. He repeated the story to Bose, and told me afterwards that upon hearing it Bose had only remarked: 'Where is the man in India to do such a thing? But my friend added that he had also noticed a strange fire in Bose's eyes.

"It is common knowledge that Bose's army roused immense, and almost hysterical, enthusiasm among Indians in the last months of the war and those immediately following. The Indian public was determined that Bose's men, who had been taken prisoner by the British Indian Army, should not be punished as traitors by the authorities under military law, which they had undoubtedly violated, and the Indian public made the British authorities eat the humble pie. Such trials as were held were turned into a farce and a fiasco. Such was the strength of the popular feeling that in order to keep the hold of the Gandhian Congress unimpaired, even Gandhi and Nehru came out vehemently on the side of the men of Bose's Army. Gandhi was a pacifist vowed to non-violence, Nehru was an anti-Fascist, and both had forced Bose out of the Congress in 1939. But the dead Bose in his military incarnation left no choice to them except that of supporting the Indian National Army."

We shall come to the story of the I.N.A. later on.

In reality Bose was in touch with the revolutionaries from the very beginning and a revolutionary group, the Bengal volunteers was composed of volunteers commanded by Bose. Bose was arrested while on way to Dacca to make an inquiry into the atrocities committed there. Later on the case against him for non-compliance of order was withdrawn.

On December 16 Kumari Shanti Ghosh and Kumari Suniti Chowdhury, students of Faizunnissa Girls' School, hit the headlines. The two sought an interview with Magistrate B. J. Stevens. The moment they were shown in, they shot at Stevens killing him on the spot. Sardar Patel, in the Strict Gandhian tradition, went out of his way to describe the girls as a blot on Indian womanhood. Statements like these were certainly unwarranted and encouraged the Government to give exemplary punishments. The two girls were sentenced to transportation for life.

On February 6, 1932 while Governor Stanley Jackson was delivering his convocation address he was shot at by Bina Das,

who had come there to receive her graduation certificate. She fired at him five times, but missed the target. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, the renowned historian of Bengali language received a minor injury. Bina Das was arrested. She gave a bold statement in the court but the Government suppressed it.

On April 30, 1932 two youths shot at Magistrate R. Douglas while he was signing some paper in his office, the second such attempt. One of the youths was arrested on the spot and a paper was found in his pocket which said: "This is our answer to the Hijli firings. British imperialism should take these assaults as a warning. Our sacrifices will not go in vain. They will awaken the people of India. Vande Mataram." Douglas succumbed to his injuries and the arrested youth, Pradyot Kumar Bhattacharya, was hanged.

On June 13 the police received information that some of the revolutionaries, who had escaped during the Chittagong Conspiracy were hiding in a village called Jal Ghat. Captain Cameron, leading the police party, surrounded the village. Some Gorkha soldiers were also called to assist the police. They raided the hide-out at 9 p.m. While Cameron, accompanied by a havildar, was climbing the stairs, he was shot dead. In the shooting that followed, two revolutionaries managed to escape. They were Surya Sen and Sita Ram Biswas. But Nirmal Chandra Sen and Apurba Sen fell to police bullets.

The Sub-Deputy Magistrate of Dacca, who was a guest in the house of S. N. Chatterjee, was killed in sleep on July 7, 1932 and the assailants escaped. Kalipada Mukherjee was later on hanged for this murder.

On July 29, Elison, the Additional Police Superintendent of Tripura, was shot at by a young man. The bullet hit Elison, but he got off his bicycle and shot back killing the young man. The young man had flung at Elison a packet of red leaflets in which it was stated that these stray attacks were a precursor of large-scale attacks on the European community. The leaflet bore the name of Surya Sen on behalf of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Elison succumbed to his injuries.

The *Statesman* editor, Sir Alfred Watson, known for his very hard-hitting editorials against Indian revolutionaries, was shot at while getting into his car on August 7. Watson escaped and the youth committed suicide by taking potassium cyanide. On

August 22, the Additional Police Superintendent, Grosby, was shot by Vinay Bhushan Dey when he was returning home. Dey was sentenced to transportation for life.

Sir Alfred Watson was again attacked while he was going in a car accompanied by a lady. Both the occupants and the driver were injured. The revolutionaries who shot from a car were pursued by a mob. Of the three revolutionaries two took potassium cyanide and the third escaped in a taxi.

On September 18, the Superintendent of the Rajashahi Central Jail, Charles Luke, was driving his car accompanied by his wife and daughter. A bicycle came from the opposite direction ran into it. Luke swerved to avoid striking it but the cycle was again in his way. This time Luke was forced to stop the car and as soon as he got out he was shot at. Luke was hit in the face, but he did not die.

Two magistrates of Midnapur had already been shot dead and a third, Mr. Burge, was shot dead while playing football on September 2, 1932. The bodyguards returned the fire and two of the revolutionaries died on the spot. A third was arrested. In the ensuing trial three revolutionaries, Nirmal Jivan, Ramkrishna Roy and Brijkishore, were hanged.

On May 8, 1934 the Bengal Governor, Sir John Anderson, was shot at while witnessing race at Lebong. Several arrests were made and Kumari Ujjala, Mano Ranjan Banerjee and Ravi Bannerjee turned approvers. As a result Bhavani Bhattacharya was executed and others were sentenced to transportation for life. This group was independent of the main group and had entered the conspiracy without proper guidance. They had, it appears, done everything in a spirit of light adventure.

Meanwhile the civil disobedience movement had collapsed. Gandhi entered into a premature pact with the Government which killed the revolutionary spirit generated by the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Jatin Das and others. He was unable to utilise the lead given by Surya Sen and his gallant band of young men and women. In spite of all this and the many discordant elements which had managed to smuggle themselves into it, the revolutionary movement limped on.

Revolutionaries in North India were not quiet either. They were in hot pursuit of Virbhadra Tiwari, suspected to have been responsible for Chandra Shekhar Azad's death. The Kanpur

revolutionaries wanted to liquidate the elusive Tiwari. At last, three youths noticed him in the Narial Bazar at Kanpur and pounced on him. As soon as Tiwari heard the shots, he stretched himself flat on the ground and the assailants, satisfied that he was dead, went their way. Tiwari was not even wounded. Sensing that Kanpur was too hot for him, Tiwari shifted to Urai. Ramesh Chandra Gupta, who wanted to kill him, told his family that at Kanpur there were too many distractions for his studies and wished to go to Urai, a peaceful little place. Ramesh joined a school there, on the trail of Tiwari. One day when Tiwari was coming down the stage after enacting a part in a drama, Gupta dragged him perforce in a real drama and shot at him. But Tiwari escaped this time too. Gupta was arrested and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

The police were on the look-out for Yashpal, absconding for a long time. On January 22, 1932, the police sighted Yashpal, who was staying in the house of an Irish lady, Mrs. Jafferali alias Savitri Devi. That night Superintendent of Police Pildich and his men surrounded the house and after a brief gun-fight arrested Yashpal. He was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment. Savitri Devi was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for harbouring an absconder.

MEERUT CONSPIRACY

The Meerut Conspiracy stands out as a different type of conspiracy because of its international links and its commitment to socialism, but as far as the Government and the people were concerned, it was the continuation of the old revolutionary conspiracies. The Judges said:

"It leaves no doubt in our minds that the violent overthrow of the present order of society and bringing about the independence of India by means of an armed revolution is not a distant but immediate object, although in the absence of favourable conditions, the spadework has to be done as a matter of policy and tactics. We are convinced that any group of persons, who formed themselves in a party and placed before themselves a programme of this type and agreed to give effect to it to the best of their ability have undoubtedly conspired to deprive His Majesty the King of the sovereignty of British India....We unhesi-

tatingly record a finding that these accused persons have been rightly convicted of the offence under Section 121-A".[13]

The case started with simultaneous searches and arrests all over India in March, 1929. Some 31 persons were arrested under Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 121-A (waging war against the K.E.) including 3 Englishmen — Lester Hutchinson, a Communist, Philip Spratt, a Cambridge Graduate, and B. F. Bradley. The others were D. R. Thangdi, Kisorilal Ghosh, V. S. Mukherji, Kedarnath Saigal, S. H. Jhabnala, Muzaffar Ahmed, S. A. Dange, Ghate, Joglekar, Nimbkar, Mirajkar, Shaukat Usmani, Sohan Singh Joshi, Samshul Huda, Majid, Ayodhya Prasad, Adhikari, P. C. Joshi, Goswami, Chakrabarti, Basak, Desai, Alve, Kasle, Gourishankar, Kadam and Dharambir Singh.

It was alleged that the accused under the guidance of the Comintern had conspired to bring about an armed revolution and establish Soviet republics in India controlled by the Soviet Union. This they were supposed to effect by armed uprisings and general strikes at the last stage.

The sessions court sentenced one to transportation for life, several to transportation for 12 years, 10 to seven years, others to five, four, three and two years. There was very strong agitation in India and England against the heavy sentences. Hutchinson wrote[14] in his book *Conspiracy at Meerut*:

"The heavy sentences passed by Mr. Yorke had raised a storm of protest not only in India but in England. With the passing of the months, the storm had increased in intensity rather than abated. The India Office was inundated with resolutions of indignant protests sent from organisations all over the country; the Secretary of State was bombarded with questions in the House of Commons...All this agitation necessarily made a deep impression on the Government of India; it was realised that the extremely heavy sentences passed by Mr. Yorke on persons who had only been engaged in ordinary trade union and political activities, had defeated the Government's object in initiating the trial; the Government of India by these sentences had forfeited every vestige of public support so necessary to successful prosecution. International interest in the trial had been aroused, and the much-vaunted traditions of British justice were shown to be hollow

[13] *Notable Indian Trials* by S. C. Sarkar, p. 55.

[14] Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 61.

and public opinion was alarmed. It was quite useless for British politicians to castigate the judicial methods pursued in foreign countries, when on British territory 31 trade unionists had been kept in jail for four years on trial and then sentenced to long terms of transportation and rigorous imprisonment. Foreigners merely shrugged their shoulders at this further example of British cant and hypocrisy. If illusion were not to be shattered once for all, British justice had to be rehabilitated and this pleasant duty was left to the Judges of the High Court at Allahabad. The work of rehabilitation was done very well."

The sentences were sensationally reduced by the High Court obviously in view of the indignant protests by such people as the Archbishop of York, H. G. Wells, Einstein, Romain Rolland and Laski. The burden of the whole agitation can be summarised in the words of Laski: "The Meerut trial is a grim incident in the history of British India. Men were torn from civil life for long years, whose only crime was to carry out the ordinary work of trade union and political agitation after the fashion of everyday life in this country. Not merely socialist opinion in Great Britain recognised that the prosecution was scandalous in its inception and disgraceful in its continuance....A Government which acts in this fashion indicts itself. It acts in fear; it operates by terror; it is incapable of that magnanimity which is the condition for the exercise of justifiable power."

The Meerut case helped in the dissemination of knowledge on socialism in detail. What Bhagat Singh had done was supplemented by the Meerut case, but the reduced sentences robbed the Meerut conspirators of a great deal of glory and glamour and some, specially Philip Spratt, later, became outspoken anti-Communist. He contributed in the paper *Swarajya* (of C. Rajagopalachari) articles proving that Marx was wrong.

On January 30, 1933, a mail train was looted near Gaya and 17 persons were rounded up in this connection including Shyama Charan Barthwar, Keshav Prashad, Shatrugna Singh, Bhagvat Das, Kedar Nath Malaviya and Jagdev Malaviya, all associates of Chandra Shekhar Azad. They were sentenced to seven years imprisonment.

Fanindranath Ghosh, who had turned approver and escaped the bullets in Bhusaval court, was stabbed to death in his home town of Betiya (Bihar) by Baikuntha Sukhla. He was arrested in

Sonepur and he was sentenced to death. Chandrama Singh was tried but could not be implicated. Ramasaran and Rambhana were, however, convicted in this case.

On April 25, 1933, a bank was looted in Ootacamand in Madras. Several arrests were made and Bachchu Lal, Shambu Lal Azad and Prem Prakash were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. All these revolutionaries were from the North.

Meanwhile the Banaras police, on a tip from Balia, arrested on January 11, 1935 a young man who was cycling his way to Allahabad. He was carrying with him some papers, 45 cartridges and a notebook. This led to raids in Balia, Banaras, Allahabad, Gazipur and Janpur and the arrests of Gokul Das, Tarakeshwar Pandey, Narmadeshwar Chaturvedi, Ram Lakshman Tiwari, Shiv Pujan Singh and many others. The police case was that these people had spread their organisation in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, the Punjab and other States and they possessed evidence that they were attempting to foment revolution in all the States.

Accordingly, on February 23, 1935, the police raided about 250 places in the province, but failed to get anything of an implicating nature. Petitions for bail were turned down and the prosecution said that the entire conspiracy was based on the notebook seized and other papers which were written in code language. The complete minutes of one of the meetings of the group was in the hands of the police. The police also had, alongside, the photographs of the members and it was emphasised that this very group was responsible for all the revolutionary activities in those provinces since 1925. Gokul Das who was arrested several times in connection with many conspiracies, was named the leader.

The police took six months to prepare the case. Everything was done to coerce some persons to become Crown witnesses without any success. A First Class Magistrate, while commenting on this decision, said that a mountain was being dug up to catch a rat.

Despite all this Gokul Das, Ram Lakshman Tiwari, Hari Nam Sharma and others were tried. The police officer who specially came from Bihar to depose against Gokul Das could state nothing except that Gokul Das had been arrested in Bihar in 1930, when he had come to Bihar to meet some associates of Yogendra Shukla. He was a star political suspect, as they called him in their jargon. In the end six persons from Banaras and Balia were

sentenced to imprisonments ranging from one to four years. One of them, a blacksmith from the Ajamgarh District, was aged 120. He was accused of having made the arms and was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

For a long time girls were not welcome for active revolutionary work. This was due to two reasons. They faced a far greater danger from the British police, and they could be a distraction to the revolutionaries. These objections could not hold good and in Bengal many brave girls came forward and covered themselves with glory. We have already mentioned Pritilata and Kalpana. Here are a few others.

Lilavati Nag: The daughter of a retired Deputy Magistrate of Calcutta, Rai Bahadur Girish Chandra Nag, she took her Masters' degree in English literature and had a bright academic career throughout. She was among the founders of Kamarunnissa Girls' School, formerly known as the Dipavali Vidyalaya. She was the Honorary Head Mistress of the Vidyalaya for 2 years. During the period, she formed a women's organisation called the Dipavali Nari Sangh which aimed at working for an all-round uplift of women. She toured extensively and set up many schools for girls.

After breaking away from the Dipavali Vidyalaya, she established a high school for girls with a hostel attached to it and provision for the girls from poor families to study and work. She also started a monthly magazine called *Jayashri*. On December 20, 1931, she was arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and was released after 7 years in 1938.

Renuka Sen: An M.A., she was a student at the Dipavali Vidyalaya. After getting her B.A. she went to study in Calcutta, where she got her master's degree. There she was arrested in connection with the Dalhousie Square bomb case in 1930 while teaching at Bethune. She was released but lost her job. She was again arrested with Lilavati Nag on December 20, 1930 and was released in 1931.

Lila Kamal from Maharashtra was arrested for trying to rob the Grindlays Bank. She was subsequently released. Indumati Sinha, daughter of Gopal Lal Sinha, of Chittagong, was arrested on December 14, 1939 and was released after six years' imprisonment. Amita Sen was arrested under the Bengal Ordinance in August 1934 and was released in 1939. Kalyani Dev, M.A., was arrested during the Satyagraha movement and was kept in jail

for eight months. She was again arrested and then released. In 1933, a pistol was discovered at her residence in Ballygunge. She was arrested at her hostel, but was released as the evidence was not enough. But she was immediately arrested under the Bengal Ordinance and was kept in jail for a long time. Kamala Chatterjee, a budding writer, was arrested under the Bengal Ordinance in 1931, while she was still a college student. She was released in 1937.

Here is a list of women revolutionaries arrested under the Bengal Ordinance and their sentences:

Shushila Das Gupta (5 years);

Lahanya Prabha Das Gupta (5 years);

Kamala Das Gupta — arrested with Bina Das, but released and was later arrested under the Bengal Ordinance;

Surma Das Gupta (1½ years);

Usha Mukherjee (3 years);

Suniti Devi (2 years);

Pratibha Bhadra (5 years);

Sarayu Chaudhury — was arrested in the Titagarh case and later jailed under the Bengal Ordinance for 4 years;

Indira Sudha Ghosh (4 years);

Prafulla Nalini Brahma — arrested in connection with the assassination of Magistrate Stevens; but there was no evidence. She was jailed under the Bengal Ordinance and she died in prison in 1930;

Helena Bal — arrested with her uncle Prafulla Kumar Dutt and Supati Ray Chaudhury, spent several years in jail;

Asha Das Gupta (5 years);

Aruna Sanyal (5 years);

Sushma Das Gupta;

Pramila Gupta — was arrested along with Bina Das remained in jail for many years;

Suphrabha Bhadra (Pratibha's sister) was an internee for many years;

Shantikana Sen (2 years);

Shanti Sudha Ghosh (4 years);

Vimala Pratibha Devi — was arrested on June 20, 1930, while she was leading a procession on the Deshabandu Day (7 years);

Mamata Mukherjee — interned in Comilla;

Hasyabala Devi — interned in her residence at Barisal;
Saroj Nag — arrested in connection with the Titagarh Arms Conspiracy, released and again interned.

This is not an exhaustive list but only to show that the revolutionary movment had penetrated very deeply among the women in Bengal.

It may be generally said the Indian revolutionary movement in its old form came to an end with the martyrdom of Chandra Shekhar Azad in North India and the Lebong incidents in Bengal. But some pockets continued to function till the beginning of the second world war.

General Dyer, the man responsible for the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in 1919, was shot dead in London by Udham Singh in 1940 on the eve of the Congress session at Ramgarh. After 21 years General Dyer got the punishment that he so richly deserved. The newspapers did not give much information about Udham Singh. But it seems that like Madan Lal Dhingra, who had shot Sir Curzon Wylie, he had gone to England for studies. After his arrest, he was subjected to inhuman tortures and was ultimately hanged. The Ramgarh session reverberated with the cries of "Udham Singh Zindabad!" But these were almost the last flickers.

CHAPTER IV

The Full Impact

WAR BREAKS OUT

THE SECOND WORLD WAR did not come as a bolt from the blue. Its rumblings were heard long before 1939. The virus was imbedded in the Treaty of Versailles.

The economic crisis of 1929 affected Germany too and it stopped payment of reparations. This was condoned in view of the revolutionary situation prevailing there. In 1932 another attempt at revolution was averted. Lord Vansitart, who later on became notorious as an anti-Facist revanchist, was Under-Secretary in charge of the Foreign Ministry in Britain during the crucial years 1930-1937.

During the Vansitart regime British capitalists sent armaments and warships to Germany with the knowledge and in complete defiance of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. France protested but in vain. A naval pact was signed between Great Britain and Germany in 1935 in the matter of making submarines. The Treaty of Versailles was scattered to winds. The stage was set for the rise of Hitler.

Indian leaders were not unaware of this situation. Subhash Chandra Bose proposed at the Tripura Congress session that in view of the impending war, the British Government should be served with an ultimatum that if it did not concede India's demand for freedom within 6 months a mass movement would be launched. It should be borne in mind that as yet there was not much difference of opinion between Gandhi and Bose, but Gandhi did not back him. Bose, who had just returned from a tour of Europe, fought an election inside the organisation against Gandhi's candidate and won. But Gandhi ultimately had his way and Bose had to go. He thus defeated democracy with the help of demo-

cracy and since then Congress leaders have become adept in this art. As soon as the war was declared on September 1, 1939 in Europe, India was dragged into it by the Viceroy. The Congress which happened to be in power in eight provinces, condemned in strong terms Nazism and Fascism and also the policies of the British Government. The Congress Working Committee, however, passed a resolution saying it was willing to give conditional support to Great Britain in its war efforts. But the Government did not respond. On the contrary, the Ministries found themselves at loggerheads with the Governors. At last, on October 22 the Working Committee directed the Ministries to resign. As soon as the Congress Ministries resigned, well-known leftists were arrested.

It was in this atmosphere of indecision and inactivity that the Congress session was held at Ramgarh. It was said in so many words at this session that in view of the policies of the British Government, the Congress was left with no option but to launch the struggle for independence. In spite of this the Congress still hesitated. In June 1940 the Working Committee made yet another serious offer to cooperate with the British Government which too was spurned, and the Congress was compelled to launch individual civil disobedience.

The Ahrars of Punjab and the Youth Leagues of the U.P. started anti-war propaganda as soon as the war was declared. The youth league of Allahabad under the leadership of Kedar Malaviya, Rupnarayan Pande, Mohit and Basant, the brothers of Manindra Banerjee, started sending a batch of youths daily to plant the national flag at the main police station and court arrest. Many leftists were arrested for their anti-war speeches. Anti-war slogans were written on the walls and railway wagons. The Congress became alarmed and Maulana Azad, the Congress President, was prevailed upon by Allahabad Congressmen to denounce it in public.

Side by side with the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940 Bose held an anti-compromise conference at Ramgarh. It was a great success. The conference resolved to launch the struggle on April 6, 1941. It is interesting to know that this plan could not be carried out even in Bengal, because Subhash Chandra Bose was engaged in the election campaign of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. After the elections, he started the Holwell Monu-

ment movement, which was related to the Black Hole tragedy. The pressure of the leftists and the progressives as well as the deteriorating condition of the masses compelled the high command to have second thoughts. Gandhi was forced to launch a half-hearted symbolic struggle. This is how individual civil disobedience began.

On December 7, 1941, Japan entered the war in favour of the Fascist camp and within a few days the Pacific theatre was active. On December 30, the Congress Working Committee once again offered to help the Government and even relieved Gandhi of the burden of leadership. Britain's position on the eastern front became very precarious and on March 8, 1942 Rangoon fell to the Japanese and on March 11 the Cripps Mission was announced. Twelve days later Sir Stafford Cripps came to India with the package proposals to secure India's support to defeat Japan. The proposal also sought to appease the Muslim League. Britain was in such a plight in those days that Gandhi described the Cripps proposals as a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank.

Those close to Gandhi had begun to feel that the technique of civil disobedience had become ineffective. Even Gandhi's writings in those days were suggestive of this mood. He wrote on July 12, 1942:

"This time I am not going to court imprisonment. We do not have to court imprisonment in this struggle. I am intending to make this struggle short and swift as far as possible."

Such a statement from Gandhi was capable of more than one interpretation. When he launched the movement in 1921, many believed that in the end he would give a call for revolution. Right from the South Africa days all the movements led by Gandhi were characterised by courting imprisonments after giving previous notice. If he was not to court imprisonment this time, what was he going to do?

Towards July end, Gandhi again wrote that he would try his best to keep the struggle peaceful. "But if I find that it has failed to impress the British Government and other powers I shall go to the extreme end. It is only proper that we should hold these powers responsible for all that happens in India."

On August 9, Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's translator and close collaborator, wrote in the *Harijan*: "We are all very familiar with the technique of non-violent non-co-operation. It includes

the boycott of Government organisations and services and non-payment of taxes. But now our non-violent non-co-operation will have to be extended to the entire field of the activities of the enemy."

Kishorelal Mashruwala, another disciple, wrote a significant article in the *Harijan* of August 23, 1942, in which he supported sabotage activities as non-violent.

It is clear from the above that on the eve of the August movement, the Gandhian camp was deliberately encouraging the very explosive idea that sabotage was not violence. This was further confirmed in a letter from Gandhi to the Viceroy in which it was revealed that in the interval between the Cripps Mission and the August movement his disciples were discussing with much excitement if sabotage activities could be called non-violent. Many of his eminent disciples had come to the conclusion that the old Gandhian methods were no longer effective. This can be interpreted as the rise of a leftist ferment inside the innermost ring of Gandhism, but I am inclined to believe that all this was paraded at the instance of Gandhi himself, who knew to what exact extent his disciples could be expected to react. Sardar Patel also mentioned that the struggle was going to be a swift one. If after all this the man in the street came to the conclusion that the struggle was to be launched on altogether different lines, how could he be blamed? Indeed this was what Gandhi wanted. On July 6, 1942, the Congress Working Committee met in Wardha and after a prolonged session finally decided to launch the struggle.

On July 14, a 1,200-word resolution of the Working Committee was released. It said:

"The day-to-day experience and the near-impossible situation through which the people of India are passing, strengthens Congressmen in the belief that British rule in India should end very soon. In the world the Congress has consistently kept up the policy of non-interference with the war. Even at the risk of failure, it deliberately confined itself to a symbolic protest.... Now all our hopes are shattered. The failure of the Cripps Mission proved that India's state of dependence was not to disappear soon. The representatives of the Congress did not pitch their demands high during the Cripps Mission talks.... The Congress thinks that it can change this hostile feeling into goodwill provided India is conceded the right to freedom. The Congress does

not on principle object to foreign armies being stationed in India to fight the Japanese agression. If, however, this appeal falls on deaf ears, the Congress would be unwillingly compelled to use all the non-violent strength it has gathered since 1920."

It was resolved to hold the AICC session on August 7 to take a final decision. Newsmen again and again asked Gandhi if he was going to court imprisonment this time. A mysterious smile would appear and with eyes a little averted he would fend off the possibility with a "Oh no." He also said the question of his going to prison did not arise, but in case he was arrested, he could not say if he would go on hunger strike. He warned ominously that violence might break out in the country as soon as the struggle was launched. If violence broke out in spite of everything, he would not mind it. When it was suggested that the struggle should be postponed till the end of the war, he retorted by saying that it would be easier to deal with Germany if the struggle was on. It could be averted only if India was conceded freedom. He reiterated that the allied army could continue to remain in India till the threat of a Japanese invasion was over. Gandhi also said that if by any chance the Japanese overran India, he would carry on the satyagraha against them as well. In a statement in the *News Chronicle* he said that the programme of action would include all non-violent activities that came within the purview of a mass revolution. He also said that the struggle would probably be launched within two weeks of the resolution passed by the AICC. In the meantime, he would be willing to see the Viceroy to avert the confrontation.

It was during this period that Pattabhi Sitaramayya circulated a letter which came to be known as the Andhra Circular. This called upon the Congressmen to cut telegraph wires. Copies of this circular fell into the hands of the Government and it declared Congressmen were responsible for the sabotabe activities in the country. The Government resolution on this point said: "The Governor-General in Council has been aware too for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities directed among other things to interruption of communications and public utility services, the organisation of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with defence measures including recruitment". (Quoted in Gandhi's letter from Aga

Khan palace to Linlithgow, August 14, 1942.)

Gandhi tried to disown the responsibility for the movement by saying: "The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing their self-control" (Gandhi's letter to Linlithgow, September 23, 1942). In spite of this Linlithgow maintained in his letter of February 5, 1943: "I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the A.I.C.C., that well-known Congressmen have organised and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; that even now an underground Congress organisation exists, in which, among others, the wife of the member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country."[1]

When the Congress leaders were released in 1945, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya boasted in Vijayavawada that he himself drafted the Andhra Circular and affirmed that he had drafted the circular only after consultations with Gandhi and the circular instructed cutting down palm trees, non-payment of all taxes except the municipal tax and cutting the telegraph wires. The circular he said, forbade sabotaging of railway tracks or setting fire to railway wagons.

It was under these circumstances that the Congress Working Committee met on August 4, 1942. It published its resolution on August 5 and the same resolution was kept before the AICC which met immediately after. It stated that the AICC viewed with disappointment the deteriorating situation on the Russian and the Chinese fronts and it was full of admiration for the courage of the Russians and the Chinese. It added that the future of the war depended on the end of the British rule in India. In view of the impending danger, it was essential to grant freedom to India. The situation could only improve if the British quit India immediately. As soon as freedom is conceded, an interim government would step in and with the coalition of the principal classes and parties of the country independent India would come to the aid of the allies. The very first function of the interim Government would be to defend India with her own armed forces

[1] All these letters are to found in *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (1944) a Govt. of India publication.

and with the help of the allied powers. The interim Government would be a coalition Government of all the parties and will have the representation of all the classes. It will prepare a scheme for a constitutional assembly, which would be asked to draft a constitution acceptable to all sections. This constitution would be federal in nature guaranteeing a greater amount of autonomy to the constituent provinces.

The resolution said that the Working Committee had made a sincere appeal to Britain and other Allies, but it fell on deaf ears. In spite of this the Working Committee wished to appeal again to Britain and the allies. At the same time it felt that imperialist Government could not prevent India from protesting against that Government guided by the supreme desire to be free. The AICC decided to permit a widespread, non-violent, struggle in which India could utilise all the non-violent power it had gathered during the last 22 years. That struggle would be undoubtedly led by Gandhiji and the AICC requested him to lead the nation at this juncture.

Some apologists of non-violence have attempted to prove that the revolution of 1942 was non-violent. At the same time they claim that the open revolution of 1942 differed from all earlier movements in the matter of objective, strategy, organisation, form and extent.

Incidents in Balia[2] are cited to prove that the revolution of 1942 was non-violent. But it will be shown in due course that it was not so. The Collector of Balia did not surrender because of a change of heart; but because he realised that he was surrounded from all sides and there was no way of escape. Even this surrender was symbolic because he did not give up arms, nor disband the police force. The police merely promised not to go beyond the police lines. But they did not keep this promise and resorted to wanton firing on August 20, 1942. This incident had many other parallels.

Gobind Sahay, a semi-official historian, nevertheless, deserves to be congratulated, for admitting that in 1942 the leaders left the masses to themselves without giving them any programme. In other words, he concedes that it was the masses that engineered the revolution.

Nehru placed the resolution at the AICC session in Bombay

[2] *Sun Biyalis Ka Bidroha* by Gobind Sahay.

in August and Patel seconded it. Nehru said: "This resolution is not a threat. It is an invitation. We are extending our hand of co-operation. But it is clear what will follow if no negotiations are held. We can co-operate on no other condition except Independence."

He clarified the Congress policy on the world war by saying that the objectives of the allies were only negatively correct in the sense that Fascism was worse than imperialism. But, if India was conceded Independence, the very nature of the war would change. "I regret that the people of Great Britain and America are taking a rather narrow view of this matter and they have failed to realise in what way the independence of India is organically related to the world war. We know what slavery means much more than the British and the Americans do, for, we have been suffering under its curse."

Gandhi delivered one of his longest speeches. Without spelling out the programme, he gave the slogan of "do or die."

The session was over by 10.30 p.m. on August 8, 1942 and everybody retired except a few reporters. The resolution passed by the Viceroy in Council came into their hands. One of the reporters immediately contacted Patel who remarked that he did not anticipate any arrests. Soon after, all the telephones went dead. Ten years earlier when Gandhi was arrested, a similar thing had happened. Some reporters rushed to Gandhi's residence and woke him up. The police had arrived in the meantime and Gandhi took goat's milk and orange juice and said his prayers and was ready to go. The entire Congress Working Committee was rounded up.

The news spread like wild fire. At first the people were stunned and then they became angry. They collected at the venue of the Congress and the police used teargas to disperse them, and when this proved ineffective, resorted to lathi charge. Bombay was soon in the throes of a revolution. On August 9 alone the police opened fire at 15 different places. All over the city and even on trees appeared the slogan "Do or die".

Youths and students started setting fire to trams and buses. There was no organisation to guide the people. But a number of leaders emerged from the masses themselves, and a few Congressmen formed a secret organisation. They also set up a broadcasting station. Without any organised plan, sabotage activities were

carried out. It turned out to be a hotch-potch revolution. Mill workers struck work for eight or ten days. But because of the propaganda of the Communist Party, which had by this time given the slogan of people's war, and the Muslim League, they went back to work. Strikes in schools and colleges lasted three to four months. By September, the revolutionaries had started using bombs. On October 3, there was a terrific explosion in Mazagoan Court. On October 18, the godowns of the *Times of India* were set on fire. The British paper had consistently followed an anti-Indian policy. The Congress Radio Station was seized by the police by November. The release of the letters explaining Gandhi's fast dampened the revolution, which dragged on till February 1944. Police stations were destroyed and a number of officers were killed, including 4 high-ranking army officers. Trains were derailed. But in the absence of any organisation and a clear-cut programme and the defection of a large number of leftists, all these were wasted.

Balia Shows the Way

The news of the arrest of the Congress leaders at Bombay reached Balia the same day. The next day, August 10, all the schools in Balia were closed and the students went round in batches shouting slogans. On August 11, people and the students took out a joint procession which ended in a meeting at which the Congress leader, Ram Anant Pandeya, called upon the people to accept the challenge of the Government, Pandeya was arrested.

On August 12, a students' procession was taken out to demand the closure of the courts. This was stopped by 100 armed policemen and in the ensuing lathi charge many were badly wounded.

The same day in a speech in the British Parliament the Secretary of State, Mr. L. S. Amery, alleged that the Congress programme included general strike in industry and trade, paralysing of the administration and courts, cutting telegraph and telephone wires and closing army recruitment centres. This speech enlightened the people and triggered the revolution. On August 13, Vilthara Road railway station was attacked and the building was burnt. It is remarkable that the wad of currency notes found in the safes was not looted, but burnt. The water-pump and the water tank were also smashed. A goods train was looted and the

engine was smashed. The post office was attacked. Seed centres and police stations were also attacked.

On August 16, the Rasda treasury was attacked. Many railway stations were attacked and burnt down. The next day when a police station was attacked, the police officer donned the Gandhi cap and shouted national slogans. When the people asked for arms, he promised to oblige them next day and called the leaders inside the police station and then gave orders to open fire on the public. The national flag planted on the police station was pulled down. A youth, Kaushalya Kumar, who went to replant, was shot down. The police kept up firing from 3.30 in the evening to 8 o'clock till their stock was exhausted and they surrendered. A number of police stations were burnt down in Balia. The District Magistrate, Nigam, who learnt that the people were coming in their thousands to free the leaders and then attack the Government offices, at once went to Pandit Chitu Pandeya and Radhe Mohan Singh in jail and offered to release them provided they pacified the crowd. But the leaders did not agree. Then Nigam suggested that they should at least take the responsibility for the safety of the treasury, prison and property. Nigam released all the leaders, who addressed a mammoth meeting at the Town Hall where Chitu Pandeya exhorted the people not to indulge in sabotage activities. Gajadhar Sharma, Mahananda Mishra, Prasidda Narayan, Nagina Choube, Mangal Singh, Parshuram Singh and others, however, spoke in a different vein and the sabotage activities were resumed. A police officer, Vyas, who had had the students beaten up, was caught and belaboured. Shops of foreign clothes, liquors and hashish were attacked. Nigam, who was by now certain that the treasury would be looted, directed a Deputy Collector to burn the currency notes after noting down their numbers. These instructions were carried out but lakhs of rupees were pocketed by the police in the process. Grainshops and seed centres were looted.

On August 20, a police van went round the city firing at passers-by indiscriminately contrary to the assurance given to the leaders.

Had the leaders any specific programme, they would have planned attacks on the administrative centres, that still remained to be captured. But they did something totally different. Separate panchayats were formed for different localities and Congress

volunteers were appointed for the defence of the city. Balia became a republic and Chitu Pandeya was declared its first president. According to a Government report, seven out of ten police stations of the district were in the hands of the revolutionaries, and Congress raj was proclaimed.

On August 22, Chitu Pandeya called a meeting to which he invited Nigam. But he did not turn up. Instead, he sent a notice to be read at the meeting. It was stated in the notice that anybody who spread terrorism in the district would be arrested.

It is evident from the firing on August 20, and also from this notice that there was no change of heart in Nigam. By August 20, the military arrived and after several clashes Balia was back under British rule.

Once the military arrived a reign of terror was let loose on Balia. The young leaders of the revolution were the first to be arrested, prominent among them being Uma Shankar, Suraj Prasad, Hira Pansari Vishwa Nath, Bachcha Lal and Rajendra Lal. They were beaten up and tortured. Those leaders were forgotten and others acquired fame as the leaders of the revolution.

It is impossible to give full account of the suppression that followed. Houses of the people who were supposed to have helped the revolutionaries, were burnt down. The leaders were made to climb trees and then bayonetted. People were even stripped and flogged in public. The senior Government pleader was arrested even after a loyal career of several years, only because he happened to be a brother of Radha Govind Singh, who had led the attack on the treasury in Bansdih.

Even villages were not spared. On August 24 a regiment reached Sukpura, eight miles north of Balia. There was wanton firing. A Mahant, who was loyal to the Government and who had given Rs. 10,000 towards the war fund only two months ago was tortured so much that he jumped from a height of 40 feet and broke his leg. His elephant was shot down. All this because he had planted the national flag on his Math. It was here that Marsh Smith shot down Chandi Prasad for the simple reason that he belonged to the Congress in 1921. There was firing in Bansdih and 30 villages were burnt down around Balia and the entire bazaar was looted in Revati. On August 25 Nethersole beat Ramkrishna Singh and Bageshwar Singh to death. And the people who fled to the fields were shot down.

Dev Nath Upadhyaya writes: "Between August 1942 and 1944 no man in Balia dared to don the Gandhi cap. Only since February 1944, when some people from Allahabad started frequenting Balia in connection with the trials of the political prisoners, some Gandhi caps began to be seen here and there." Nobody could even pass through Balia with a Gandhi cap on. In April 1944 Harihar Singh of Muzaffarpur was ordered to take off his Gandhi cap at the Balia railway station. When he refused, he was dragged out from the train and belaboured on the platform. Collective fines were arbitrarily imposed, and fantastically large amounts were collected. Arrested people were, at first, mercilessly beaten up, then they were kept in th lock-up and starved. If the prisoners did not answer the questions put to them, they were suspended by their legs. Upadhyaya writes: "More painful tortures were improvised for 'dangerous' prisoners. Applying chilli powder on the private parts and the striking of penis with cane came in as quite useful measures. Masturbating again and again till blood came out was another form of torture."

So many prisoners were crammed into the the prisons that there was not enough room even to sit. The prisoners were not provided with any bedding. Instead of the usual jail utensils they were provided with earthen bowls; and once a day they were given chapatis made from chaff which caused them dysentery. Many contracted diseases by the time they came out. When the Congress was in power in Balia, Government officers were treated well, but when British rule was re-established, this was the treatment given to them. Upadhyaya has prepared a list of 64 martyrs in the Balia revolution.

Students spearheaded revolutionary activities at Gazipur. On August 15 they took out a big procession to plant the national flag on the Sadat police station. The procession was fired upon. When the stock of bullets was exhausted and many persons had been killed people set fire to the police station killing all the policemen inside. The S.D.O. at Syedpur, in a bid to save himself, planted the tricolour flag atop his office. On August 14, people from Sherpur attacked Mohammedabad railway station and also the nearly airport. Reinforcements arrived after crossing the Gomati river, and a reign of terror was let loose. Ram Shankar Rai and Shobhan Lal of Sherpur were killed. For 12 hours massacre and plunder became the order of the town. A woman

called Radhika Devi was pushed into a well and drowned. Budh Nath Singh and Daroga Singh of Gahmar were shot dead. There was widespread repression in Karuyabad, Sadan, Nandgunj and nearly 70 other villages and 167 persons were killed. Over Rs. 3.25 lakhs was extorted by way of collective fines.

The revolt in Banaras began with a procession of the Banaras Hindu University students to plant the national flag at the Court. The police officers tactfully allowed them to do it. The masses were satisfied and proceeded to hoist the national flag on the civil court too. Had the masses insisted on capturing the treasury or the armoury, then that would have been something serious. But even this little concession hurt the bureaucracy, and so it began to have second thoughts. On September 13, a procession which started from Dashashvamedh was lathi charged and subsequently fired upon. Many lost their lives. This led to mob fury.

Telephone and telegraph wires were cut and posts of every kind were uprooted. Almost all the stations were looted and rail tracks damaged. The airports at Rajawadi and Ibbatpur were rendered useless and a number of post offices, railway stations, godowns and police stations were looted. In many places police officers were compelled to hoist the national flag. At Dhanapur, when the public proceeded to plant the national flag on the police station, the inspector ordered the police to loot the market. At this the infuriated mob killed the inspector and two policemen. The grand trunk road was cut up at several points to prevent the army from coming.

On August 28 a procession taken out at Syed Raja Bazaar was fired on. The police then let loose a reign of terror in the market. Women were stripped, raped and then lashed.

When the Government launched the repression, the army singled out the students for special torture. Their hostels were evacuated and the students' belongings were looted. The students dispersed throughout the province and remained at the helm of the revolution. Not only the students, but also a number of professors like Kripalani, Radheshyam, Asrani and Garolla also did wonderful work.

The news of the arrest of the leaders at Bombay reached Allahabad on August 9. That day all the Congress leaders in Allahabad were rounded up and the Congress offices were locked up. The next day meetings were held in the Purushottamdas Park

and Mohammadeli Park and on August 11 the students of the Allahabad University took out a procession. This had hardly reached the Jha Hostel, when the police authorities wanted to resort to lathi charge, but the police refused to obey the orders. A students' meeting was held in the Union Hall which decided to take out a procession on August 12. Several girls headed the procession and the police opened fire. At this one boy came forward and baring his chest said: "Why are you firing at the girls? Fire at me." And the boy was instantly shot dead. Another procession, led by Yudhvir Singh, was also fired upon. The girls leading the procession refused to surrender the flag and then they caught hold of the reins of the horses of the sowars. Many were killed in the firing. One Baijan, leading a procession, was shot, and a goldsmith, Daulatram alias Bengali, received a number of bullet wounds. Several others like Raja Pandit, Kattu Ahir and Yasin also received bullet wounds. A student, Lal Padmadhar Singh, was shot on August 12 in the compound of the District Court of Allahabad but the bravest among the victims was a 14-year old boy called Ramesh Malaviya, who pleaded with the Baluchi soldiers not to fire. But those soldiers shot him right through his right jaw. There was a regular tussle over his body between the people and the police, but the latter got it.

Amir Raza, a deputy collector, later deposed that Lal Padmadhar Singh's death was nothing short of murder. According to him the City Kotwal, S. N. Agha, ordered the firing for no reason at all. Amir Raza revealed to a correspondent of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* that he had overheard Agha giving an order on the phone to shoot at sight. At this Raza remonstrated with the city magistrate, Anthony. Two magistrates who were present there, supported Raza and stressed that only the magistrates had the authority to order the shooting. Agha grumbled over this and instructed an army officer who happened to be present to ignore the magistrates and go ahead. Raza was unhappy over this attitude of the police and resigned from his service. He has been a Congressman ever since.

On August 13 the Bamroli airport was attacked, but it escaped total destruction. Several military trucks were blown up and many post offices were looted. In the Handia sub-division, the revolution took a very violent turn and the Government was almost paralysed. But when the military arrived at last, they committed

atrocities in many places. In Barod Bazaar, a Congressman was suspended from a tree by his legs, and in Handia a number of students were suspended upside down from the trees and then shot. In Saidabad a house belonging to Congressman was razed to the ground. The Gandhi cap was a particular traget of the official wrath. Dashrath Lal Jayaswal, a young man, who donned the Gandhi cap was arrested and ordered to do the usual penance. When he refused, he was mercilessly belaboured and shot at, but he did not give up the Gandhi cap. When he tried to escape two shots were fired at him one of which killed a passing washerman. Dashrath Lal survived all these.

A big procession was taken out in Azamgarh on August 10 which turned into a public meeting at the Karbala Park. The magistrate had initially intended to stop the procession, but on second thoughts he refrained from doing so. A crowd of 70,000 approached the police station at Madhuban and the leaders requested the officers-in-charge to surrender. The people marched ahead in spite of the firing and dispersed only when they learnt that machine guns were going to be used. Some 34 persons were killed on the spot.

The police inspector of Maharaj Ganj was not present when the police station was attacked. Other officers surrendered and the national flag was hoisted. In Tarwa the people raided the police station from the rear and snatched the guns. They set up a panchayat to courtmartial the Government officers. The police inspector was exiled from the area as a punishment. In Kaza Mrs. Starmar's bungalow was reduced to ashes. Her forefathers had received the estate as a reward for their services during 1857. Mrs. Starmar was in England at the time. Post offices were looted and railway tracks were sabotaged and a military train was derailed. A railway engine was smashed near Rani-ki-Sarai. In many places bridges were blown up.

In the absence of proper leadership and a programme of action all these proved futile. And when retribution came, the British Government was ruthless. The house of Mahadev Singh, a Congress worker of Judawa Pardevara was burnt down and he was hung from a tree. Nearly 100 houses were burnt down in this district and women were beaten up and raped. An untouchable, Chet's wife at Ram Nagar was raped by 20 white soldiers and she died. In Maza a woman was raped right in front of the members

of her family. There were many such instances.

The revolution had a rather belated beginning in Gorakhpur. The people of this district could not act unitedly and in an organised manner and soon police atrocities became the order of the day. Villages were looted. People were beaten up till they became unconscious. A reign of terror prevailed in countless villages like Bapna, Khoyapar, Gopalpur, Abhoda, Dudhra, Malpuri, Uswa, Sisai and Bhadavia. Kailaswati, wife of Rambali Misra was beaten up and stripped naked. When the police atrocities reached the limit in Sisai, the people manhandled the Government officers. A Baluchi contingent was sent to meet the situation, but most of the people had fled from the village by then.

In the course of investigation regarding the Sahjanwa train robbery the police discovered that Shibban Lal Saxena, although he had been in prison for a long time, had been smuggling letters to his friends. The police arrested one Rana Pratap Singh in this connection. He spilled the information about the revolutionaries in Dharampur and 13 were arrested. After many other raids many instruments of sabotage, eight bombs, some materials for manufacture of bombs, thousands of handbills and printing machine were captured. Twenty persons were tried and R. B. James, the Sessions Judge, stated in his 217-page judgment that in spite of the protective guise of non-violence used by the accused, sabotage and violence were inherent in the call to open revolution. He stated that Shibban Lal Saxena was the brain behind the conspiracy and sentenced him to ten years imprisonment. Surya Nath Pandey and Ramji Verma were sentenced to seven years and Kailashpati Gupta and five others to five years imprisonment. The remaining ten accused were sentenced to three years imprisonment. Shibban Lal had been a professor and then an M.L.A. and finally an important Congress leader. Despite all this he was beaten up in prison. And that too not by any stupid warder but by an I.C.S. magistrate himself.

As a result of the efforts of Raj Deo Singh, some left-wing Congressmen had already organised some training camps in Jaunpur district in 1938 and a number of volunteers had been trained within two years. After Raj Deo Singh's arrest in 1939 the movement slackened. The August movement was welcomed by the younger elements in Jaunpur and they wholeheartedly plunged into it and the Kisan High School of Pratap Ganj became

the centre of activity for the entire district. On August 8, a meeting was held which elected Surya Nath Upadhyaya as Commander-in-Chief. The next day the students started an effective strike and did not retreat even in the face of firing. The Collector and the Police Superintendent were surrounded and were left alone only when they begged for mercy. The national flag was planted on Government buildings. On August 10, all the granaries of the district were looted and the national flag was hoisted on the police station at Machhli Shahar, Badarpur and Bakhsha and official documents were burnt. The attack on the Surya Ganj police station was led by Raj Narayan Misra and Raj Shiromani Dubey. All the rifles were confiscated. But military poured in from all sides and began a reign of terror in the district. Followed a series of arrests, houses were burnt and people were mercilessly beaten up. The police reduced to ashes the Kisan High School. Nearly 1,000 persons went underground.

The absconding revolutionaries formed themselves into a group and toured the whole district encouraging the masses. They frequently clashed with the police, who could not arrest them. But the police terrorised the villages, arrested people at random and extorted money. Many women were raped for having harboured Congressmen.

There was a clash between revolutionaries and the police at Bandhwa in which a C.I.D. inspector and a constable were killed. A number of informers were severely beaten up and their houses looted. In the last week of October a group of Congressmen looted the mail bag of the Government at Kultna Mau. The people were so much terrorised that they caught hold of the revolutionary leaders, Surya Nath Upadhyaya, Baij Nath Singh, Dukkh Haran Maurya, Udrej Singh and Daya Shanker Singh and despatched them to the police station. A few days later Ram Shiromani Dubey, Raj Narayan Misra and Nand Kishore were similarly caught.

After these arrests Master Jagannath Singh assumed the leadership and toured round the entire district organising the youths. It was at this time that the atrocities of Bhup Narayan Sinha, the police boss, began in Jaunpur. He subjected nearly 400 men to electric shocks and made them imbecile; he brought countless women to the police station and got them raped. Two rifles belonging to the Sujan Ganj police station were recovered

from Danvarna village for which the people were fined Rs. 4,600. Raj Narayan Misra, Ram Shiromani Dubey, Gauri Shankar, Girja Shankar Sinha, Ramcharan Tripathi, Bhagavatilal and Parasnath Tripathi were sentenced to death in connection with the Bandhwa conspiracy.

Master Jagannath Singh who carried a price of Rs. 3,000 on his head was never arrested and at last when the Congress Cabinet was formed in April 1946, the warrant against him was withdrawn.

The revolutionary movement in the western districts of Uttar Pradesh was quite weak. Much was expected from Kanpur, the city of the proletariat, but due to Communists going over to the other side, there was hardly any response. On August 9, the public had attempted to take possession of the Tilak Hall where the Congress had its headquarters. A few Englishmen were assaulted and their cars were damaged. On August 10, some police stations were attacked. The Government started repressive measures in Kanpur from the very beginning. In spite of this there were stray attacks on post offices and other Government buildings. The students continued their strike for a month and a half. Kanpur Central Station was attacked.

The tempo was slow in Agra. The people took out a procession to plant the national flag on the police station, but they failed. There were only stray sabotage activities. Some stations were burnt and two engines were damaged. The Income-Tax Office was also attacked.

Attempts were made at Garhwal to form a parallel government and Swarajya Courts were set up. A children's army gave correct information to the people and attempted to prevent them from growing panicky. Finally the army had to be called to suppress the movement.

In Almora, due to the leadership of Madan Mohan Upadhyaya and other revolutionaries, activities were more organised. Upadhyaya was arrested on August 11, but escaped. Government officials were almost starving because the villagers refused to give them any food. A soldier resigned saying he could not work as he got nothing to eat. He was later on sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. On August 11 the Collector snatched the national flag from a students' procession and tore it with his own hands and a stone was flung at him. In Deghar,

the police dug themselves in and opened fire on a meeting of revolutionaries.

The capital of the province, Lucknow, lagged behind the districts. The movement here was characterised by the publication of some illegal bulletins entitled "Free India", "Azadi", "Ghadr" and "Janmabhoomi". At the back of this movement were Shiv Kumar Dwivedi and Munish and others. It is said that Alam Bagh station was attacked under Dwivedi's supervision. Nehru, after his release, congratulated the Dwivedi family. Shiv Kumar Dwivedi could not be arrested till the very end.

The activities in Moradabad, Etah, Bareilly, Bansbareilly, Meerut, Shahranpur, Dehra Dun, Bulandshahr, Mainpuri and other places were confined to bringing out of processions, strikes and minor sabotages.

No account of the revolutionary activities would be complete without mentioning Raj Narayan Misra. He had the good fortune of being at the helm of an underground group of Bhishampur. When he was two years old, his mother, Tulsi Devi, committed suicide by hanging. Bhagat Singh's hanging had left an indelible impression on him and he was impatient to emulate him.

During the 1930 satyagraha movement Raj Narayan a child then, marched holding the national flag. The teachers caned him for this. He was compelled to leave the school as he refused to sing "God save the King".

By this time Raj Narayan had become fairly conversant with the political situation. He imbibed the revolutionary spirit from his elder brother, Baburam Misra, a prominent leader of the district. Baburam was sentenced to 38 years' imprisonment and Raj Narayan also had a taste of prison for delivering an anti-Government speech. The moment he was inside the prison, the police raided his village and almost all the houses were searched. Raj Narayan was falsely accused of having stolen the revolver of the Inspector of Unnao and when he was released, the 1942 movement had just started.

Raj Narayan organised a youth corps, raided the revenue office and seized arms from the authorities. A ziladar who resisted and opened fire was shot dead. Three days later, the police, reinforced by the army, attacked the village and a reign of terror followed. Raj Narayan's group dispersed and he went underground. At last, in Lucknow he came into contact with someone to whom he

revealed his actual identity and he was handed over to the police. He was sentenced to death.

On December 9 Misra gave this parting message to his family: "I am dying for the country. I shall be reborn and shall die again." He went to the gallows with the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" on his lips.

He wrote to his brother from the Lucknow District Jail while awaiting execution:

"Dear brother,

According to your desire I sent a message to Sagdarpur for telling beads, but so far my letter has not been acknowledged. To tell you the real truth I have no faith in prayers.

The reformists and middle class Congressmen cannot take advantage of my sacrifice, because I stand for a classless society. I want to have socialism leading to a classless society. I want the liquidation of the middle class reformists. A few reformists of the bourgeoise should not be allowed to benefit by it. I am dying for the poor. We should put an end to class distinctions. A socialist and a classless society is our objective. Although Kunwar Khushakhat Rai is defending me and he belongs to the higher class, I have not minced matters and have told him of the cause which is dearest to me. It is good that he has not spent a single pice from his pocket, but has taken all money for my defence from the poor peasants. You constitute my family, it is you who should benefit. You should expand the family and explain to the people why I am dying. Please make use of my sacrifice properly, expand the work for which I am being hanged. I have also written to Bharat. My greetings to all my family comrades.

Yours affectionately
Raj Narain Mishra"

This letter was addressed to his elder brother, Lalan, who was then a prisoner in Fatehgarh.

He wrote in another letter to a fellow-revolutionary, Jharkhande Rai: "Please leave no stone unturned to wipe away the capitalists, even if they are in the Congress. Along with foreign capitalists they are sucking our blood."

He was hanged on the 9th December 1944 in Lucknow district Jail.

THE REVOLT SPREADS

Assam:
Leading Congressmen like Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Tayabullah, Vishnu Ram Medhi, D. Sharma and others were arrested here. It, however, took some time for the agitation to blossom here. In the beginning only peaceful processions were taken out but when the Government sought to suppress even these, the movement took a violent turn. Strikes were so widespread that all the educational institutions were closed down. On August 15, students in Gwalpada took out a procession, whch was at first lathi charged and boyonet-charged.

On September 20, a huge procession proceeded to hoist the national flag at the Gopur police station. It advanced from two sides with a 14-year-old girl, Kanakalata Barua, leading it. Kanakalata addressed the policemen as brothers and asked them to resign.

The Collector was not prepared to hear these remarks from a mere child. He ordered the processionists to retreat, but Kanakalata, without even a moment's hesitation, marched forward. The Collector at once fired and the brave young girl was shot down. The police fired at the crowd as well as Mukund Kabta, who had taken up the national flag. Many were wounded but a few revolutionaries managed to hoist the national flag on the roof. Nearly 60 persons were killed.

The same day in Dhokaujuli, some 16 miles off Tejpur, the masses, mostly hill people and tea-estate workers, tried to hoist the flag over the police station resulting in firing. Some 20 persons, including a 12 year old girl, Phuleshwari, were killed. The army was despatched and it indulged in atrocities. Women were abducted and soldiers fired on the people who had come to a nearby fair, killing 16. These included six women. One of the soldiers who strayed into a hospital, mistook an inmate in the casualty ward to be a victim of that day's firing and was about to shoot him down, when the doctor came round and saved the patient.

When the news of these firings reached Tejpur, a meeting was convened to register a protest. Here too the police resorted to wanton firing injuring about 100 persons.

A meeting at Jolachhot village was held even before the police

got scent of it and when the police officer reached the meeting he saw people returning in small groups. This annoyed him and he ordered them to disperse. The people refused and the officer promptly resorted to firing. Madan Chandra Burman, a school student, and Ram Ratan Das of Sadari village were killed. The inspector went to another road and there also opened fire.

At Navgaon the people organised a peace army which rallied to the call of a bugle. The Government was aware of this, but could do nothing. One day an army unit was despatched and the man on the watch sounded the bugle to alert the people. The military commander threatened to shoot him, but Tilak Dekha, the volunteer, at once blew the bugle. His body was riddled with bullets. Subsequently 300 persons were arrested on the charge of taking away the body of Tilak Dekha. They set fire to the office of the peace army and when a volunteer remonstrated, he was bodily lifted and thrown into the fire.

The village was the scene of many atrocities. On August 20, some soldiers who were hiding under a bridge to guard it, shot down many villagers passing that way.

At a meeting at Bahrampur in Navgaon district, a young girl, Ratnamala, stood holding the national flag. The police snatched the flag and Ratnamala was pushed aside. Her grandmother, Bhogeswari, and her aunt who were present and snatched the flag, were promptly shot dead.

This enraged the people and in the wanton firing that followed, Laxmi Ram Hazarika, Thanu Ram Sut and Balu Ram Sut were killed. When Hazarika's wife learnt about his death, she expressed satisfaction that her husband died a noble death. In spite of continued shooting the people picked up the dead bodies and the police could not desecrate them.

In Kamrup district, the movement was at first confined to peaceful processions and meetings, but when the Government resorted to repression and unwarranted killing of the people, it took a violent turn. On August 26, the people attacked the Sorbhag airport and set fire to everything that they could lay hands on. They set fire to three military lorries. They had first paralysed the ferry service and when the officer-in-charge received this information, he at once started to bring the fire under control. Women also participated in these sabotage activities.

Independent pockets were set up in places like Charigaon,

Hathigarh and Tevka, and attempts were made to deprive the soldiers of food. The soldiers in their turn attacked these villages and looted them.

The movement in Assam acquired a revolutionary trend from September 1942 and it continued to be so till Gandhi's letters on his fast unto death were published. Army rule continued for four months, but in spite of this the police and the military had their sway only in a few places.

Kaushal Konvar of the Ahom community took part in sabotaging the railways. He was tried and sentenced to death and the sentence was carried out on June 15, 1943. Later on Chief Minister Bardaloi was in the same jail and he had the good fortune of meeting this great hero on the eve of his execution. Konvar was not in the least disturbed by the thought of death and considered it a grace of God to die for the country. When the hangman came to fetch him, he prayed for five minutes and then walked with him as if he was just going out for a stroll.

Bengal :

Two thousand revolutionaries were interned even before 1942 in Bengal. The Congress was in a bad shape there consequent to the expulsion of Subhash Chandra Bose. It was split into two camps. The group which had the blessings of Gandhi and Patel was ineffective. The other group too was weak because all its leaders were in jail. The Communist Party had already drifted away from the national struggle with the result the Muslim League was becoming more powerful. The majority of the population remained untouched by the August movement.

In spite of all this the movement reached unprecedented heights in Midnapore. The moment Japan plunged into the war, Midnapore was declared a dangerous zone and petrol quota for the buses was mercilessly cut down. On April 18, 1942, the Government ordered that all the boats of Nandigram and Maina should be taken 90 miles away within three hours. But this order was not carried out with the result all the boats were burnt down. This was followed by confiscation of all the cycles. The people thus knew in advance that famine was round the corner. They organised themselves to form Vidyut Vahini to present a united front to Japanese invasion. Their number swelled to 5000 including 500 women.

On September 8, a police inspector of Midnapore was helping the owner of a rice mill to export rice when 2,000 strong crowd prevented it. Three persons were killed in the resultant firing. The volunteers demanded that the rice should not be exported and that the bodies of the three be handed over. The authorities agreed to hand over the bodies, but ultimately they went back on their word and threw the bodies into the river. The villagers salvaged the bodies and cremated them properly for which the Government decided to punish them. They raided six villages, arrested 200 persons and sentenced 18 persons to one-and-a-half to two years imprisonment. Despite this the owner of the rice mill was forced to pay a fine of Rs. 1,500 which was distributed among the families of the victims of the firing.

After the cyclone of October 16, 1942, the Government had imposed strict restrictions on the movement of rice. But now the mood of the people had changed. Meetings were held and processions were taken out in every village. The volunteers took upon themselves the duties of the police.

A declaration of independence was read out at a meeting of about 20,000 people in front of the Mahishadal police station and the police chief, Sheikh, who arrived on the scene tried to arrest four persons, but in vain. He then ordered a lathi-charge, but the police did not carry out the order.

A parallel postal department was also started in this district and contacts with the Provincial Congress Committee were maintained. A cyclostyled paper, Biplavi, was brought out regularly.

At a meeting on September 29, it was resolved to attack the police stations, courts and other Government offices, simultaneously. All the police stations except Panskuda and Maina were raided. On the night of September 28, trees were felled and thrown across important roads blocking them: 30 bridges were blown up, 27 miles of telephone and telegraph wires were cut and 194 wire-posts were uprooted. Many boats in the Kosi and the Hooghly rivers were sunk to prevent reinforcements coming.

That very night the headquarters received the information and next day the Tamluk-Panskuda road was cleared. It took about a fortnight to clear the other roads. The revolutionaries arrested 13 Government officials, but when they promised that they would

not be in service, they were given railway fare and packed off home.

On September 29, a very large crowd divided itself into four processions and attacked the city. The biggest of this consisting of nearly 8,000 revolutionaries approached the city from the west. The procession was lathi-charged as soon as it came near the police station followed by firing. Five persons were killed. One Ram Chandra Vera who was badly wounded and bleeding profusely reached the gate of the police station and died a martyr's death saying: "I have taken possession of the police station."

The procession from the north was headed by a 73-year-old woman Matangani Hazra. It was lathi-charged near Vankupur by an army unit. A boy, Laxmi Narayan Das, snatched a soldier's gun for which the soldiers beat him to death. Matangani was shot but she kept the national flag aloft.

Apart from Matangani and Laxmi Narayan Das, a 14-year-old boy, Pusi Madhav Pramanik, Nagendra Nath Samant and Jeevan Chandu were killed.

The procession from the south was fired at as it reached the Rakar Ara Bridge. Niranjan Jana and Puran Chandra Maiti were wounded and they later died in hospital. The women in the procession nursed the wounded defying the soldiers. A procession of 3,000 strong which came from the south-west, was lathi-charged and several arrests were made. Seven persons were subsequently sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

On September 29 about 50,000 persons advanced on Sutahata police station, led by the members of the Vidyut Vahini and the Bhagini Sena Shibir, all dressed in uniforms. They disarmed the officer-in-charge and took away six rifles with some cartridges and two swords. The police station was burnt down, along with all the things inside. Three planes circled over the area and threw at least one bomb. It was subsequently stated in the sessions court that the object thrown down on the people was not a bomb, but something like liquid fire. Following this air attack the revolutionaries spread throughout the district and set fire to the Khas Mahal and the offices of the sub-registrar and union board.

On September 30, a crowd of 10,000 attacked the Nandigram police station and in the firing four died on the spot. The people retreated but returned to set fire to all the remaining Government buildings.

Nearly 10,000 persons and three-fourths of the cattle had died during the cyclone of October 1942 in this district. Along with this natural calamity came the man-made famine. On December 17, the Tamralipta National Government was set up and under its auspices, the national governments of Sutahata, Nandigram, Mahishadal and Tamluk came into being on January 26, 1943.

The Vidyut Vahini first organised in Mahishadal which spread later on to Tamluk and other places. It had three divisions: 1. Soldiery; 2. Secret Service; and 3. Ambulance. Subsequently, the national government declared the Vidyut Vahini as its army. Two divisions added to the Vidyut Vahini were Guerillas and Bhagini Sena (sisters unit).

The first dictator was Satish Chandra Samant. Three others succeeded him and the fourth was Varada Kant Kuiti who disbanded this organisation on August 8, 1944, after giving out a statement in pursuance of Gandhi's orders. After this the Vidyut Vahini also was disbanded.

The national government, in the course of its two years of existence, handled many cases. A fee of Re. 1/- was charged for a case in the court which was later increased to Rs. 2/-, and from January 1, 1944, it was increased to Rs. 4/-. Both criminal and civil cases were handled by these courts. The appeals of the police court were heard in the district court and the appeals of these in their turn were heard by a special tribunal composed of three judges. To make things easier for the public, there was a provision of mobile courts also. The plaintiff and the defendant remained present in the court and at times nearly 800 spectators were present. In criminal cases, sentences like fines, imprisonment till the rising of the court, warnings, etc. were given. The court ordered the property of the absconders to be attached. In most cases both the parties accepted the judgment. The Sutahata Government disposed of 836 cases, the Nandigram Government 222 cases, the Mahishadal Government 1044 cases and the Tamluk Government 794 cases. In very rare cases appeals were sent to higher courts. When the national governments were broken up, the fees for the pending cases were refunded but many did not accept the refund

The war department of the national government dealt with the famine and epidemics. At the same time it handled thieves and the bandits. During the famine days the national government

volunteers lived on one frugal meal. Clothes and medicines worth Rs. 79,000 were distributed among the poor and schools were conducted with the help of efficient inspectors.

The British Government spared no efforts to crush the movement. There was famine. Supplies were cut off. And the police set up a reign of terror. Nearly 2,000 persons were subject to inhuman tortures and some 1,044 houses were looted.

In Contai there were several strikes in August itself following the arrest of Congress leaders. Meetings were held and processions taken out. Eight thousand volunteers were trained and 82 camps were set up and all school students enrolled themselves as volunteers. On September 14, nearly 1000 people proceeded towards Contai at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the form of processions along eight roads. The Government was so frightened that even the police kept quiet. On September 6, the local authorities of the sub-division had arranged a dance performance in aid of the war fund. The volunteers picketed the dance hall and 11 of them were arrested. For nearly three weeks Contai was in such a state and a large number of village chaukidars left their services. On September 20 the police fired on a procession resulting in the death of 24 persons. On September 19, the masses raided the police station and 10 days later the police station of Khajuri.

The public set fire to all the police stations and post offices of Henaria, Haludwadi, Kalagachhia, Ajoy, Janka and Khajuri. Several bridges were burnt down and the shops of two distilleries were also burnt. The Circle Inspector who came with a posse of 11 policemen to crush the people were arrested and after being held in custody for 10 days, they were taken to the Sunderbans jungle and set free. On September 29 a crowd of 20,000 attacked the police station of Bhagwanpur.

It is not necessary to describe each and every happening in Midnapore. Suffice it to say that each village there hoisted the banner of revolt.

The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was declared illegal on August 10. In spite of this large processions were taken out and meetings were held in Calcutta on August 11 and 12, and Mr. Churchill had the audacity to announce on August 13 that Calcutta and Bengal were absolutely unperturbed by the arrest of the Congress leaders in Bombay. This was a challenge and the students burnt down three trams at the junction of Harrison Road

and Mirzapur Road and of Shankar Ghosh Lane and Cornwallis Street in Calcutta. There were clashes with the police near Srimani Bazaar and Vaidya Nath Sen was killed in the firing. Violence spread the next day.

There was firing in almost all parts of Calcutta except Chowringhee. Telephone and telegraph wires were cut and trams were set ablaze. Post offices were raided. There were strikes in some mills. Military trucks were burnt down and on August 14, the Bombay Mail, Dehra Dun Express, Delhi Express and other trains did not start from Calcutta.

On August 15, a reign of terror was let loose on Calcutta. Military vans romped through Chittaranjan Avenue and soldiers with Bren and tommy guns barged into a sweet-meat shop in Hathi Bagan Bazar and looted it. Trams and buses stopped plying.

On August 16, the Ballygunge post office was burnt down and towards evening there was firing in front of the Vidyasagar Hostel. A tram was burnt near Tarachand Avenue and the public barricaded the road.

The movement in other parts of Bengal was not very marked. Dacca observed a strike on August 10 in which the students took a prominent part. The next day a students' procession was lathi-charged in front of the Eden Girls College. On August 13, a crowd attacked the Munsif Court and threw the papers into fire. One person was killed and several were wounded in the firing which followed. Telephone and telegraph wires were also cut on the same day and roads all round Dacca were blocked, and the railway lines were cut. Files of the post offices of Nawabpur, Urai, Takatushi, Laxmi Bazaar, Farhas Ganj and Walter Road were brunt and there were strikes in the Dhakeshwari and Laxmi Narayan Cotton Mills. The people set fire to the Gandaria railway station, which lies between Narayan Ganj and Dacca and there were bomb explosions in many places, especially in the houses of some police officers. On August 17 two village post offices in Farhas Ganj were burnt down.

In Faridpur too some processions were taken out when the Congress leaders were arrested and sabotage activities spread into the nearby villages. On September 5 a students' procession in Madaripur was lathi-charged. There was a clash with the public when the police came to arrest Suresh Bannerjee. The police managed to cause a Hindu-Muslim riot in Manga.

In Murshidabad telegraph wires were cut at Nazim Nagar and Ajim Ganj and Neldanga railway stations were attacked.

In Howrah processions were taken out at first followed by the cutting of electric, telegraph and telephone wires. At Bhainsagarh, railway sleepers were uprooted. Bisanpur airport was attacked.

The Municipal Commissioners of Chunachada, Shrirampur and Hooghly resigned their posts. The railway sleepers of Martin and Company were uprooted with the result that the train services could not be resumed on the line for many days.

In Mymensingh there were many raids on the railways and the post offices and the Government godown was burnt down. On August 21, crowds attacked the sales-tax and the income-tax offices. On September 12 the people set fire to the Muktagachha post office, Rayer Bazaar and Atherbari Bazaar were attacked.

In Burdwan processions were taken out at first, these were followed by sabotage activities. The national flag was hoisted on September 16 on the Kalna Court. The Kasiara post office was burnt down.

Even Bolpur of Rabindranath Tagore did not keep quiet. On August 29, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Santhals joined together and attacked and damaged the Bolpur railway station.

In Nadia, the students of Kusalthia, and girls took the first step. Seven persons resigned their membership of the Navadweep municipality to protest against the arrest of the Congress leaders. The post offices of Shyamanagar and other nearby places were burnt down. The post offices at Shantipur, Fatka Badi and Ranpur were burnt down too. Beldanga and Azimanj railway stations were attacked and Mudagachha station was set ablaze.

The authorities machine-gunned the saboteurs from an aeroplane at Ranaghat and the then Chief Minister Fazlul Haq, came out with a statement on October 2 in which he said that some coolies who were working on the railway line were mistaken as saboteurs and shot down from the air. The call of the August revolution reached as far as Darjeeling where a procession was taken out on September 9 to observe the monthly anniversary of August 9. It was fired upon killing three persons.

Bengal had a Muslim League Ministry which was opposed to all struggle except fratricidal struggle with Hindus.

The most abominable thing which the British Government did

there was to call upon the Muslim villagers to plunder the Hindu villages and even molest women.

Orissa:

The Oriyas did not lag behind in the August movement. The Act of 1935 had given Orissa the status of a separate province. Since the Japanese joined the war, it was feared that India might be invaded through Orissa. That was the reason why the capital of the province was shifted from Cuttack to Sambalpur. As in Midnapore, here also the boats and the bicycles were confiscated. The masses responded to the call of the August 9 resolution. A feature of the movement in this part was that side by side with the agitation against the Government, the people also revolted against the tyranny of the landlords. But here too proper organisation was lacking. The Congress ministry, of course, had resigned, at the outbreak of World War. But subsequently some Congress M.L.A.s defected and attempted to form a ministry. Actually a ministry completely loyal to the Government was formed with the ruler of Parlakimedi at the head.

In Cuttack a wave of strikes and public meetings followed the arrest of the Congress leaders. The students of the Ravenshaw College were in the forefront of the agitation. Girl students also played a considerable role. They were threatened but the girls attacked the college office and burnt away whatever papers came into their hands. Muslim students also participated in the movement.

On August 16 when some political prisoners were being transferred from the local jail a crowd of over 3,000 gathered round them to prevent them from being taken away. There was firing in which one man was killed. Many Government buildings including the Tehsil of Jagatsinghpur, Arsabha post office and revenue office were burnt down. On August 10 itself Section 144 was imposed; but in defiance of this, processions were being taken. Muslims were exempted from the collective fines even though they had taken part in the movement.

The students in Puri continued to be on strike for many days and attacked Neem Pada police station. Six persons stealthily smuggled themselves into a court in Balasore and were successful in burning the records. Murlidhar Panda, a Robin Hood type of leader, looted the shops of the blackmarketeers and distributed

the proceeds among the poor people. The houses of Government officers were also looted in the same way. On September 22, the Government received the information that Panda was in Katsahi, but a crowd of over 5,000 had collected there to prevent his arrest. There was firing resulting in the death of six persons. Murlidhar could have escaped but he realised that the people would be put to a lot of trouble, and he surrendered.

Bihar:

Bihar came into prominence during this movement. The Congress had spread far into the villages, but the masses here also had not been given any programme. Anugraha Narayan Sinha wrote in the freedom supplement of the *Free Press Journal* in 1944: "Bihar gave a very good account of itself during the last trial although the movement was neither initiated nor controlled by the official Congress organisation." But Anugrahababu had to support non-violence and so he adds: "It proved beyond doubt the potentialities of what a non-violent struggle for freedom, if scrupulously pursued, could achieve in the fullness of time."

Even before August 9, the students of Patna were spoiling for a fight. Anugraha Narayan Sinha confessed: "It was raining cats and dogs on July 31, 1942, but in spite of this heavy rain, an important meeting of the students was held. The Anjuman Islamia Hall was full to capacity and a very large crowd was standing outside drenched in the rain. There was a divine lustre of excitement on the faces of those young men, although none of them had any idea of the programme. On August 9, the countrywide round-up of the leaders started. Even though it was being privately whisphered the leaders would be arrested within a few hours of the passing of the resolution, the people were under the impression that considering the watered down tone, the arrests may not after all materialise so soon. In my province nobody had an idea of the programme adopted by the Congress. We tried to have some information in the matter, but we did not succeed. There were rumours and rumours; but there was nothing authoritative. As soon as the leaders were clamped inside jails, a strange restlessness spread throughout the province. The students were very much excited."

According to Anugraha Narayan Sinha August 11 was a day of great significance. "A procession, consisting mainly of young men,

reached the Secretariat and hoisted the tri-colour on the assembly chamber. This was the signal for the revolution. It was not easy to take the flag down. There were hurried consultations outside the Assembly chamber between the police officers and the Government House, i.e. the Governor. Orders to shoot were given. Half-a-dozen young men, including a boy, were killed. The wounded were not given first aid."

The boy who succumbed to his injuries even regained consciousness for a few moments and asked the doctor if the bullet had hit his chest or back. When the doctor replied it was his chest, a smile lit up his face.

The police used Dumdum bullets, the use of which is forbidden by international law. Their use on the unarmed people was proof of the brutality of British imperialism. The people attacked Patna railway station and cutting of wires, the removing of the railway sleepers, burning of the railway engines and such other activities were carried on side by side. On August 11, 12 and 13 the Government was completely paralysed. Bales of cloth were looted in Bhokass and Behra. When the people attacked some places in Fulwari they were shot killing 17 persons.

On August 11 and 12 peaceful processions were taken out in Champaran, but when they were lathi-charged, the public took to sabotage. All Government buildings were attacked and the police fled to the headquarters. When the movement started the district collector who was a Hindu, was replaced by an English officer, who belonged to a much lower rank. When the army arrived, it indulged in all sorts of atrocities.

In Govindgunj, Hrishiji, Sahadeo Prasad, Jagannath Prasad and Brahamanand Tiwari set up a parallel government. The police could arrest Hrishiji only when he allowed himself to be arrested at a meeting.

On August 10, a meeting at Shahabad was disturbed by the police. Pradyumna Mishra was making a speech when the police barged in to arrest him. The public got excited and surrounded the police. The police were ordered to shoot but they refused. Subsequently when British soldiers came they quelled the movement after months of mopping up operations.

The landlords, Government servants such as magistrates, retired officers and others had invited the British soldiers to camp there. With their collusion they got revolutionaries and Congressmen

arrested. In spite of this for one full month the officers in the railways and post and telegraph offices showed their sympathies with the masses. The members of the business community, partly out of fear and partly out of patriotic sentiments, fed the political workers for months. The Communists held the Government.

In Dumraon, a procession of nearly 5,000 was taken out on August 16 for hoisting the national flag on Government buildings. A young man, Kapil Muni, who was at the head of the procession, was shot down. At once, Ramdas Lohar came forward and he was also shot. Then came an old man aged 60 and he was shot too. A young man of 19, Gopal Ram, came in as his substitute and he was also shot. This is probably the only incident of its kind in the whole history of 1942 where people were shot down mercilessly, one after the other.

The movement had a belated beginning in Gaya. Up to August 13, the people had hopes that the leaders would take some initiative. At last, the people started acting on their own and police stations in the villages were attacked. Many post offices and the canal offices were blown up. When the people advanced to hoist the national flag on the Kurtha police station, they were greeted with bullets. Shyambihari Lal was killed. The Muslims also participated in the movement.

On August 10, the court, the collector's office and the head post office at Bhagalpur were attacked and the national flag planted. The movement now spread into the villages and the police smashed the spinning wheels of the Saidabad spinning training camp and requisitioned the inmates to cook chapatis for policemen.

Parashuram Babu led an underground group in this district. After his arrest, Siyaram Babu took up the work. This group used to snatch arms from policemen. The Government had released Mahendra Gope and 75 other criminals, who all joined the underground group. Gope was subsequently arrested and was sentenced to death. Siyaram Babu could not be arrested till the end. This group was powerful in Banka and Bhagalpur subdivisions. Later on when repressions started, a military camp was set up at every cross-road in Bahipur.

The August movement had a glorious spell in Muzaffarpur district. The people hoisted the national flag on almost all Government buildings. The police fled to the district or the subdivision headquarters. A crowd which had gathered at Bajpatti

killed the Indian S.D.O., one sub-inspector and two policemen. To avenge this offence, the highest provincial and district authorities reached the spot with 11 military trucks. The police officer of Pupri, who had fled, also returned. The famous firm of Lalchand Madangopal was looted by the police. The I.G. and the district collector were present when the premise of the firm was being looted. Devaki Prasad, one of the sons of the owner, was killed, and his other sons were assaulted.

The people took a procession to Sitamarhi railway station on August 11, and on August 14, they uprooted the rails. They tore up the busy motor road between Muzaffarpur and Sitamarhi and damaged bridges.

Later on, as Government forces came round, Ramnandan Sinha's house was looted. Rampal was sentenced to death in connection with the killings at Bandgaon. Others got transportation.

In Purnea district, the movement in its early phase, was confined to meetings and processions. The people proceeded to attack the Katihar police station and plant the national flag. There was shooting in which eight persons were killed. A 13-year-old boy, Dhruva, was also killed, and his father, Dr. Kundu, was arrested, while he was returning after cremating the boy. This firing excited the people and attacks on police stations and post offices became the order of the day. In one place, a police officer and 3 policemen were killed by the people, but the police shot nearly 50 persons. Muslims in these areas participated in the movement.

In Saran District too the movement started with processions and meetings. But even this the police could not stand and they fired on a meeting at Sewan killing 3 persons. Soon after this the people resorted to sabotage activities and attained a fair measure of success. Chhapra station, the court and the engine shed were burnt down.

The flag-hoisting on the Sewan police station will be enshrined for ever in the minds of the people because of its association with the martyrdom of Phulena Prasad. He was a seasoned political worker and according to some eye-witnesses, he did not fall till eight bullets were drilled into his body. The ninth bullet smashed his head. Three others were also killed on this occasion. When Phulena fell a victim to the ninth bullet, his wife, Taravati, was by his side. She tore a piece from her sari and tied it over her husband's head and advanced to complete the work that was left

unfinished by her husband. When she returned after hoisting the national flag, Phulena was already dead.

In Darbhanga, the movement which started with processions, transformed itself into sabotage work. On August 17, as a big procession reached the railway station, it was fired at, killing one person and hurting many. Janaki Mishra was beaten to death. On August 19 Janaki Devi led a procession to the Behra police station and burnt the papers and other things. The inmates of the police station had fled long ago. Up to August 22 when the army arrived, the rule of the masses prevailed. The national flag was hoisted on the court of the city on August 12. When repression started the officers stopped at nothing. Women were raped and villages were looted and burnt down. Two hundred houses were reduced to ashes in the Deep village alone.

The non-violent stance of Congressmen in Manbhum kept the people quiet for a long time. The Santhals and the Mahatos were prepared to fight with bows and arrows; but the votaries of non-violence pacified them. But when the news of sabotage in other districts reached them, they could no longer be stopped. The leaders had been arrested in the meantime. The cutting of wires and sabotaging of rails started all over the district. There was shooting at Jargaon, Kabrajgarh and Manavmar and a reign of terror started when repression began.

The labourers at Jamshedpur started their programme with a strike. Labour leaders had been placed behind the prison bars. Treta Singh was one of these, and he died during a hunger strike in jail. The strike by the mill hands was peacefull all along and it had such an impact on the police that a few of them resigned their job. On September 6, a large crowd went up to the prison gate and demanded to have a darshan of the leaders. Sensing the situation for what it was, the jail authorities brought the leaders out. The leaders were garlanded and presented with addresses. Pleased with this "success" the people went back peacefully.

The authorities in Ranchi sensing the mood of the masses behaved in a very clever manner. When the demonstrators came to hoist the national flag on the Government building, the authorities turned a blind eye. The people happy after hoisting the flag, went back. When the people insisted on locking all the Government buildings, the police pointed out that this would inconvenience them. At this the simple-minded people opened the locks.

The movement in the Palmau was led by the students. The national flag was unfurled on the Daltonganj, Husainabad, Lancel Ganj and Latihar police stations and leaders were set free from Daltonganj jail. In places like Domchanch and Kodarma where the labour force was strong, the movement gathered some momentum. People at Kodarma were stripped naked at the cross-roads and beaten up. There was firing too.

A large number of political prisoners were held in the Hazaribagh Central Prison who thought out a plan to escape. It was decided that the plan should be executed on November 11, the Diwali Day. Those who were to escape that night included Yogendra Shukla, a disciple of Chandra Shekhar Azad, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ramnandan Mishra, Surya Narayan Sinha, Gulab Chandra Gupta and Shaligram Sinha. They took advantage of the festivities and quietly jumped out of the wall to freedom and motored to Ranchi, and from there fanned out. Jayaprakash Narayan showed a lot of courage under the guidance of Yogendra Shukla and other seasoned revolutionaries. But it would be ridiculous to say that he was the leader of the August revolution. He was just a symbol.

Monghyr was in the forefront of the revolution and the people had control over 10 out of the 20 police stations. In Tarapur a "people's Government" was set up with a parliament, army, and the judiciary. The entire management was so efficient that for a period that area was completely free from thefts and robberies. All the police stations had national flags hoisted on them. The British Government later on subjected the people to much oppression for this offence. It is interesting that an American army unit stationed nearby was called upon to shoot at the people but they refused to carry out the orders. The people were subjected to indiscriminate bombing.

The railway line between Koilwar and Mughalsarai was completely cut. Up to September 5, sabotage work went on under the direction of Master Jaggu Lal. When the Government took over Jaggu Lal was threatened that his house would be blown up if he did not surrender. After his arrest, he was subjected to brutal atrocities and his father was so upset that he died out of grief. Bhai Kapil Deo was shot by British soldiers who pulled out his intestines. The soldiers shot at almost anything moving, a traveller, a goat, a wandering animal on the railway lines. Women were

raped, were carried away in cars and then thrown away at deserted places. The soldiers destroyed the school library of Chandi and at Zamyra some persons were shot down when they were easing themselves in the open. Poet Kailash Singh of Ghodadei was kept submerged in hot water till he died. When the army fanned out in Lasadhi, the people, mostly cowherds, attacked them to the beat of drums. Twelve persons were killed in the clash.

Central Provinces

The movement began in Nagpur with processions and meetings and later on went over to sabotage activities. Railway tracks were tampered with at Khaya and a few Englishmen were attacked in their houses. Police stations at Amred, Ramlet and other places were attacked and a "people's Government" functioned in Nagpur for three days. Shankar, a resident of Nagpur, was later hanged for setting up this government. In Ramtek Taluka the S.D.O.'s office was attacked and the treasury looted. A sum of Rs. 11 lakhs came into the hands of the people. The Hindustan Red Army was set up in the district as early as 1939 under the leadership of Madan Lal Bagdi and Shyam Lal Nayak and had much in common with the Hindustan Republican Association. It adopted the red flag but the Congress flag was also used. The Red Army which had been already working along the lines of mass revolution now plunged into action at once. On August 14, 1942 it captured a soldier, Shaikh Dawood, who was carrying a message from a police post to the headquarters soliciting additional help. The people marched to the police post and Madan Lal Bagdi and Shyam Lal Nayak opened fire. The police post was then burnt down. When Madan Lal Bagdi was subsequently arrested, a "dangerous" diary was recovered from his person. Bagdi and Koshthi were later sentenced to transportation for life. A meeting was held at Wardha after the national leaders were arrested. The people declared Independence, and soon the police opened fire killing one Jagaloo. The students of the Seksaria Commerce College of Wardha took a leading part in the August movement, with the result that the college was locked up.

In Asti in the Wardha district, the excited public rushed to the police station to hoist the national flag. The police opened fire which enraged the crowd and it pounced upon the police. Ram Nath Mishra, Superintendent of Police, and four policemen

were killed and the national flag was unfurled on the police station. Ruthless suppression followed this incident and a trial was held in which six persons were sentenced to death. But only two were executed.

In Chimur in Chanda the police resorted to wanton firing on a peaceful procession. This enraged the people and they fell upon the police killing five policemen. The district magistrate arrived on the spot along with the army. Later on Dr. Munje went to hold an enquiry into the atrocities that followed. He was amazed to see that nearly 130 prisoners were bundled up in three or four small rooms. Dr. Munje then visited the house of Mr. Bagdi, where Mrs. Bagdi presented to him 17 women out of whom 13 complained that they had been raped. A British soldier had molested a girl from the Nayak family and then deprived her of her gold ring, and snatched away Rs. 10 from her aged mother. A trial was held in connection with the killing of policemen in Chimur, and several persons were sentenced to death. Of course, there was no trial of the rapists.

There was firing in Bhandara District too on August 14 and the people resorted to sabotage. Post offices, railway stations and telegraph offices, were attacked. Gondia, Shiroha and Mohra also joined in the struggle.

Instances of firing and sabotage were reported from districts also. High school boys in Jabalpur took a prominent part in the movement. There was firing on a students' procession on August 14 resulting in the death of Gulab Singh.

In Amaravathi wires were cut in many places and other sabotage activities were also undertaken. A collective fine was imposed upon the people, which they refused to pay even when the Collector came down. He wanted to take down the national flag and this resulted in a clash in which five persons died. There was firing here on six occasions taking a toll of 14 lives.

The Government let loose a reign of terror in Akola from the very beginning. School boys, particularly of the Tilak Rashtriya Shala and the Akola national school, took a prominent part in the movement.

When the national leaders were released in 1944 and the stories of the 1942 movement came to light, a committee under the chairmanship of Seth Govind Das, started investigating into the atrocities in the Central Provinces.

Delhi:

The police and the army were concentrated in the imperial capital. The police were always out to nip any political movement at the very first stage. For the smallest lapse people were externed from Delhi. By the afternoon of August 9, the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached Delhi. Although no announcement was made, there was a successful strike and a mammoth meeting was held in the Gandhi Grounds.

New Delhi, centre of the bureaucracy, remained unaffected and the Government took care to see that the infection did not spread there. The Government had erected a fence of barbed wire to keep off possible intruders coming from old Delhi but many managed to elude the police in small groups and a call was given to observe hartal. Most of the shops in New Delhi were closed.

On August 11, it was decided to take out a procession to the police station, but the police resorted to a ruthless lathi-charge and Khalilur Rehman, the leader, was arrested. The people were enraged at this, and a stone was hurled at the Deputy Commissioner, who ordered the police to open fire.

Petrol stations at Peeli Kothi and Queen's Road were set ablaze and the biggest railway office was in flames. One police officer was killed and the enraged public attacked the military barracks and the post office at Paharganj. The soldiers fled. In the ensuing firing on August 13, 150 persons were killed. This did not deter the public. Mill workers, especially from the Delhi Cloth Mills and the Birla Mills, joined the strike. Girl students even picketed the house of an executive officer. Bulletins, printed as well as cyclostyled, were regularly brought out. Upto November 1942, *prabhatferies* were occasionally taken out. During one such *prabhatferi*, women were lathi-charged and two of them were killed. Some sabotage work was carried on in villages too. Rails were uprooted and wires were cut at some places. Badli and Ghevra railway stations were attacked.

Punjab and NWFP:

The Punjab had always been the recruiting ground for the army. Add to this the dominance of Muslim League which was never anti-British, but always anti-Hindu. The result was that anti-British feelings were never strong there. All this contributed to the weakness of the movement in the Punjab. The N.W.F.P. was,

however, different with the Khan brothers at the helm.

In spite of it all, the August revolution touched the Punjab too. Left to themselves, probably the Punjabi Congressmen might have remained indifferent. Many of them were rounded up and their offices locked up. Railway fishplates and wires were pulled out in a few places. The Punjab lagged far behind in 1942 and no incident worth mentioning took place there.

The North-West Frontier Province, however, participated gloriously in the August movement. It should, however, be told that the Province did not venture beyond the Gandhian concept of pressure politics and did not channel its heroism on the new revolutionary lines. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had taken non-violence too seriously. While Gandhi, realising the futility of the old type of movement was ready to make a show of impregnating it with revolutionary methods, Ghaffar Khan and his band of workers could not properly understand this pragmatic stance. Another good reason why the Congressmen here did not come out of their shell of non-violence was that the British acted with great restraint and did not resort to the policy of arresting the leaders there. The bureaucracy adopted the deliberate policy of not arousing the feelings of excitement and hatred among the Muslims as far as possible. Even in places where they joined in the movement, they were exempted from collective fines. Dr. Munje had noted this not very astonishing fact in his report on repression that followed the movement in the Central Provinces. The demonstrators in the Frontier Province were not arrested and even Ghaffar Khan was spared. By October he was fed up and organised the picketing of wine shops. Even the Government kept its peace, so they started picketing Government buildings. At the same time, pickets were also sent to the military camps. This was too much as the Government was now hit at the vital point. By then the situation in other parts was under control and the Government could change its policies towards Muslims. The Government thought that the isolated people of the Frontier Province could not resort to much violence. So came the lathi-charges on October 6 and the Frontier leaders were arrested. The movement thus got a very belated start. Now, instead of picketing in front of the Government buildings, attempts were made to hoist the national flag there. People were lathi-charged and arrested. The movement followed the same course in Bannu,

Kohat, Mardan and other places. There was firing in one place, but that was probably due to the overzealousness of a local officer. In all 2,500 persons were arrested.

Gujarat and Sind:

It is strange that the N.W.F.P. known for its martial races, remained faithful to the principles of non-violence, while Gujarat and Kathiawar where Gandhi was born, abjured it. The Khan brothers turned out to be more Gandhian than Gandhi himself.

The people of Ahmedabad organised the whole province and the working class fully co-operated to make the strike a total success. This was possible because the Communists had no influence among the working class there and the capitalists themselves were keen on the success of the movement. If we are to believe the Royists and the Communists, the capitalists there had sent away the workers after paying them two months' salaries.

A joint war council of the workers, students and the managers was set up and on August 10, a students' procession was lathi-charged. A student named Vinod Kinariwala was killed. Nearly 1,000 soldiers paraded Ahmedabad to strike terror.

There was firing on eight occasions on August 12. Bombs were thrown on the police stations and railway stations. The bungalows of the police officers and the police headquarters were attacked.

At Kaira processions were taken out which was followed by a series of lathi-charges and shootings. According to the *Free Press Journal* 34 students who boarded the train at Baroda for Bombay in order to preach the Congress programme, when they came to Adas, were confronted by half a dozen armed policemen. In fact, they had been on the look-out for these very students. The students were ordered to sit down and the policemen shot them right through their chests. Four students died on the spot. The dead and the wounded were left in that state to rot from seven o'clock in the evening till midnight when at last the faujdar came and handed over the dead bodies to the people.

There was firing at Dakore too.

In Surat it started with processions and then sabotage work followed. Bardoli remained in the forefront as far as the sabotage of railways was concerned. In a place called the Tapti Bali, the railway track continued to be sabotaged and the wires tampered

with until Gandhi went on his indefinite fast. The police could not stop these activities. Almost all the police stations in Surat were attacked. In Broach, the movement acquired a revolutionary character from the very beginning under the leadership of Meghji Nayak. Police stations were attacked and the constables were disarmed. Meghji Nayak followed his old-time method of robbing the rich to help the poor.

The movement remained somewhat slow in the Panchmahal. But even there a certain amount of sabotage work was done and bombs thrown on the police station and other Government buildings in Kalol. An army unit was sent there, but a bridge along their way was blown up. A few soldiers were injured badly, but the unit still managed to reach the trouble spot and resorted to ruthless suppression.

Sind rose to the occasion in freedom struggle. Shri Parshuramji Tahilramani has testified that it did not lag behind in the movement. The population of this province was just 45 lakhs but at least 2,500 persons were put behind the bars. It is interesting to note that Sind had been exempted from participation in the individual civil disobedience of 1940-41, but in 1942 the province plunged headlong into the struggle.

In Karachi the movement began with processions and meetings, but the Government crushed it with a heavy hand. This changed the course of the movement.

There were strikes in Sukkur, but when the Government started obstructing them, sabotage work was started. The police subjected the people to untold atrocities. A student, Hemoo Kolani, led the movement. Let me quote from his biography prepared by B.L. Ledwani:

"Hemoo was born on March 11, 1924, in the famous Kalani family of old Sukkur. Under the influence of Dr. Mangharam Kalani, who himself was a staunch fighter, Hemoo came to be what he proved himself later — dauntless devotee of the motherland. He was a very good sportsman.

"During his school days, he became the leader of the Swarajya Sena (an organisation of the students working for the independence of India) within the organisation of the Swarajya Mandal a secret institution working against the British Government under the able guidance of Dr. Mangharam Kalani. Hemoo was a devotee of Sardar Bhagat Singh. He rehearsed his life. He was

often seen putting the noose around his neck and when questioned, would reply: 'I like it. I want to be hanged in the service of my country.'

"On the moonlit night of October 23, 1942, getting information that a military train was bringing arms and ammunitions to Sukkur, Hemoo took two of his friends and proceeded to the railway tracks running through at the outskirts of old Sukkur, in order to remove the fishplates. Hardly had these young boys got to work when they were challenged by policemen.

"He was tried by a court martial in camera. He refused to be represented by any advocate. During the trial Hemoo was extremely brave and blunt. He told the court that he had done no wrong. If the British Military could crush the freedom struggle with army, he had every right to destroy the very military equipment.

"The court sentenced Hemoo to life imprisonment. However, the Headquarters, Hyderabad (Sind) under the command of Lord Richardson enhanced the sentence to death. Hemoo was happy to hear this. He was also happy that death would give him a chance of rebirth in India and thus give him one more chance to fight the Britishers. The attempts by the various personalities of Sind including Sadhu T. L. Vaswani of Hyderabad, Shri Jamshedji Mehta of Karachi, Pirzada Abdul Sattar of old Sukkur to move the Governor-General, Lord Linlithgow, to reduce the sentence failed.

"Hemoo was suddenly hanged on January 21, 1943 in Sukkur Central Jail. He went to the gallows with a smile on his face and the slogans of 'Bharatmata ki Jai' and 'Inquilab Zindabad' on his lips."

While expressing his last wish he asked all those standing around him to repeat along with him "Up up the Indian Flag; Down down the Union Jack!" The news of his execution spread all over Sind like a jungle fire. The people of Sukkur and surrounding areas joined the funeral and the body was taken to cremation ground at Sukkur with all honour and dignity.

Nehru, on his visit to Sind in 1945, met the parents of Hemoo at Sukkur and paid his homage to the dauntless freedom fighter. Nehru also visited the home of Hemoo's father at Chembur (Bombay), when he came to Bombay after Independence. The same Nehru had refused to be the chief guest at Muzaffarpur

when a monument to Khudiram was being erected.

The movement in Hyderabad (Sind) and Sikarpur followed the same pattern as in Karachi and Sukkur. The women in Hyderabad and Sikarpur performed their duty in a grand manner. They were subjected to lathi-charges on several occasions.

There were demonstrations in Rajkot and in Porbunder the Kharawas, the seamen, took a prominent part. In the beginning the movement was confined to imposing an embargo on essential commodities being sent out of the state. The leaders were rounded up and the Kharawas were forced to carry sugar to the ships. But they carried the bags and dumped them into the sea. The state People's Congress took out a procession to the Maharaja who evaded a straight reply and brought Ahirs and other people in lorries from villages. When these arrangements were completed, an agent provocateur threw a brickbat at the Maharaja and this was the signal to let loose a reign of terror. The ruling Princes were thus not far behind the British.

In Charanda in Baroda there was shooting on August 18 in which two persons were killed. Ambalal Gandhi accompanied the crowd from Charanda and proceeded to attend a meeting at Kurali when it was learnt that an army unit was coming by train to deal with the movement. Ambalal called upon the people to prevent that train from coming. The railway track up to two miles was uprooted, and the railway station was burnt down. The army arrived by road and Ambalal Gandhi was belaboured till he became unconscious. The reign of terror there lasted for over a month. About Rs. 45,000 was got by way of collective fines and 100 villagers were locked inside a railway carriage for a week. Later, Ambalal was sentenced to 12½ years of imprisonment plus a fine of Rs. 15,550. His shop was also confiscated. Premanand Bhatt was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5,000.

Maharashtra:

In Poona the people had no programme and awaited instructions from the returning leaders. But as soon as they reached Poona they were all rounded up. The students were spoiling for a fight and took out a 10,000-strong procession. The police persuaded the students to disperse, but in vain. They were fired upon all of a sudden. Forty students were wounded. Military guards were

posted in the city and sporadic firing became the order of the day. Sabotage activities were now started. In the Capitol Cinema, frequented by Englishmen, a bomb burst, killing five Europeans. An ammunitions store was set on fire resulting in an explosion which shook the entire city, causing damage worth nearly a crore of rupees.

Abortive attempts were made to contact the Congress leaders lodged in Ahmednagar fort. Sabotage activities continued. A magistrate's courtroom was burnt down and at one place the people relieved some soldiers of their uniforms and let them go.

In Satara each one of its 1,200 villages contributed its mite to the revolution. The Satyashodak movement had made an impact on the Satara peasants. On August 24, in Karad, a procession of 2,500 peasants led by Balakrishna Patil from Andale, approached the court buildings. The police halted it and arrested Patil. One Pandurang Deshmukh was attacked with a bayonet.

On September 3, nearly 4,000 peasants of the Tasgaon taluka peacefully approached the Tasgaon court to take it. There was a similar peaceful demonstration in Badaj, led by Parashuram Garg. Garg stood at the head of the procession with the national flag in his hand and informed the police that he intended to hoist the flag on the Government building. Garg received three shots and died. Six more persons were killed.

On September 10, there was a clash between the public and the police at Islampur and Pandu Master, leading a crowd of 2,000 was arrested. He requested the people to disperse peacefully but despite this, there was shooting. Baradu Barapate died on the spot and an engineer Pandya passing that way was killed.

By now the police atrocities were on the increase. Villagers were harassed and ruthless treatment was meted out to the prisoners and anti-social elements started taking advantage of the situation. It was in such a situation that Nana Patil organised the revolutionary elements and met the police tyranny with equal strength. Nana Patil made things impossible for the police. Informers were killed in one place and the house of a watchman was blown up. Threatening letters were sent and a parallel government was set up in Satara. The Government was harassed to such an extent that it could not exercise its authority in any way. The revolutionaries laid down their arms only when the Congress resumed power.

The movement was powerful in East and West Kandesh also. The police lathi-charged a students' procession, and a boy, who bared his chest was shot dead. In all, four students were killed. Sane Guruji, Uttam Patil and his wife, Lila Patil, led the sabotage activities. Lila Patil was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment, but she escaped.

In Nasik for a long time the Government could not suppress the revolutionary forces.

South India:

There was firing on a procession in Hubli, in Mysore, in which a boy was killed and seven persons were killed in a firing in Bailhongal. In Nipani, when there was firing on peaceful demonstrators, they set fire to the post offices and other Government buildings. The taluka office was attacked in the Soundatti Taluka and a prisoner was set free. Four railway stations near Hubli were burnt down on September 15. Seventeen railway stations were destroyed and arms were taken away and Government treasuries looted. The programme was carried out in an organised manner. Had the people so desired they could have finished off the officers also, but they were spared because they were Indians. Sabotage work went on in Belgaum. Some Government servants, such as the police patel of Bhorao, resigned. The revolutionary activities continued till the Gandhi fast. A collective fine of Rs. 3 lakhs was imposed and five persons were sentenced to death.

In Andhra workers, peasants, students and women combined to make a success of the August movement. A great deal of sabotage work was done. Tenali in Guntur district remained in the forefront. A group of students seized the railway station on August 12 and the police were deprived of their turbans and the booking clerks were ordered to go home. Telegraph and telephone connections were cut. They instructed the passengers to alight from a train which had just arrived from Madras and then set it ablaze. Tenali was cut off from the outside world. The army was stationed in this place and the usual reign of terror followed.

We have mentioned the Andhra Circular. The people were aware of the programmes and sabotage work was very successfully carried out here, particularly in Bhimavaram, Rajahmundry and Kakinada. The secret letter was publicly read out in Ellore.

The people hoisted the national flag on the court buildings and police stations. Some buildings were even set ablaze. Later on a collective fine of Rs. 5.5 lakhs was imposed in Andhra. Nearly 2,000 persons were imprisoned.

In Kerala, within six hours of the arrest of the national leaders, K. Kelappan and K. Madhavan, the well-known leaders, were arrested. On August 10 the Kerala Congress Committee was declared illegal and the police raided its office. No instructions were given, but the students promptly went on strike. There were strikes in the Zamorin College, the Christian College and many high schools in Calicut. Moidu Maulavi, M.P. Narayan Menon, Karunakara Menon and Dr. Chandu were arrested either for taking out processions or addressing meetings. There was picketing in front of the courts resulting in the closure of the Tellicherry District Court and the Calicut Munsif Court. Demonstrations persisted in Badagara, Ottapalam and Palghat in spite of the heavy lathi charge by the Malabar Special Police. The general strike in Malabar on August 20 was a total success.

It is amazing that even during 1942 when it had been realised by Gandhi that the old type of movement was futile the fad of the constructive programme continued to occupy some people. Some 20 hand-spinning centres were functioning. The police raided these centres and declared them illegal.

All this repression led to sabotage. *The Swatantra Bharatam*, an illegal weekly, was being regularly published. Whoever was found to be in possession of a copy of this paper was penalised.

Sabotage work in Kerala went on in full swing. Many Government buildings were burnt down. Naduvannur and Chemancherry sub-registrar's offices were also attacked. An attempt was made to blow up the railway bridge at Feroke and rail traffic between Calicut and Kalai was disrupted. The Pallikunnu post office was set ablaze.

Several renowned persons from Khizariyoor, including Dr. K. B. Menon, N. A. Krishnan Nair, C. P. Sankaran Nair and P. Kesavan Nair, were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. These persons were brutally treated and some of them became permanently disabled. According to Govindan Nair, the Communists handed over some people to the police. Some died in prison due to ill treatment. These included Ishwarlal Sharaff, Kombi Kutti Menon and Kunhiraman. L. S. Prabhu, who came out of prison

in very bad health, died later.

Kerala had to face a natural calamity over and above a famine, which was caused by Government policies. As Govindan Nair has written, the people in Travancore, then a native state, were tortured. The people of that state were cowed down after the arrest of 100 Congressmen. In Cochin nearly 150 persons were imprisoned. The students in Trichur and Ernakulam did admirable work. The native princes showed as much fervour to suppress the movement as the officers of British India.

The movement was fairly successful in Tamil Nadu. It began with meetings, processions and strikes and for several days, no trains ran between Madras and Calcutta as the railway employees went on strike. The students remained in the forefront in Madras. They went on strike soon after the leaders were arrested and did not go to their classes.

The railways were very badly damaged in Trichy. Mannargudi railway station was burnt down. The situation was so tense that each train had an escort of two compartments of armed police. In Ramnad District, the movement began with processions and meetings but acquired a new tone. The people seemed to have become so powerful that the officers deserted their police stations. The Government ceased to exist for nearly 72 hours, but with the arrival of the army, Government control was gradually re-established.

At Tiruvali in Tanjore, the Munsif Court and other Government buildings were burnt. The airport at Coimbatore was attacked and the Government, in return, completely wiped off 20 nearby villages.

The movement in Kumbakonam, Madurai and other places was not upto the mark. The atrocities committed at Devakottai were unparalleled. The wife of an absconder, Gopal Krishnan, was stripped naked and tied to a tree and inhumanly tortured till she died.

Native States:

As soon as the leaders were arrested, the Kolhapur State conference started the struggle. In the meantime some attempt at compromise was made and the actual struggle put off till October 18. Meetings, processions and such activities were declared illegal and all the leaders were rounded up. Special tribunals were set

up to hold summary trials. Now the people switched on to sabotage. Some bungalows, offices and 3 railway stations were attacked. Six postal bags were looted and the statue of Leslie Wilson, the former Governor of Bombay, was disfigured. Bombs exploded at eight places. A collective fine of Rs. 44,550 was imposed in this area. Sixteen persons were killed in this state during the movement.

The movement in Miraj started on August 9 itself. Charudutt Patil, the president of the Praja Parishad, wrote to the ruler calling upon him to break off his connections with the British Government and set up a responsible Government in his state. When there was no response, the movement was speeded up; Shikare Patil and other leaders were arrested. The ruler then agreed to set up a commission for forming a responsible Government. The Praja Parishad, in view of the settlement, withdrew its demand that the ruler should sever his connections with the British Government. All the political prisoners, with the exception of Shikare, were released. Shikare went on hunger strike demanding that the poor in the state should be given grains at lower rates from the ruler's stock and the smaller officers in the state be given dearness allowances. He was transferred to the Nasik prison. In the meantime sabotage activities were started, bombs exploded, postal bags were looted as the settlement was not in sight.

In Mysore too the movement attained a high pitch. As the Praja Parishad and the Mazdoor Sabha co-operated labour participation in the movement was considerable. Production of war materials was affected. There was firing on the processions, and for each officer killed a hundred persons were shot and the bodies of those killed were not handed over to the relatives. This did not cow down the people. A goods train was derailed at Sirangpattam. Hotalkarm, Ajur, Satapur and other railway stations were set ablaze. Among all the states, it was probably in Mysore that sabotage and other revolutionary activities reached the highest point. The atrocities committed by the Government too were as high.

The ruler of Gwalior happened to be a Hindu and his subjects were mainly Hindus. But he had his Hindu subjects beaten up by Muslims as it suited his interests. In response to the arrest of the national leaders, the Praja Parishad of Gwalior raised the slogan of "Quit India", called upon the ruler to sever his ties

with the British Government and establish a responsible government. This resulted in the arrest of the leaders. The Bohra Muslims attacked a students' procession on August 13, although it was in no way a communal procession. As a result Bohra shops were looted. Communal feelings were aroused and things came to a standstill. Thus even a Hindu Government in conformity with the British tradition resorted to the policy of divide and rule and formented communalism when the situation demanded.

Horses were let loose on a students' procession in Lashkar.

Another procession in Ujjain was attacked by the police. People were beaten up in the market place.

The Nawab of Bhopal was on the point of receiving an ultimatum asking to break away from the British Government and set up a responsible government, but the secret police forestalled the situation and papers were seized in advance and sponsors of the ultimatum were arrested. Altaj Mazdani was taken ill in prison and died under suspicious circumstances after he was released.

Nearly 500 political workers of Indore were rounded up and kept at Mandaleshwar. They escaped from custody, but the majority of them were soon rearrested. In the end an agreement was reached between the ruler of Indore and the Praja Parishad, which like all such agreements only helped the rulers to gain time. Gandhi's letters from prison to the Viceroy and his fast only helped the rulers.

The people of Kotah seized power in the city. On August 13, the police officials invited some leaders for friendly negotiations and put them under arrest promptly and the wife of one of the leaders was maltreated. This created a state of frenzy and the masses seized the city walls and gates and closed all roads. They also seized the arms. They hoisted the national flag on the police station and named it the Swarajya Bhavan. When the army came, it found the gates of the city barred and bolted. The people greeted the army with the cries of "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". The soldiers refused to shoot the people. The ruler of Kotah sent a messenger to the leaders and as an expression of his goodwill, he sent away the army. New magistrates, kotwals and other officers were appointed. The police were replaced by volunteers. The rule of the people lasted three days, after which talks were held with the ruler who promised a responsible government and the city was handed back. Thus the people were duped.

In Mewar the people were arrested when they demanded that the Rana should break his ties with the British Government. A British officer snatched the national flag from a student, trampled it under his feet, and threatened to shoot everyone. For want of any programme the movement there faded out after some 500 people were arrested.

The movement was quite powerful in the Talchar State in Orissa where the people resorted to open revolt which continued even after Gandhi's fast. A parallel government was formed duly recognised by the village heads, chaukidars and ziledars. The chaukidars etc. made a bonfire of their uniforms themselves and started work under the new government. Railway lines were cut and all transport came under the control of the national government, which had its own military force. It was proposed to capture the city after the villages were captured. The State Government sought help from the British Government. Handbills and tear-gas shells were dropped on the crowds from aeroplanes. The Government resorted to aerial bombing to disperse the people.

Police atrocities followed soon. An amount of Rs. 10 lakhs was looted from this poor state with a population of just 85,000 and collective fines were mercilessly extorted.

In the Nilgiri state in Orissa, the people managed to release one of their leaders by attacking the police station on September 29. Sabotage work was carried out on large scale in Raigarh also where many Government buildings were burnt down. Vishnu Patnaik led an attack on the Chanpur police station on September 2 and took away all the arms.

Post-Mortem of the August Movement

The August movement was triggered by the Bombay arrests, but as the leaders failed to give the people any programme, whatever happened was a people's movement. Gandhi did not give any programme because he had none. It has been said that he had realised that the old type of civil disobedience had outlived its usefulness. It was impossible for Gandhi to admit this truth, discard the old weapons and adopt the revolutionary technique. He was so committed that accepting this new truth publicly would have been suicidal. Compare this to Bertrand Russell's attitude.

He was a militant pacifist and opposed to participation in the first world war and he suffered for this. He continued to preach this viewpoint, but during the second world war he very soon realised that Hitler's victory would be an unmitigated calamity, so he threw all his previous commitments overboard and came out with a case for joining the war. But Gandhi, wedded as he was to certain dogmas, could not divorce himself from them.

The Congress Socialist Party played a glorious part in this movement. From the very beginning, this party and all other revolutionary parties had branded the second world war as an imperialist war and even when Russia was invaded by Germany, it did not alter its anti-British stand. Jayaprakash Narayan later on wrote a series of articles in which he laid down that he did not accept the doctrine of socialism based on the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat. Rather, he desired a socialist State on the model of the British Labour Party. Narayan achieved a lot of glamour because he had escaped from Hazaribagh Jail. Since then he has moved from Fabianism to Gandhism, managing to remain in focus all the time.

The Forward Bloc formed by Netaji persistently held on to the anti imperialist front during the war, and its members participated in the August movement. A large number of them desired that Japan and Germany should emerge victorious in the war. But, as has been pointed out later with regard to the I.N.A. or Azad Hind Fauj, it refused to be a tool of Japan in spite of being formed under the auspices of the Japanese.

The Revolutionary Socialist Party also took the same stand. Its leader, Jogesh Chatterjee, had stated in the course of his trial at Etah that he was expecting that Japan would invade from the east and Germany from the west and this would lead ultimately to India's independence.

Jogesh Chatterjee had been released from the Deoli prison following a hunger strike. He made a brave attempt to organise the August movement in which connection he was at first tried at Etah and sentenced to 10 years R.I. and then accused as the leader of the Lucknow Conspiracy case.

The real leader of the August movement was neither Jayaprakash Narayan nor Aruna Asaf Ali nor Jogesh Chatterjee, but the masses. All the leftist parties, except the Communist Party, tried their level best to make the movement a success.

It would be interesting to note how in similar circumstances Lenin handled the situation. During the first world war, it was only the Bolshevik Party of Russia that stuck to the principles laid down at the Copenhagen Conference of 1910 and other international conferences had resolved that in the event of a war, socialist parties instead of participating in it, should oppose it, because wars were waged with the intention of colonial re-division of the world. The working class had nothing to gain. Such being the case, there was no reason why workers should sacrifice their lives in these conflicts of the capitalists. The Russian Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Lenin, called upon the working class to turn the imperialist war into a series of civil wars in various countries and put an end to imperialist domination. The result of this policy is well-known. The Russian revolutionaries were not taken in by patriotic slogans. They converted the imperialist war into a civil war which resulted in the October Revolution.

Lenin's party split into two, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. The Menshevik group was reformist whereas the Bolshevik group was revolutionary. The entire programme of the Bolshevik group rested on the working class and its alliance with the exploited peasantry. Every time a difference arose, the Mensheviks took a reactionary stand. The February Revolution of 1917 dethroned the Czar and the Mensheviks were content with this and forgetting that continuance of the war in no way furthered the interests of the toiling masses they declared that it was not their war. They called upon the Russian working class to fight the war, saying that the war was now being fought by the people of Russia for the defence of their fatherland. Not only this, the Mensheviks started giving open support to the ruling class. Even in such a situation the Bolsheviks did not waver and declined to be mere puppets in the hands of the ruling class. 'Moreover the Russian ruling class was not free to look at the war from the point of view of its own interests, but it was playing in the hands of the capitalists of France and England.

When Lenin came to Russia after the February revolution, he felt that there should be an end to the farce. He was particularly keen on it because he wanted to prevent his party from being one with the Social Democratic Parties of Europe in fighting the imperialist war. He also wished to purge his party of

reformists. The social democrats in other countries were doing exactly what the Mensheviks were doing in Russia. Lenin was against Social Democratic Parties, for, according to him, these parties were sacrificing the lives of the peasants and workers of their respective countries to serve the capitalists.

Lenin was of the opinion that the revolution which shook Russia during the first world war would not be confined to that country. Hungary and Bavaria did actually have socialist revolutions in the spring of 1919, but international capitalism spared no efforts to throttle these. Russia was also invaded at 23 fronts simultaneously, but the Red Army repelled all those attacks.

The Indian revolutionaries maintained that the world revolution, and in the case of colonial countries, the fight against imperialism, could not be tide to the apron strings of Russia, as every country had to fight its way to liberty and socialism by its own efforts. They also maintained that a free India could be a better asset for Russia than an India under the British yoke. They asserted that it was the first task of every colonial country to free itself from the shackles of imperialism. They said that if Russia found itself in the camp of Britain and the U.S.A., this could not change the course of their own fight against British imperialism. On the other hand, the Communists said that all other considerations should be subjugated to the interests of the U.S.S.R., the only socialist country. It can be said in retrospect that had the Communist Party been able to carry the bulk of the left, even the extreme left, with it, things would have been different. But as it was, its breaking away from the mainstream when the struggle was on, dealt a death-blow to the propagation of Communism. It hopelessly divided the labour movement in India and knocked the bottom out of many socialist values. Long long before the invasion of Russia Communists were often asked by their comrades in jail as to what would be their attitude in case Russia was forced to join the camp of imperialist powers. To this they used to give an emphatic 'no'. When Russia was actually dragged into the war, they still insisted that there would be no change. Even after the invasion of Russia by Germany, the Communist Party of India took a long time to make up its mind. This is mentioned by the renowned Communist writer, Edgar Snow:

"Incidentally it is interesting to note that the Indian Communist

Party evidently was completely cut off from the Comintern some years prior to its dissolution in 1943. This was evident in the curious deviation of the Indian party on the question of the war. Most national Communist parties immediately abandoned whatever qualifications they had attached to their support for the war when Hitler invaded Russia, but a full six months later the Indian party was still opposing Indian participation in it." (*Glory and Bondage*, p. 489)

This so-called deviation and delay in coming round to world communist point of view may have been accentuated if not caused by the fact that in India the Communists were in the thick of a struggle. By December 1, 1941, the new thesis had gone round the prisons and the Communists came to the conclusion that the war was no longer an imperialist war; it had now turned a people's war. Communists in jails were gradually released. The Communist Party was declared legal. Sir Stafford Cripps, who had come to India for negotiations with the Congress, is supposed to have played a significant role in removing the ban on the Communist Party.

The 1942 movement in many respects resembled the 1905 revolution in Russia, the chief difference being that in 1905 revolution the proletariat was the principal force, but in the 1942 movement the working class played a negligible part. The Communist Party was partly responsible for this.

Had the movement of 1942 been timed properly, had it been triggered, say, in 1940, after the fall of France, had the leadership freed itself mentally from the hangover of the movements of 1921, 1930 and 1932 and had the programme been prepared in a revolutionary perspective, it could easily have turned itself into a revolution and a parallel government could have been set up everywhere. But as I have said, Gandhi did not want a revolution and the leftists were divided and weak.

It has been shown that women's participation in the revolutionary movement was by no means insignificant. They played an equally glorious part in 1942. Aruna Asaf Ali and Sucheta Kripalani were in the committee formed for organising the revolution soon after the first flush was over. For some reasons, the history of this committee has never been written, but the importance of these women leaders can be gauged from the open letter written in 1946 to Maulana Azad by Aruna Asaf Ali and

Achyut Patwardhan while they were still underground. "Millions of tons of elemental power were unleashed during this upsurge. We could only give direction to a few ounces of this power," she wrote.

Women worked along with men, but they were called upon to undergo greater sacrifice. They were raped by policemen and soldiers and many instances of molestations must have been suppressed by the outraged women and their relations. In spite of this hundreds of such incidents found their way to the papers. From whatever appeared in the press, it can be said that in this matter, British imperialism compared well with Nazism.

According to the findings of the investigation committee set up under the chairmanship of B. G. Kher, former Chief Minister, Kashibai and her husband (parents of one Mallu who had been absconding for participating in the August movement) along with their two young children and two more persons, were taken to the house of the police patel of Chikhawal on October 19, 1944. Kashibai was produced before a sub-inspector named Ingawale. She was asked whether she was Mallu's mother or wife. Then the sub-inspector caught her by the hair and ordered her husband to strip her naked. Kashibai was then beaten mercilessly. The members of the committee saw the marks of beating on her body. It was further learnt from four chaukidars, who had acquired some land in reward and who were present at the place of the incident that Ingawale threatened Kashibai that if she refused to give the whereabouts of Mallu, chilly powder would be inserted into her private parts. According to some witnesses, the officer himself inserted chilly powder. Next Friday she was again stripped naked and beaten up. All this torture was inflicted in the house of the police patel. The family was completely starved for the whole period that the police stayed on in the village. She became so ill that she had to be taken to Kolhapur Government Hospital. The committee tried its best, but the doctors and the nurses of the hospital were not allowed to give evidence. A woman deposed that Kashibai started bleeding profusely after she returned from hospital. These atrocities were committed in a state ruled by the supposed direct descendents of Shivaji; the Hindu hero who fought against the Aurangzeb regime.

Sidhi Bala Maiti, wife of Adhar Chandra Maiti, who belonged to Chandipur in Midnapore district deposed thus:

"I am 19 years old. I have got a child. On January 9, 1943, a police officer entered my house with some soldiers at 9.30 in the morning. They forcibly removed my husband and then molested me. I became unconscious. This was the second time that I was raped."

She had been raped on October 20, 1942. She succumbed to the injuries caused by torture. The wife of Haripad Pandit from the same village stated.

"I am 21 years old and mother of three girls. On January 9, 1943, a police officer entered my house in the morning with some soldiers. He arrested my husband and took him away. Then he returned to my room. The soldiers, following his orders, tied my mouth with cloth and threatened to shoot me if I shouted. After this two soldiers raped me. I became unconscious and when I regained consciousness again, I found that my husband had returned and blood was oozing out from wounds all over his body."

This woman was pregnant at that time.

Suhashini Das, wife of Hanmath Nath Das, of the same village, deposed:

"I am 20 years old. I am childless. On January 9, 1943, a police officer came to my house with a few soldiers. At his instruction two soldiers tied my mouth with a piece of cloth. They threatened to shoot me if I shouted. I became unconscious out of shame and disgust. It is up to you to take me back in society. Please take me back."

This woman was recovering from an attack of plague when she was raped.

Sneha Bala Mukherjee, who was the widow of Sushil Mukherjee from the same village deposed:

"I am 28 years old. I have four children. On January 9, 1943, a police officer came to our house with some soldiers. Some of them caught hold of my eldest son and sent him away. Then the soldiers, at the instruction of that officer, entered my room and held me. They thrust cloth in my mouth and raped me again and again. I became unconscious and when I came back to consciousness I saw that my son had returned and he was bleeding."

Vasant Bala Maparu, wife of Girish Maparu from Dihi Masuria in the same thana gave a similar statement to the effect that three soldiers raped her.

One police superintendent was responsible for all these incidents.

No account of the 1942 movement would be complete without some account of the tortures inflicted on political prisoners. A number of political prisoners including doctors and lawyers were kept in the Alipuram prison in the South. One of the prisoners had an argument with a warder and for this prisoners were thrown on the ground a lathi charge was ordered. The floor turned red with blood. A few prisoners, who were locked in the barracks were also beaten up. These prisoners were ordered to collect at a central place under the impression that the beating now was over. But another lathi charge followed. They were all brought out and made to file past four abreast. Many of them could not even stand. Those who could stand were ordered to do drill and when it was found that they could not do, they were whipped. This happened on September 14, 1942.

On September 7, Deputy Inspector General Lack met Shibban Lal Saxena in the Gorakhpur Prison. That very day he wrote the following letter to his wife in England:

"My Darling,

.... Trobton and his regiment will leave this place tomorrow and will be replaced by the Suffolk regiment. Those people were very useful. Very often Trobton's regiment went out of its way to help me. I hope the Suffolk regiment would be as useful. The well-known Congress rebel Shibban Lal about whom I was so worried all these days, was arrested yesterday by a village-head in Maharajgunj. He is the same man who was engaged in the attempt to kill Erick Mass and had organised sabotage work in this district. I had an interview with him in the jail today. That swine said that he had no information whatever regarding the sabotage activities in Bihar and U.P. I told him how a police officer was burnt alive at which that scoundrel shed crocodile tears and stated that such incidents were really a matter of shame for the Congress flag and that if Gandhiji came to know about such things he would make an atonement for them.

It is not only suspicion but I am certain that this rascal must be responsible for many such deeds. It simply enrages me when I see such hypocrisy. As it is, he is not sorry for all the trouble, all hardships and all anti-social things that have taken place. If he was at all sorry, he was so because he was arrested before he could do any further mischief. Inside this cell I belaboured him

till he was almost dead, Erick was so much delighted at his arrest as if he had got the better of me in a game of cards. I am glad you are going to so many parties, but please don't keep late nights for long. But I know you are a sweet angel. My darling wife, lots of love.

Yours ever
Jim"

During 1942 Lahore Fort became notorious for police atrocities. The writer has direct knowledge about the torture methods practised in Fatehgarh Central Jail. The following is based on the account sent to him by Niranjan Sinha of the Kanpur Station Bomb Case. Fatehgarh Central Prison was the most dreaded place in U.P. It was here that the revolutionary Manindra Nath Banerjee died in 1934 in very pitiable circumstances.

Babu Ram and Master Gaya Prasad, arrested during the 1942 movement were made to grind mills the moment they were brought here. For an insignificant offence Gaya Prasad was beaten up so that he fractured his left leg. He was locked up in a dark cell for four days. He was brought out on the fourth day for another round of beating. Unable to bear it any longer, he went on hunger strike which lasted 40 days.

Kanaiya Lal of Etawah was also first made to grind mills and then he was beaten so brutally that his skull was broken, his clothes were soaked in blood and he became unconscious. He went on a fast for which he was tried and sentenced to 20 strokes. Babu Ram Gupta, Omkar Sinha and Ram Narayan Azad went on a sympathetic fast for which they too were given 20 stripes each.

In the same jail Shiv Ram Sinha, Ram Nath Varma, Ram Ratan, all from Kanpur, Siddhinath and Giri Raj from Gazipur, Halchal and Bachchi Lal from Farukhabad and Ram Nagina and Mulraj Singh from Balia were beaten till they vomited blood. The eardrums of Kanaiya Lal and Shiv Ram Sinha burst. All the C class political prisoners in the Fatehgarh Prison were made to lie on the ground and their legs were raised and they were beaten unconscious.

Some of the prisoners were beaten even if they wished the jailor. These prisoners were taken to be so unworthy that their greetings could not be accepted. If any of them abstained from food on grounds of health, then also they were beaten. Jamuna

Prasad, Ram Chandra and Jagannath from Allahabad, and Mithailal and Kamta Prasad from Meerut were beaten for similar reasons.

Manna Singh of Mainpuri was beaten up because he could not complete his quota of labour. Very often those who had finished their labour were also beaten up for the simple reason that even though they themselves had done their allotted work, they had failed to persuade their friends to do jail labour.

All these activities were done under the supervision of Jailor Ram Dutt Shukla. His younger brother Jagdish Shukla, however, was his exact opposite, a revolutionary. Ram Dutt Shukla turned out his son, a mere boy, from the house for ever on learning that he joined a procession. Azizul Rehman, Shukla's successor, followed in his footsteps.

In the same jail Shiv Ram Sinha, Ram Rakhan and Mannalal Dwivedi of Kanpur, Radha Krishna and Kanaja Lal from Etawah, Dev Nandan Dixit of Banaras, Bihari Ram of Mirzapur, and Deleep Singh of Naini Tal were given 7 stripes each for breach of discipline, which consisted in their refusal to join the parade on the arrival of the I.G. of Jails.

Rameshwar Dayal, Munna Lal, Kashi Ram, Nagannath, Komil Ram and Chhote Lal of Kheri, Hari Narayan Sinha of Badaun, Ram Sunder of Faizabad, Lala Madho Singh of Pratapgarh, and Pandit Ram Lal Sharma of Pilibhit were also beaten. Jagdish Chandra Yadav was beaten because he refused to use the blanket badly damaged by white ants. Ram Lal Sharma and Prem Singh were asked to carry wood and were beaten up for refusal to do so.

Jailor Shaukat Beg reduced the ration of the political prisoners on the ground that they would not be able to digest so much. It is not strange that many prisoners fell ill. They were not sent to hospital, even when their condition became precarious. Swami Bhuddhu Lal of Etawah, Hari Narayan Sinha of Badaun, Hari Govind Sinha of Balia and Bachchi Lal of Farrukhabad had to be continuously kept in the hospital.

Even the most esteemed political prisoners of the August movement were put in C class. Mukundi Lal of Etawah, who had been in B class for 8 years as a Kakori Conspiracy case prisoner was kept in C class this time for 7 years. He lost 70 lbs. in weight. The police had looted the house of Ram Bali Gupta of Jaunpur and taken away Rs. 72,000.

Dwijendra Bose, the nephew of Subhash and Sarat Chandra Bose, after his release from the Lahore Fort narrated the innumerable tortures in the prisons to which prisoners were subjected in the course of his speech in a public meeting at Lahore. He said that he was once kept in a solitary cell in which the temperature had gone up to 116° F. He was kept there till he became unconscious.

He said that while he was in the Lahore Fort, a C.I.D. officer kept on questioning him: "Did Subhas Bose leave India with the consent of Gandhiji?" "Is Sardar Baldev Singh, Subhas Babu's friend?" "Did Sardar Baldev Singh help Subhas Bose in leaving India?" When he refused to answer these questions, he was theatened to be shot.

Shiv Nandan Hrishi, a doctor from the Punjab, on his release from the Lahore Fort, threw light on the maltreatment of the political prisoners in Lahore Fort and made an appeal to the then Congress President, Maulana Azad, to appoint a committee to investigate this.

He said that Dwijendra Lal Bose deserved our thanks for revealing the infernal tortures perpetrated there. It is significant that the Lahore Fort was not a regular detention camp like the Ahmednagar Fort, Aga Khan Palace or the Deolali camp. The I.G. of Prisons had no control over it, and even the ordinary police, normally responsible for detention could do absolutely nothing there. This Fort was under the absolute control of a special branch of the secret police of the Punjab working in consultation with the Intelligence Bureau.

Solitary confinements in dark cells, unhygienic and stinking lavatories, lack of clothes and bathing facilities were the order of the day.

Shiv Nandan Hrishi said that during his two months' stay in the Lahore Fort he was subjected to so much torture that he preferred death. He had to pass three nights in biting cold without any bed or blanket. He started vomiting blood, but he was denied medical treatment. He developed pneumonia and much later a doctor was called, who just prescribed a mixture.

Prisoners in Jaunpur Jail were beaten for several days and made to confirm to a routine. There were nearly 800 political prisoners but ordinary criminals received very much better treatment.

The Government was specially unkind to the prisoners confined in the revolutionary ward of Bareilly District Prison. They were asked to have their names stenciled on their kurtas. Mukti Nath Upadhyaya of Azamgarh, Jagdish Shukla of Faizabad, Virupaksha of Maharashtra, Hriday Narayan Pathak of Banaras Gazipur, Shiv Vrat Singh and Dukkha Baran Maurya of Jaunpur, Keshav Pandeya of Gorakhpur, Mul Raj Singh of Balia and Jagannath Puri of Gonda were each given 20 stripes in Bareilly prison.

The wounds they received from this flogging were not treated. After flogging they were dragged into the barracks and locked. For six days they remained incommunicado. The flogging and a weak long fast made them very weak and they refused to go into their cells. They were dragged along for a furlong and put in their cells. But the prisoners were adamant. A compromise was at last reached on February 16, 1944.

Kunj Bihari Sinha, Hriday Pathak and Arjun Singh were tried on November 1, 1944 under Section 52 of the Prison Act and their sentences were increased by six months. Hari Prasad of Gorakhpur was dragged out of the latrine for having gone there at the time of parade. Some 34 political prisoners went on hunger strike in protest, which lasted for 60 days. One of them Bhagwan Shukla was refused even water for 12 days.

Diwan Singh died of torture. Umashankar of Gazipur who contracted pneumonia was denied treatment till his condition became very serious. He was then taken to the hospital, but it was too late.

Vishnu Kumar Dwivedi, the younger brother of Shiv Kumar Dwivedi of Lucknow was arrested at a wayside station and beaten up mercilessly and was kept in solitary confinement for three days. From then on he was treated daily with a doze of medicine that would give him fits and then he was subjected to all possible tortures to extract information. When he did not respond he was belaboured till he became unconscious. He was kept suspended from air and pricked with needles. Several sticks would be arranged on his chest and policemen would sit at each end.

Jogesh Chatterjee was exasperated when he heard about these atrocities. He was particularly sorry that the prisoners of the August movement were kept in C class. This led to a fast unto death in 1945. The whole country responded to this call and he finally gave it up in deference to requests. By then he had

successfully drawn the attention of the country to the shameful conditions prevailing inside the prisons.

GANDHIJI'S DILEMMA

Gandhi's views on the 1942 movement are to be found in the *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (August 1942—April 1944) published by the manager of publications, Delhi in 1944. It is marked "Published with authority".

In his letter to the Viceroy on the 19th January 1943 Gandhi writes: "Of course, I deplore the happenings which have taken place since 9th August last."

On May 27, 1943, he wrote about the genesis of the movement:

"As it is, the Government left me no time to start the movement. Therefore, how could a movement, which was never started, embarrass 'India's' war effort? If then, there was any embarrassment by reason of the popular resentment of the Government's action in resorting to the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen, the responsibility was solely that of the Government."

To an American correspondent who asked: "Would a free India declare war against Japan?", he said: "Free India need not do so. It simply becomes the ally of the allied powers simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however, overdue. Human nature thanks the debtor when he discharges the debt."

"How then would this alliance fit with India's non-violence?"

"It is a good question. The whole of India is not non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority or perhaps by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there too the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice; so that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they do not hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately

on the moral field and declare that India is independent today, irrespective of India's demand." *Harijan*, June 14th, 1942, p. 187.

We have already mentioned the statement by Aruna Asaf Ali and Achyut Patwardhan. It said: "Our attention has been drawn to the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee on 21-12-45. How this resolution can be related to the movement of the last three years and how it will influence the future struggle are subjects on which we have given special thought. Even after your arrest in Bombay, some one dozen very responsible Congressmen were available. Some of these were above suspicion as far as giving short shrift to Gandhian truth and non-violence was concerned. In collaboration with them we set up an organisation to guide those thousands of Congressmen and others who were eager to act according to the resolution of the 8th August. We issued such instructions as were necessary. We considered it very necessary to lead the forces released by the resolution. Just after your arrest we started issuing instructions, declarations (through Congress radio) from time to time, and all this was done in the name of the A.I.C.C. We are mentioning this only to show that we have no intention of backing out from the responsibility. Nobody ever questioned our right to speak on behalf of the A.I.C.C. On the contrary everybody congratulated us and heartily came to our aid. That the people responded spontaneously to the Congress call for a struggle is the most important event of modern history. Once the people started their march on the path of open rebellion, it called for an effective and courageous leadership. They wanted to face terrorism in an organised manner as far as possible and the genius of the people succeeded in this for some time. People were given clear and definite instructions about the removal of fishplates, cutting of telegraph wires, secret work, strict boycott of Government servants, etc.

"The Congress slogan was that the struggle should be launched on a large scale within the four corners of non-violence. It was said that every Indian striving for freedom should become his own guide and relentlessly work for it. All this is very good, but every man cannot be expected to have the requisite initiative nor can he put up an organised effort.

"You say now definitely that the struggle as it was carried on went counter to the resolution and did not tally with non-violence. Thus we are left with but two options. Either we should dub

all that happened as the spontaneous revolt of the masses, brand ourselves as swept off our feet by them and promise to toe your line in future, or we should disavow any part in it and quietly accept your judgment. But integrity and faith do not allow us to take this easy course. We were again and again warned that our actions could be challenged and our interpretation as to the right type of resistance and struggle could be repudiated. In spite of this we followed our practical criterion. Whatever stabilised our power for resistance and struggle and strengthened the will to be free was accepted as proper by us. An inner compulsion forces us to avow our faith.

"We did not impose anything on the masses from above and did not say do this and do it this way. On the contrary we studied the *modus operandi* of the people and tried to gauge the experience gained at the furthest centres of revolt. Thousands sacrificed their lives on these lines, now if we disavow those acts, it would amount to cowardice. Ours was a collective struggle against the British system and not an individual struggle. We think that the Working Committee has not added lustre to its image by dubbing the historic episodes of the freedom struggle as spontaneous sentimental, misguided acts. We are unable to see our mistake, although we concede that we might have committed the average number of mistakes natural for such an organisation. Those who call upon the people to sacrifice everything and plunge in the struggle owe it to the people to supply them with proper leadership. This is very necessary specially because the resistance is decentralised. Lack of this understanding results in utilising the genius of organisation in a lopsided manner. People are stirred up but their enthusiasm is not given proper direction. Persisting on this is tantamount to flat refusal to learn from the experience of the last 3 years. To eulogise dead people as heroes and martyrs and at the same time to brand their actions which they performed collectively as misguided is to separate enthusiasm from actual action. This type of thinking forced many good workers to leave the Congress. That is why we pray that the whole matter may be gone into again."

CHAPTER V

The Denouement

EMERGENCE OF INA

DURING THE second world war, Rash Bihari Bose, the famous revolutionary, organised the Indian National Army. Bose had settled down in Japan after marrying a Japanese woman. He continued to write and speak on India, its culture and civilisation and its struggle for freedom in Japanese and English. He wrote more than a dozen books in Japanese on these subjects.

As soon as Japan plunged into the war Rash Bihari thought[1] that it was time for him to take the plunge. He had smuggled himself out of India during the first world war to contribute his mite to the German plot. He now met Field Marshal Sugiyama, the head of the Imperial General Staff and offered to help him if he promised to help the freedom struggle in India. He explained to him the blueprint of the I.N.A. But Sugiyama was not convinced and emphasised that Japan was at war with Britain and the Indians as British subjects would be treated as members of enemy countries.

Rash Bihari Bose realised that Sugiyama was too much of a legalist and it was not possible to din into him any revolutionary idea. The Deputy War Minister gave him all facilities and the Indian Independence League was activised with Rash Bihari Bose as its President.

When Japan overran Thailand where there was a large number of Indian settlers, the Indian Independence League was formed there under the leadership of Swami Satyanand Puri. Rash Bihari was held in great respect by the Japanese Government. Japanese army maltreated the people of the vanquished countries

[1] (1) *Beplavi Rashbehari Basu* (Bengali) by Mani Bagchi, pp. 157-176. (2) *Netaji—a a symposium* edited by Shriram Sharma. (3) *Azad Hind Fauj* by B. Roy and P. Dhar.

but at Bose's instance no Indian woman was touched in any of these countries.

Rash Bihari Bose made speedy attempts to organise the captured Indian soldiers to form a liberation army. His emissaries also tried to infiltrate into the enemy lines, and persuade Indian soldiers not to fight against the Japanese. In pursuance of this programme Pritam Singh met Captain Mohan Singh who was at that time cut off from the British army. He yielded to strong pressures from Pritam Singh, surrendered and started building the I.N.A. or Azad Hind Fauj. A Japanese major, Fujiyara, assisted Pritam Singh.

As the Japanese advanced further, more and more Indian soldiers fell into their hands. Captain Mohan Singh began with 200 soldiers, but the number swelled to 30,000.

A conference of the Indian Independence League was organised in Tokyo in March 1942 which was attended by Captain Mohan Singh, Captain Mohammed Akrâm Khan and Colonel Raghavan Menon. Swami Satyanand Puri and Pritam Singh could not attend.

By May 1942, the Indian officers were convinced that the Japanese were serious about helping India. They realised that the organisation of Indian National Army was a certainty. On June 15, another conference was held in Bangkok which was presided over by Rash Bihari Bose. It passed 17 resolutions one of which empowered Rash Bihari, Captain Mohan Singh, Raghavan Menon and Jailani to organise the whole movement. It was decided that Independent India would repay all the loans that might be taken for carrying out the operations. It was resolved to organise the Azad Hind Fauj, with Captain Mohan Singh as the Commander-in-Chief and it should be accepted by the axis powers as the army of an independent country. This conference also resolved that Subhas Chandra Bose should be invited to take up the responsibility of this organisation..

Subhas was already released as a result of a fast and had secretly travelled to Kabul and from there to Germany. Even while in jail Subhas had thought that either he would die and so contribute his share in the struggle or the Government would release him in which case he would promptly escape. From the very day of his release he began his preparations to escape from the country. Some 62 CID men were posted round his house, to keep a watch but he eluded them. In Germany he tried to

rally round all forces working for India's Independence.

When the call for the August movement was given, the Indians settled in East Asia were quite well organised. On August 11, the Indians in Kuala Lumpur held a grand rally where Shah Nawaz Khan emphasised that the Azad Hind Fauj was no puppet.

The Azad Hind Fauj also published a bulletin, the *Azad Hind*, in English, Tamil, Malayalam, Roman Hindustani and Gujarati. The members of the Indian Independence League carried on propaganda among the Indians from many radio stations. Three regiments bearing the names of Gandhiji, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru were formed. Bose was hounded out of the Congress by these men, but when the time came Bose forgot his private feud and named the regiments after the three Congress leaders.

It should not be taken for granted that all the captured Indian Army officers came over to the Azad Hind Fauj. At the outset, Captain Shah Nawaz Khan himself did not want to join.

There were also occasions when the relations between the Japanese and the Indian Independence League became strained. In October 1942, the League claimed that the property left behind by the Indians in Burma should be handed over to the Azad Hind Fauj, but the Japanese were not prepared to agree to this. When General Mohan Singh learnt about this, he sent the orders that the Azad Hind Fauj should not be sent to Burma under those circumstances. This quarrel was somehow settled. Col. Raghavan had opened an educational institution and the Japanese attacked this, and kidnapped some people. Col. Raghavan was enraged and he closed it down on November 29. The Council of Action, the most important body of Indians, sent a memorandum to the Japanese Government in which doubts were expressed about the bona fides of Japan. In reply, Gen. Tojo made a statement to the effect that Japan had no expansionist designs on India and promised that there would be no interference from the Japanese Government. Yet another trouble arose in October. The Japanese Government tried to keep under its custody those military officers who had not joined the Azad Hind Fauj, but General Mohan Singh objected. Col. Gill was arrested by the Japanese on the suspicion that he was the source of all this trouble. The Indian Council of Action promptly offered to resign.

However, Rash Bihari Bose said these were all minor issues that could be settled by negotiations. He offered to meet Mohan

Singh and convince him but Mohan Singh was so enraged that he flatly refused the offer. Bose also came to know that some of the officers were having second thoughts about joining the I.N.A. Rash Bihari advised the Japanese Government to arrest Mohan Singh. He was arrested on September 30.

Mohan Singh was held on an island near Singapore from where he was sent to Sumatra. Mohan Singh had ordered that after his arrest the I.N.A. should be disbanded.

Rash Bihari made it plain that the Japanese Government had arrested Mohan Singh at his suggestion. He also said that Mohan Singh could agree or disagree, but he had no authority to disband the Azad Hind Fauj. He tried to salvage and build up the army once more, but his first attempts failed.

In February 1943, the Japanese Government called a conference of some 200 officers of the Azad Hind Fauj and explained the circumstances that led to the arrest of Mohan Singh. It was upto Mohan Singh to resign his post, but he had no authority to disband the army. Captain Shah Nawaz Khan retorted that he was not willing to be a puppet in the Japanese hands. On the second day of the conference, however, a compromise formula was evolved.

This time, when the Azad Hind Fauj was reorganised the Japanese saw to it that power was not concentrated in one person. When Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Japan on July 4, 1943, Rash Bihari Bose withdrew from the scene gladly after handing over charge to him. He died in Tokyo in January 1945.

Subhas had reached Japan by submarine. On June 30, 1943, the Tokyo Radio announced that he was soon arriving in Japan to take charge of the liberation movement. He was brought near Madagascar by a German submarine from where he was picked up by a Japanese submarine and brought to Japan after a very hazardous journey. He was accorded a public reception on his arrival in Tokyo. From the very outset, he made it plain that neither he nor other Indian revolutionaries were eager to see the British replaced by the Japanese.

Subhas Bose thought that soldiers and military officers should be educated politically. In his speech on July 9 he said that it would have been easier for him to remain in prison like other leaders, but he felt that the cause of Indian freedom demanded that he should go and organise the forces outside India. "After prayers and meditation for more than three months I came to

the conclusion that I possessed the strength to sacrifice my life while performing my duty. Now the problem was how to get out of prison. It was necessary to go on fast for that purpose. But that was a difficult task. Terence Maeswiney and Jatin Das had died as a result of hunger strike, but I felt that I was intended for a historical task. I resorted to fast and got myself released from prison. From experience I had come to realise that no useful purpose would be served if I lingered within the country. I left India to strengthen the forces of liberation inside the country with the help of the forces of liberation outside India."

Bose was thrown out of the Congress because he had challenged Gandhi's dictatorial authority and had pleaded for the acceptance of a more militant programme. But he harboured no ill-feeling against Gandhi and soon after he took charge of the Azad Hind Fauj. Gandhi's birthday was celebrated throughout East Asian countries. He paid tribute to Gandhi and said that had Gandhi not entered the political arena with his new methods of struggle, in the helpless situation of the 1920's, India would have probably remained prostrate.

The Azad Hind Government was set up on October 21, 1943. Celebrations were held in Singapore on that occasion, when Netaji delivered his historic speech.

Rash Bihari was the first to speak. He said: "I have been away from Mother India's lap for the past 20 years. Time and again Mother India extended her hand to drag this headstrong child back to her lap. But I refused to go back, as her hands were manacled. But today, Subhas, a brother of mine, younger in age, but superior to me in the struggle, has descended like a prophet to nurse the wound. On behalf of 2 million overseas Indians I have pleasure in welcoming this torch bearer of freedom."

After this, the vetaran freedom fighter Colonel Chatterjee read out the report in which he gave the background of the freedom fight in East Asian countries.

Subhas Bose was the next to speak. Analysing the political scene in India, he pointed out the significance of the Azad Hind Government and the Azad Hind Fauj. He said: "I have not the slightest doubt that the entry of the Azad Hind Fauj into the Indian borders will unleash a revolution in India and British rule will crumble into dust."

After this he stood up and took an oath. It was a historical

moment. "With God as my witness, I hereby resolve to fight like a soldier till my last breath for the freedom of India. I shall remain a servant of India and the interest of India shall be the sole purpose of my life. Even after independence is won, I shall protect that independence with the last drop of my blood, if and when necessary."

All the dignitaries of the Azad Hind Government took the following oath. "With God as my witness, I take the sacred oath that I shall be loyal to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the fight for freedom, and I shall stake everything for the independence of India."

The Azad Hind Government was duly recognised by Germany, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Croatia, Manchuria and Burma. The Andaman and Nicobar islands were ceded to the Government of Subhas Bose and they were named as Shahid and Swaraj.

Those officers of the Azad Hind Government who put their signature on the proclamation included Subhas Chandra Bose (President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Minister for War), Captain Laxmi, in charge of the women's organisations, A. S. Iyer (Propaganda), Lt. Col. Chatterjee (Finance), Lt. Col. N. S. Bhagat, Lt. Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt. Col. Guejara Singh, Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiyani, Lt. Col. A. D. Loganathan, Lt. Col. Ehsan Kadir, Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz (Representative of the Army), A. M. Sahay, Secretary with Ministerial rank, Rash Bihari Bose, Chief Adviser, Karim Gani, Devnath Das, D. M. Khan, Y. Yellappa, J. Thivy, Sardar Ishvar Singh (advisers), A. N. Sarakar (Legal adviser).

The Azad Hind Government declared war on Britain and America, after which the Government settled down to its routine functions. The army was organised along new lines. In January 1944 the Subhas Brigade of the Azad Hind Fauj reached Rangoon, but before actively plunging into the war, it was essential to clarify the ground on which the Indian and the Japanese armies were to collaborate. Netaji had made it abundantly clear that his army would not work under Japanese regulations. There was some trouble with the local commander over it, but the Japanese had to accept the conditions laid down by Bose. Bose also stipulated that the Azad Hind Fauj should be the first to set foot on the Indian soil. He also insisted that no flag except the tricolour should fly on Indian territory. The entire financial burden of the Azad Hind Fauj was being borne by the Indians themselves.

Many Indians donated their entire property. They included a large number of Muslims too.

The Azad Hind Fauj started its march towards the Indian border and on March 18, 1944 it entered Manipur where the national flag was hoisted and the I.N.A. national song was sung. The unit was 20,000 strong. It consisted of a platoon of women who did their work very well.

Due to reverses the Japanese wanted to retreat but the Azad Hind Fauj did not agree. They were determined to hoist the national flag on the Red Fort in Delhi at any cost. But the destinies of the I.N.A. were tied up with those of the Japanese whose condition was becoming precarious. It was not able to withstand the onslaughts of the American army. Netaji could not hold his ground in September 1944 and was compelled to order his army on the Imphal side to retreat. By November 1944 his army had reached Rangoon.

On October 11, 1944 Netaji reached Rangoon and explained to the people the situation and stated that victory could not be won on account of certain natural and other factors over which he had no control.

The situation deteriorated still further and in November 1944 Netaji went to Tokyo along with General Chatterjee, Kiyani and Col. Habibur Rehman to acquaint himself with the situation. Col. Aziz Ahmed took over the command of the army in his absence. Bose returned by January 1945, but by this time, the situation had gone from bad to worse.

Under the changed circumstances in March 1945, the Japanese Government wanted the Azad Hind Fauj to fight the Burmese. But they refused to do so on the ground that it was fighting the British for the attainment of India's independence and not against the Burmese who were fighting for their independence. The Burmese General ordered his army not to fight the Azad Hind Fauj.

By this time Germany surrendered and Japan was under heavy bombardment. The leaders of the Azad Hind Fauj realised that the hopes of victory receded. Some of the soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj resolved to go down fighting. They were either captured or killed.

On April 23, 1945 the Japanese fled Rangoon. Netaji was also requested to leave but he said that he would not do so before the women of the Jhansi Regiment were in a position to leave. Only

after they had left did he go from Rangoon. About 5,000 soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj stayed back in Rangoon under the command of Major General Lokanathan.

Even after this Bose continued to broadcast on the Indian situation from Radio Saigon. He condemned the compromise talks going on in India. He was in favour of continuing the struggle till complete independence was achieved. At last he left for Tokyo with Habibur Rehman, but the plane crashed. Bose received a severe head injury and succumbed to it within six hours. Col. Habibur Rehman was present at his cremation. There is no reason to suppose that there was any foul play, but Japan at that time was a fascist power. Bose had all along resisted Japanese interference. The I.N.A. had refused to toe the Japanese line. The latest was its refusal to fight the Burmese. Again and against Bose had made it very plain that the I.N.A. was a liberation army and not a mercenary force dancing to the tune of the Japanese. The Japanese leaders knew very well that Bose was with them because their interests coincided, but he was not one of them. In any case now the Japanese had no use for him and indeed they did not know what to do with him. But this was not a good enough reason to kill him. There is not the least doubt that Subhas is dead.

The following passage in *The Discovery of India*[2] by Nehru is revealing:

"In 1938 the Cogress sent a medical unit consisting of a number of doctors and necessary equipment and material to China. For several years this unit did good work there. When this was organised Subhas Bose was president of the Congress. He did not approve of any step which was anti-Japanese or anti-German or anti-Italian. And yet such was the feeling in the Congress and the country that he did not oppose this and many other manifestations of Congress sympathy with China and the victims of Fascist and Nazi aggression. We passed many resolutions and organised many demonstrations of which he did not approve during the period of his presidentship, but he submitted to them without protest because he realised the strength of feeling behind them. There was a big difference in outlook between him and others in the Congress executive, both in regard to foreign and internal matters and this led to a break in early 1939. He then

[2] P. 508.

attacked Congress policy and early in August 1939 the Congress executive took the very unusual step of taking disciplinary action against him who was ex-president."

Every line of this published in 1946 distorts the picture, imputes motives and reeks with malice. The Azad Hind Fauj which was under the command of Major General Kiyani and Major General Bhonsle, surrendered to the British according to the rules of war.

Jhansi-ki-Rani Regiment, led by Captain Lakshmi Swaminadhan, a doctor, needs special mention. This Regiment had rendered very useful service in the face of grave dangers. It was formed on July 12, 1942, at Singapore. The members specialised in the treatment of wounded soldiers, but they were also given military training. They had also to take regular military exercises. When the Azad Hind Fauj was on the point of invading India in 1944, the women of this regiment sent a representation to Netaji written with their own blood demanding participation in the liberation. Netaji in principle wanted that they should participate later. Unfortunately the situation deteriorated and they did not get their chance. When the Jhansi-ki-Rani Regiment was about to withdraw from Rangoon, a unit of the British Army attacked it. These valiant women repulsed the attack with rifles and the British were forced to retreat. Many of the soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj, who were captured by the British were subsequently court-martialled and shot.

A public trial was held in the cases of Major Generals Shah Nawaz, P. K. Sehgal and G. S. Dhillon to make an example of them. But the outcome was contrary to expectations. The people of India were aware of their services, and the Congress and especially Nehru, who had made history by saying that he would be the first man to oppose Bose if he came at the head of the I.N.A., took up their defence. Mammoth meetings greeted the heroes and funds to defend them were collected. Bhulabhai Desai, the best legal brain inside the Congress, pleaded for them in court and even Nehru donned the barrister's gown.

There is a general impression among the public that Major General Shah Nawaz and his colleagues were released as a result of public agitation. But this is only a half truth. It was the Indian army that compelled their release. A report in the *Hindustan Standard* is worth reading:

"LUCKNOW, Jan. 4: It is learnt that the army had put forward

a demand for the release of the three heroes of the Azad Hind Fauj. The Commander-in-Chief, the chief authority of the army, acted in accordance with the wishes of the army. Nearly 80 per cent independent votes of the army were in favour of their release. The Chiefs of the regiments explained to them the implications of their decision in the context of their oaths of loyalty. They were also reminded of their duty, and a second vote was taken. This time 78 per cent were in favour of the release. The Indian section of the army made it clear that had it been placed in the situation like that of the soldiers who joined the Azad Hind Fauj, they also would have acted in a similar manner. Thus, judging the mood of the army, the Commander-in-Chief explained the situation to the Viceroy's Executive Council and informed them how he was going to act as the highest authority. Thus, these court-martials made one thing clear, i.e. the Indian armed forces, whatever the legal or constitutional position, was loyal only to the Indian nation and to none else."

The mutinies that followed made it even clearer. The mercenary Indian army in the pay of the British, the mainstay of British imperialism in India was converted by the Azad Hind Fauj. The I.N.A. as an army failed to liberate India but it attained this objective in a different manner. It morally won over the Indian army which was the dream of every revolutionary.

The spontaneous ovation accorded to the I.N.A. trial prisoners, the tremendous publicity given to the proceedings of the court, the alacrity with which Nehru, Bhulabhai and others sprang into position to defend the case, the speed with which the erstwhile foes of Netaji were silenced and even compelled to break into praise reminded the days of Bhagat Singh's meteoric rise.

It is, however, futile to view this as an isolated phenomenon. Rash Bihari and Subhas did not emerge in a day. The revolutionary struggle of nearly a century, the sacrifices made in the course of it, Gandhi and his satyagraha, the socialist and anti-imperialist ideologies, the patriotic press, all this contributed to this denouement. At the same time it must be admitted that neither Gandhi nor the other revolutionaries could in the course of decades create such an impact on the British Indian army. The following paragraphs from H. V. Hodson's book *The Great Divide* are significant:

"The other crisis concerned the Indian National Army trials.

Pandit Nehru was demanding that the court-martial be stopped and existing sentences quashed: The Commander-in-Chief was refusing and threatening to resign, thus creating a very serious situation. In approaching it, Lord Mountbatten started with the advantage of having had a preliminary round with Pandit Nehru on the latter's visit to Singapore, when he persuaded the Indian leader to cancel his intention of laying a wreath on the I.N.A. memorial. He had then told Pandit Nehru: 'The I.N.A. were not politically conscious heroes fighting for their country, but cowards and traitors who betrayed their loyal friends. The people who will serve you well in your national army of the future are those who are loyal to their oath; otherwise, if you become unpopular a disloyal army may turn against you.' Pandit Nehru saw the force of this, but said that for political reasons he must ask for the trials to be stopped.

"The same evening the Viceroy saw the Commander-in-Chief. He wrote shortly afterwards:

'We went through the whole history of the I.N.A. case, and although he was his usual friendly self and spoke with the utmost frankness, I detected a frame of mind which made him more difficult to deal with than I can remember at any time since October 1943. It was clear to me that he had in mind that any retreat from the position he had taken upon the advice of his staff and senior commanders would be impossible, since he would lose the confidence of the army. He made it quite clear that once his utility had gone he would not feel justified in staying.

When I pressed him about what was likely to happen with the rest of his staff and commanders, he replied that he knew that most of them would resign, because they had raised the matter with him. He had given them instructions that they were to indicate their desire, if necessary, for release in due course.

It was only with the greatest difficulty that I got him to see that it might be necessary to take at least one pace forward from this position if I was not to be faced with two entirely unacceptable alternatives.'

"The following day Lord Mountbatten called Pandit Nehru, Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, Sardar Baldev Singh, and Field Marshal Auchinleck to a special meeting. It proved long and tense. For

a long time neither the members of the Cabinet nor the Commander-in-Chief would yield an inch. Eventually, however, the Viceroy persuaded the Indian leaders to stand up to the Legislative Assembly the next day and refuse the demand for immediate release, while stating, with the consent of the Commander-in-Chief, that without creating any precedent the available Justices of the Federal Court would review the cases and recommend whether there should be any alteration in the sentences. A formula to that effect was agreed between Field Marshal Auchinleck and the Chief Justice over lunch. In the Assembly Pandit Nehru made a balanced and courageous speech, and the resolution was withdrawn. That was in effect the end of the I.N.A. as a political issue. It had proved a flaming torch for agitation and the cause of grave loss of prestige and self-confidence for the British in India. If it had not fatally undermined the loyalty of the armed forces, as many officers had predicted it would unless the public law and military code were vigorously upheld, it certainly did nothing to repair their morale and discipline at a critical time."

The fact emerges very forcefully that the British could no longer trust the Indian soldiers of the army. This was the contribution of the I.N.A., but as I have already said this was the last step in the cumulative process.

Tables on pp 242, 243 and 244 give a list of I.N.A. heroes who were executed:

LIST OF HEROES OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY WHO WERE EXECUTED

Name	*Indian Army*		*I. N. A.*		*Date of trial*	*Charges on which convicted*	*Home address*	*Remarks*
	Rank	*Unit*	*Rank*	*Unit*				
Chattar Singh	Sepoy	5/8 P.R.	—	—	14-6-44	Waging war against the King Emperor	—	Executed in Delhi Jail on 29-7-1944
Nazir Singh	,,	8 Burma Rif.	—	—	15-6-44	-do-	—	-do-
Durga Mal	Hav.	2/1 Gurkha Rif.	Capt.	Special squad	5-7-44	-do-	V. Bhori Khana P. O. Dharamsala Kangra	Executed in Delhi Jail on 25-8-1944
Hazara Singh	L/Nk	5/2 P.R.	Hav.	—	25-8-44	-do-	V. Jhan Glana Dist. Hoshiarpur	Executed in Red Fort on 25-10-1944
Sardara Singh	Fitter	I.A.O.C.	—	S. S. Group	6-10-44	-do-	V & P. O. Bhopalwala, Dist. Sialkot	Executed in Calcutta on 23-3-1945
Naginder Singh	Nk	8 Burma Rif.	Hav.	Bahadur Group	3-7-43	Desertion	V. Ramagarh P. O. Sidhwan Ludhiana	Executed on 28-8-1943
Kesri Chand Sharma	Jem.	R.I.A.S.C.	—	—	13-12-44	Waging war against the King Emperor	—	Executed in Delhi Jail on 3-5-1945
Charan Singh	L/Nk	8 Burma Rif.	—	—	6-7-43	-do-	V & P. O. Sarawan Dist Jullundur	Executed in Multan Jail on 28-8-1943

LIST OF HEROES OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY WHO WERE EXECUTED—(*Contd.*)

Name	*Indian Army*		*I. N. A.*		*Date of trial*	*Charges on which convicted*	*Home address*	*Remarks*
	Rank	*Unit*	*Rank*	*Unit*				
Dal Bahdur Thapa	Jem.	2/1 Gurkha Rif.	Capt.	Reinf. Group	12-2-45	-do-	Bara Kothi Dharamsala Cantt.	Executed in Delhi Jail on 3-5-1945
Dalbara Singh	—	—	Capt.	—	—	—	—	Hanged in Delhi Jail on 3-5-1945
Chaman Singh	Hav.	1/8 P.R.	—	Bahadur Group	—	—	—	Caught and hanged (charged of infiltration)
S. C. Bardhan	—	—	—	—	—	—	Bitghar, Dt. Tipperah, Bengal	Hanged on 10-9-1943 in Madras
Gurcharan Singh	—	—	Hav.		—	—	—	Hanged in Delhi by the British
Pritam Singh	Policeman in Malaya	—	—	—	—	—	V. & P.O. Hiran, Dist. Ludhiana.	Courtmartialled and shot by British Indian Government.
T. P. Kumaran	Civilian	I/c Intelligence Br. Swaraj Institute	—	Ind.	—	—	V. Nelligode, P.O. Puthiyara, S. Malabar.	Hanged by the British.

LIST OF HEROES OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY WHO WERE EXECUTED—(*Contd.*)

Name	*Indian Army*		*I. N. A.*		*Date of trial*	*Charges on which convicted*	*Home address*	*Remarks*
	Rank	*Unit*	*Rank*	*Unit*				
Koddor	Civilian	—	—	—	—	—	Kadevil House, P.O. Anchigore, Travancore.	Hanged by Govt. of India.
Kartar Singh	„	—	Sep.	I Engr. Coy.	—	—	Dt. Sheikhpura.	Hanged in Sialkot Jail on 4-12-1945.
Mohd Abdul Kader	„	—	—	S. S. Group	—	—	V. Vayahpurayldom Vakka, 10 Anjined, Quilon.	Executed in Madras on 10-9-1943.
Ramu Thaver	„	—	—	S. S. Group	—	—	V. Thumpadakhai Kottai, P.O. Raja singalam, Dist. Ramnad Madras.	Executed on July 7, 1944.
Ramasami Ondiriyar	„	—	—	S. S. Group	—	—	V. Tirumanglak Kottaividile, P.O. Vadaseri Mannugudi, Dt. Tanjore, Madras.	Landed in India, was caught and hanged.
Ajaib Singh	„	—	—	S. S. Group	—	—	Kalha, Dt. Amritsar.	Hanged in Red Fort, Delhi.
Zahur Ahmed	„	—	—	—	—	—	V. Jahur Mukhlian, P.O. Sangla Hill, Sheikpura.	Hanged on 23-8-1943.

Naval Mutiny

Shaken by the events of 1942 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, on January 29, 1943:

"But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one — not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, i.e. of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India.

"If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February a fast for 21 days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salt. But nowadays my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. This fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

"I am not making this letter personal as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were a mere personal appeal."

On February 7 he wrote:

"I begin it on the 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as 'a form of political blackmail', it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the highest tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the judgment seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it."

The fast lasted 21 days. It resulted in a few sporadic incidents, but the overall effect was gloom. Gandhi was released in 1944

and other leaders were let out in 1945. The first thing that Gandhi did after his release was to condemn the course of the movement. When the Working Committee of the Congress met, only Acharya Narendra Dev praised all aspects of the movement. Gandhi asked all absconders to surrender. Nehru also praised the heroes of 1942 and the I.N.A.

In November 1945, meetings were held all over the country praising the achievements of the Azad Hind Fauj. On November 21, a meeting was held in Calcutta under the joint auspices of the R.S.P. Students' Union and the Students' Congress demanding the release of the leaders of the Azad Hind Fauj. The police stopped a group of students near Madon and Moti Sheel Streets. The students went on a sit-down strike and the police let loose the mounted sowars at first. But when this did not work, they resorted to firing. This was followed by a clash between the public and the police resulting in a number of casualties. Rameshwar Bannerjee was one of the martyrs.

On November 22, 1945, a students' procession was taken out and there was general strike in the city. People belonging to the Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha joined the rally. Sarat Chandra Bose came and requested the people to return, but they did not. There was firing again in Dharamtolla street. Clashes between the public and the police continued for some days. The public set fire to police vans and military trucks in a number of places and beat up policemen. The spectacle of 1942 re-enacted.

The Congress High Command was scared and launched a massive offensive against the present trend towards revolution. A belated post-mortem of 1942 was conducted. The resolution on 1942 said, "In 1942 after arrest of the leaders the people spontaneously took over the leadership of the agitation. Many heroic deeds were performed, which cannot come in the purview of non-violence. Hence it is necessary for the working committee to lay down categorically that the cutting of wires, derailing trains and intimidation do not constitute non-violence." For the same reason it passed another resolution on the Azad Hind Fauj which said:

"The Congress although proud of the heroic deeds, sacrifice, discipline, courage and goodwill evinced by the I.N.A., which was built by Subhas Chandra Bose under unusual circumstances in

a foreign land, and conceding that it was in the fitness of things to defend the prosecuted members of the I.N.A. and help others who are in need of help, Congressmen should not lose sight of the fact that the Congress in no way has modified its policy to get swaraj by non-violent means."

But resolutions of this nature could not smother the forces of revolution. There was large-scale demonstrations in Calcutta when Captain Rasheed of the Azad Hind Fauj was sentenced in December 1945. Once again military trucks were burnt and Englishmen were assaulted. Martial law was proclaimed in the city and Gurkha and British soldiers armed with tommy-guns went round the city. There were firings in numerous places for several days. But this did not cow down the people. There was remarkable unity and the tricolour flag of the Congress, the moon and the stars of the Muslim League and the hammer and sickle, all were seen together in the same procession. The agitation was at its height in Bow Bazar, Maniktolla and Dharmtolla. The army used tear-gas, but the public opened the taps which uncleashed the water of the Ganges and flooded the streets of Calcutta. Till February 15, 1945, some 35 persons were killed in the firings.

Trams, buses and taxis were off the roads. The working class was on strike in Calcutta and in the surrounding places like Kankannada, Kamarhats and Belgharia, and train services were interrupted. The people stopped and set fire to a train at Champahati on February 13, 1946. At Batanagar, near Nungi, 10,000 striking workers came out in procession on February 14, 1946, and they were indiscriminately fired on. The army looted some of the sweetmeat shops and hotels were attacked. The Indian soldiers were also restless. They had stood by the British army and fought its war but the state of political dependence still persisted. The Navy was particularly restless. On February 12, 1946, Commander King of the S. S. Talwar used foul language towards the Indian naval ratings, who were already restive. For the past five years they had been smarting under British atrocities. Now the limit had been reached. The ratings were not in a mood to suffer it any longer.

Even according to the army rules, a British commander was not authorised to abuse his subordinates. But the appeal to higher authorities was in vain.

On February 18, 1946, the ratings were served an awful

breakfast. As a protest the 100-strong crew went on strike. Their demands were: they should be served proper food; action should be taken on Commander King and he should be prosecuted; the Indian Officers as well as the rank and file of the Indian Navy should receive the same pay as their British counterparts; all political prisoners, including the prisoners from the Azad Hind Fauj, should be immediately released and Indian forces should be called back from Indonesia and Indian Army should not be sent in future on such missions.

The crew of S. S. Talwar were adamant. The next day 800 ratings of Fort Barrack, 2500 naval ratings of the Castle Barrack, the entire naval force of S. S. Akbar and S. S. Cheeta, those working in the wireless centres at Colaba and Mahol, all the naval ratings of S. S. Machchli Mar and Hamla, joined the strike. In all, the naval ratings of nearly 100 ships joined the strike. The officers were disarmed and the ratings themselves took over the command of the ships. They sent wireless messages to their brethren all over India asking them to join their struggle. In many places, they brought down the Union Jack and unfurled the national flag, the Muslim League flag and the Red flag. They took out a procession and held a rally at the Azad Maidan.

After prolonged consultations Rear Admiral Rattarary came aboard S. S. Talwar and suggested that the demands be specified. To begin with an undertaking was first got from him that nobody would be victimised. Admiral Rattarary conceded all their demands and promised to give a reply by 4.30 p.m. It is possible that after consulting the higher officers he came to the conclusion that it would be improper to concede these demands. Hence no reply was given. On the contrary 300 ratings of the S. S. Hamla were arrested. Thus they slammed the door to reconciliation.

A central strike committee was elected on each ship to carry the fight in an organised manner. The Government posted guards at all the camps of the naval ratings in and around Bombay, but no guards could be posted on the ships in the high seas.

There was a strike even on the ships in Karachi. There were strikes on the S. S. Chamak, Bahadur and Himalaya and also on the S. S. Rajputana and the Hooghly.

Maratha soldiers were posted to guard the naval ratings in Bombay and Karachi on February 21 and 22, 1946. When the ratings told them that they too were Indians like themselves,

the Maratha guards said they were only carrying empty cartridges. On February 21 some empty cartridges were used in front of Castle Barrack and the military advanced towards the navy camp.

The naval ratings set up machine guns at strategic points and used them against the army and even threw a bomb. A cross-mark of blood was done on the chest of each naval rating killed and then they were taken out in procession.

The ratings of S. S. Assam and Punjab fired on British soldiers who took to their heels.

When the Government realised that it would not be possible to win the battle, it decided on some drastic step. Rear Admiral Godfrey threatened that unless the ratings put down arms and surrendered they would be attacked and wiped out by a mighty military force. As one of the naval ratings has written, several planes were hovering over their heads and some war ships were also kept ready.

The ratings had public sympathy and the public supplied them with cigarettes, food and fruits.

Meanwhile the Government set a Baluchi regiment to capture S. S. Hindustan, but the Baluchi soldiers refused to act. It was then that the British army was called in. Small machine guns were used by the naval ratings when the army attacked them. The army retreated.

On February 22, when S. S. Hindustan was stuck in the low-tide at Karachi, and was not in a position to use its machine guns, the British soldiers attacked it once again. Six persons were killed and 25 were injured and at last S. S. Hindustan surrendered. The ratings on board the ship were arrested. Once S. S. Hindustan surrendered at Karachi, ratings in other places also surrendered. This revolt thus ended in Karachi itself.

To indicate to what extent this revolt had spread, it should be mentioned that apart from the places already mentioned, 700 naval ratings went in revolt in Cochin, 1,300 in Visakhapatnam and there was a naval revolt even in Jamnagar.

One of the rebels has written that a small ship called the Kathiawar in the Morvi state of Gujarat demonstrated tremendous gallantry. The crew decided to go in revolt as soon as the ship sailed from the port for Bombay. The ship set off at 10 o'clock and a little later it received a message from S. S. Hindustan in Karachi that she was in trouble. This small ship, with a crew of

120, diverted its route and proceeded to Karachi. By 1 p.m. it was learnt that S. S. Hindustan had surrendered and S. S. Kathiawar was again diverted to Bombay.

To coincide with the naval revolt, there was a general strike in Bombay and Flora Fountain was under public control. A few Britishers in uniform were assaulted and the American Flag was burnt. On February 22, lakhs of workers struck work in sympathy and there was strike in the B. N. R. in Calcutta. The Chitpur Loco Shed, carriage, wagon and the running staff also went on strike. At the same time 150 workers of the Indian Air Force went on a hunger strike in Dalhousie Square. In Bombay there was firing in many places, two trains were burnt between Dadar and Mahim, and Mahim station was also burnt. According to hospital reports more than 130 persons were dead and 700 were injured on that day. A full-fledged battle raged on Delisle Road and Duncan Road. In Karachi police fired upon a public meeting at Idgah.

Had the leaders wanted it, they could have a revolution. The division of the country could have been averted. The leftists in Calcutta had given a call but this was not taken up by others. Gandhi was, of course, allergic to a revolution and so was Patel who naturally betrayed the ratings. The leaders of the Congress as well as the Muslim League turned a blind eye to the Hindu-Muslim unity created in the course of this struggle.

The League's attitude can be understood. It was quite natural for Jinnah. The press also played down the revolt as if this were something isolated. Patel intervened on behalf of the Government and gave them an assurance that the legitimate grievances of the navy would be conceded and there would be no victimisation. These promises were not kept.

This is what B. C. Dutt, a 17-year old naval rating at that time, has to say (Vide *Times of India*, February 28, 1970):

"In those days, discrimination was dressed in a variety of hues. Better food for the British sailor; any food for the Indian ratings. Better pay, better clothes, better leave facilities for them. We made no bones about that. But that basic discrimination was always there. Although we did the same work they were the rulers. During world war II, thousands of Indian youngsters joined the navy and saw clearly the "difference" between two identical sets of people. With the years they became increasingly bitter about it.

"Of course, in 1946, all of us were worried about the future. The fear of demobilisation. Most of us weren't equipped for any other kind of job, you see. That sharpened all our grievences. And the contempt with which we were looked down upon by officers like Commander King, Officer, Commanding HMIS Talwar, pushed anger over the fence.

"The war as a whole alerted us. Most of us in the navy were so isolated that we were ignorant even of such elementary things as what Gandhiji stood for. But with each day of the war, somewhere at the back of our minds, a gong kept ringing — the British were fighting for their country and for their survival. What were we fighting for? Then, as our units moved around South-East Asia we heard of the INA and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. That was long before the Indian public heard of them, you see. I remember I was somewhere off the Arakan coast in those days and I remember the stir the INA caused in our unit. For the first time some of us felt a kind of guilt. We started asking ourselves: If they could do it, why not we? And among us were people who reflected on the fact that with the exception of Rash Bihari Bose and of course, Netaji, the Indian leadership did not think of involving the British Indian Army in the national struggle. In 1946 we thought the INA had changed all that. We were terribly mistaken.

"The mutiny started on the 17th of February. By the 18th, the British had lost all control over one section of their armed forces. Shore establishments, ships off ports, ships on the high seas like HMIS Sutlej and Jumna, even wireless stations as far away as Aden and the Persian Gulf were in revolt — every man-jack Indian in the Royal Indian Navy! Even the BBC broadcast the news. Of course, there was no word of encouragement from any Indian leaders."

On the charge of indiscipline levelled by some leaders B. C. Dutt says:

"Where does the question of discipline come in when throughout the period of the struggle for Independence, disobedience of British rule was the main plank of the freedom movement? There we were, a group of young Indians, divorced from all reality, accused of being mercenaries. We were beginning to feel Indian and to realise where our duty lay, and just then you throw this charge at us about indiscipline. How were we wrong when diso-

bedience was right for all Indians?"

About the leaders of the central strike committee he says:

"I remember only two of them. M. S. Khan, president, Naval Central Strike Committee, and Madan Singh, vice-president. The other names escape me; the faces stay registered. Khan, hailing from what is now the Punjab region of Pakistan, became an officer in the Pakistan Navy, Madan Singh joined the *Free Press Journal* along with me. Neither of us at that time knew how to read English. But S. Natarajan, the Editor of that paper, was the only man who had compassion enough to take us. In fact, he also had the intelligence and the courage to publish news about the mutiny on the 18th, the day after the mutiny broke out. It required a hell of a lot of guts. He was our pipeline and publicist during the struggle, and our protector later.

"Madan Singh later on became a radio officer in one of the privately owned airlines. I suspect, like me, most of the 4,000 people who were jailed after the mutiny, drifted off to pick up any crumbs they could get. I remember meeting one such person in Bombay in 1953. He was a part-time driver and a part-time pimp. He had to live somehow, I suppose."

He also narrates how the leaders betrayed them:

"We the conspirators calling ourselves Azad Hindis, thought: What are we taking the Navy over for? Surely, to use it as an extension of the national struggle against the British. We thought that once we presented the Navy to the national leadership, we would be led and told what to do. It never occurred to us that the leadership would have none of it. They were all for negotiations. To them ours was an inconvenient eruption. The minute that was made clear to us by the leadership's high emissaries drawn from the right as well as the left, we at the Naval Central Strike Committee became rudderless once again. And that was the end of it; our innocence and isolation versus the expertise of the professionals! What else was there to do then but surrender?"

Epilogue

INDIA BECAME FREE on August 15, 1947. A day earlier, by tragic quirk of fate, Pakistan became free. These dates tell their own story. Perhaps Lord Mountbatten had something to say to Gandhi and Nehru through these dates. It has been mantained by historians that India became free, through the non-violent struggle conducted by the Congress. Even some of the Indian communists are not opposed to this view, because they did not have much to do with the freedom struggle. Of course, their role during 1946-47 was useful.

Even if it were conceded that the 1942 movement was a Congress movement and it was a non-violent movement, the fact remains that by 1944 there was nothing left of that movement. The I. N. A. had delivered the *coup de grace* and the British decided to quit India because it could no longer rely on the Indian army. The fight for freedom that began with Mangal Pande in 1857 was crowned with success in 1947 owing to the revolutionary forces released by the I. N. A. trials. The story of the Indian revolutionaries is a story of the sharp clash of ideologies, of the growth of the objective from mere anti-British feeling to socialism, of the hundreds of youths marching to the gallows and of thousands of people wasting the best part of their lives in jails.

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