

Bihar, Orissa and the U.P. were scenes of the Muzaffarpur and Nimez murders and the Benares Conspiracy case though these provinces were comparatively less affected by revolutionary movement.

**The Ghadr Movement.** Hardayal, an intellectual giant and a fire-brand revolutionary from the Panjab, was the moving spirit behind the organization of the Ghadr Party on November 1913 at San Francisco in the U.S.A. He was actively assisted by Ram Chandra and Barkatulla. The party also published a weekly paper, the *Ghadr* (Rebellion) in commemoration of the Mutiny of 1857. The *Ghadr* in its premier issue asked the questions : What is our name ? Mutiny. What is our work ? Mutiny. Where will mutiny break out ? In India. The Ghadr Party highlighted the point that Indians were not respected in the world abroad because they were not free. Consequent upon complaints made by the British representative, the U.S. authorities launched proceedings against, Hardayal, compelling him to leave the United States.

With the outbreak of World War I Hardayal and other Indians abroad moved to Germany and set up the Indian Independence Committee at Berlin. The Committee planned to mobilise Indian settlers abroad to make all efforts—send volunteers to India to incite rebellion among the troops, to send explosives to Indian revolutionaries, and even organise an invasion of British India—to liberate the country.

The *Komagata Maru* case created an explosive situation in the Panjab. One Baba Gurdit Singh chartered a Japanese ship *Komagata Maru* for Vancouver and sought to carry 351 Sikhs and 21 Panjabi Muslims to that town. The Canadian authorities refused permission to the ship to land and the ship returned to Budge Budge, Calcutta on 27 September 1914. The inmates of the ship and many Indians believed that the British government had inspired the Canadian authorities. The Government of India ordered all the passengers to be carried direct by train to the Panjab. The already explosive situation in the Panjab worsened with a band of fresh malcontents. Large-scale political dacoities were committed in the Jullundur, Amritsar, Ludhiana districts of the Panjab. The Lahore Conspiracy trials revealed that Panjab had come ‘within an ace of widespread bloodshed.’

The Government of India unleashed repressive legislation to meet revolutionary activities : The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act (1907), The Explosive Substances Act (1908), The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act (1908), The Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908, The Press Act, 1910 and, above all, the obnoxious multi-fanged Defence of India Rules, 1915.

A temporary respite in revolutionary activities came with the close of World War I when the Government released all political prisoners arrested under the Defence of India Act. Further, the discussions about the new scheme of constitutional reforms (Government of India Act 1919) also created an atmosphere of conciliation and compromise. More so, Gandhiji's emergence on the national scene with promise of big achievements through non-violent methods also halted the pace of violent revolutionary activities.

**Second Phase of Revolutionary Terrorism.** The virtual failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the gloom that descended on the nationalist scene again created conditions calling for bold and terrorist revolutionary activities. The old *Anusilan* and *Youngtar Samitis* reappeared in Bengal and revolutionary organisations erupted in almost all important towns of Northern India. A new development was, however, the feeling that better results could be achieved only through an all-India organisation and better coordination. Hence a meeting of revolutionaries from all parts of India was called at Kanpur in October 1924. The Kanpur meeting was attended by old-timers like Sachindranath Sanyal, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Ramprasad Bismil and youngsters like Bhagat Singh, Shiv Varma, Sukhdev, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Chandrashekhar Azad. The deliberation resulted in the setting up of the Hindustan Republican Association subsequently (September 1928) reorganised as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association or Army (H.S.R.A.) with provincial unit in Bengal, Bihar, the U.P., Delhi, the Panjab and even Madras.

The HSRA had a three-fold objective (a) to rouse the consciousness of the people of India to the futility of the Gandhian methods of non-violence, (b) to demonstrate the need and desirability of Direct Action and Revolution in order to achieve complete independence, (c) ideologically inspired by the Russian Revolution and the Socialist thought, the Association hoped to substitute British imperialism in India by a federated Republic of the United States of India. The terrorists also introduced a novelty in their methods to finance their activities. Henceforth they decided not to plunder private individuals but to make government treasuries alone as the target of their dacoities.

On 9 August 1925 the U.P. revolutionaries successfully carried out the dacoity on the Kakori-bound train on the Saharanpur, Lucknow railway line. The subsequent trial-proceeding in the Kakori Conspiracy case evoked wide sympathetic echoes in the press and the case was also the subject of a resolution in the U.P. Legislative Council. The leader Ramprasad Bismil embraced the gallows with the slogan 'I wish the downfall of the British Empire' and Roshanlal with the slogan "Bande Matram" on their lips. A band of Panjabi revolutionaries led by Bhagat Singh shot dead Mr. Saunders (17 December 1928), the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Lahore to avenge the fatal assault on Lala Lajpat Rai during the anti-Simon Commission demonstrations (30 October 1928). The police unleashed a reign of terror on the Lahore civilians and the general public reaction was that while the revolutionaries escaped after daring acts, the public had to suffer the consequences of their doings. To efface this impression, the Panjab unit of the H.S.R.A. decided to send two volunteers to commit a crime and court arrest. It was in pursuance of this decision that Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datta threw a bomb in the Central Assembly on 8 April 1929; they had no intention to kill anybody but just wanted to demonstrate in the fashion of the French anarchist-martyr Vaillant that : "It takes a loud noise to make the deaf hear." Since capital punishment could not be awarded in the Assembly Bomb Case the Government combined it with the Lahore Conspiracy Case. The Saunders Murder case) and sentenced Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev to capital punishment; they were executed in the Lahore jail on 23 March 1931 and their dead bodies cremated at Hussainiwala off Ferozepur. In Bengal, Surya Sen masterminded the Chittagong Armoury Raid (April 1930) and declared himself the President of the Provisional Independent Government of India. The revolutionaries demonstrated their valour but without much tangible success. Surya Sen could not for long escape the long arm of the police and was arrested and hanged in early 1933.

Another lull in both the revolutionary and non-violent activities came during the political negotiations preceding the enactment of the Government of India Act 1935 and the halting imperialist manoeuvres during 1935–39. The stage of another crisis was reached when the Government of India unilaterally involved India in World War II without consulting Indian opinion. The failure of the Cripps Mission (April 1942), the Quit India Resolution (14 July 1942), the arrest of Gandhi (9 August 1942) was a signal to revolutionary minds to settle old scores. The popular Revolt of 1942 was a struggle in which both the Gandhites and the Revolutionaries made a joint though unsuccessful effort to shake off foreign rule. A new brand of revolutionaries became active under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose who sought to uproot British imperialism from India by an armed invasion from abroad under the banner of the I.N.A.

Were the revolutionaries seditionists and enemies of society or true patriots, martyrs and freedom-fighters? — the question will be differently answered by the imperial historians and Indian writers. Equally difficult it is to answer the question of the measure of real success achieved through revolutionary terrorist methods. Though the Gandhites and the Indian National Congress disapproved of Terrorist methods they were not unaware of the spirit of selfless service to the Motherland that inspired the young revolutionaries. Even Gandhiji appreciated Bhagat Singh's patriotism, his courage and deep love for Indian humanity and observed : "Our heads bend before Bhagat Singh's bravery and sacrifice." The All India Congress Committee, too, observed 18 August 1929 as "Political Sufferers Day" all over India...Further, the second phase of revolutionaries was not merely romanticist and revivalist but gave a socialist orientation to the movement. Above all, the slogan of *Inquilab Zindabad*

(Long Live the Revolution) under which the Gandhites fought the struggle was first popularised by the revolutionaries.

In India today, the freedom revolutionaries are remembered as martyrs who laid down their lives for the cause of the Motherland.

The nation will remember its martyrs

By honouring their tombs as places of pilgrimage.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Third Phase<sup>19</sup> or the Gandhian Era, 1919-1947**

*(Aim of Swaraj through Non-Violent Non-Cooperation)*

During the period the object of the Congress was the attainment of *Swaraj* by all legitimate means within the Empire if possible and without it if necessary. On 31 December 1929 came the unequivocal declaration that *Purna Swaraj* or Complete Independence was the goal of the Congress.

The period was dominated by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi who introduced new ideas into Indian politics. Gandhi deprecated the policy of violence and underground plots but preached open and active resistance to injustice. He advocated the adoption of the policy of *Satyagraha* (literally persistence in Truth), i.e., non-violent non-cooperation towards a government which did not look to the interests of the governed and was high handed and oppressive. The Congress movement gradually became a mass movement. The Congress organisation was considerably strengthened and its constitution made more democratic. The aim of the Congress was the all round improvement of India society. Gandhi used to explain his programme for strengthening India by pointing to the five fingers of his hand, exhorting the people to practise five virtues—spinning, removal of untouchability, sobriety (non-consumption of alcohol or opium), Hindu-Muslim amity and equity for women. The five virtues were to be achieved through non-violent methods.

The Great War of 1914-18 gave a big shock to imperialism by advocating the principle of self-determination. During the war, the Congress gave ample demonstration of loyalty. Mahatma Gandhi showed great enthusiasm and urged the Gujarati peasants to join the army and 'think imperially', if they aimed to win *Swaraj* Gandhi's loyalties earned him the epithet of "Recruiting Sergeant of the Government" and a medal for his services in the war.

**The Non-Cooperation Movement, 1920-22.** The events of the year 1919 greatly disillusioned Gandhi and from a cooperator he turned a non-cooperator. The passing of the Rowlatt Acts

18. शहीदों की चिताओं पर लगेंगे हर बरस मेले।

वतन पर मरने वालों का यही बाकी निशां होगा ।।

19. Adopting Marxist postulates some scholars have viewed the development and progress of the nationalist movement during this phase in a different light. According to them, the most important development during this period was the unholy alliance between the Indian industrial bourgeoisie and the top Congress coterie under the leadership of Gandhi. The Indian industrial bourgeoisie which had gained considerable strength during the First World War started supporting the Indian National Congress ; the Congress policy of Swadeshism and Boycott of foreign goods particularly suited it and promoted its class interests. "Thusd" asserts A.R.Desai "from 1918 the Indian industrial bourgeoisie began to exert a powerful influence in determining the programme, policies, strategies, tactics and forms of struggle of the Indian nationalist movement led by the Congress of which Gandhi was the leader." Another important development was the emergence of new social forces in the rise of the industrial working class and the Kisan Sabhas, their political awakening and their direct participation in the nationalist movement as independent political units. These new development which stemmed from Indian industrialization and modernization also revealed the inner contradictions, and evolving tensions and antagonism. The workers' interests lay in fighting not only foreign imperial and capitalist interests but also indigenous capitalists and exploiters. However, the Indian National Congress increasingly became the party of the Indian Bourgeoisie.