

# **The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement**

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## **The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement**

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## **FOREWORD**

This book is a thesis approved for the award of the Ph.D degree of the Panjab University in December, 1965. The author, Dr. Gurdev Singh Deol, has attempted to unfold and analyse the story of the organisation, activities, hopes and disappointments of the Ghadar Party and the Ghadar Movement. It is evident that Dr. Deol took enormous pains to collect his facts from as many sources as he had access to. The extraction from an immense mass of material of facts which the writer wished to incorporate into his thesis must have involved a large amount of labour and also demanded certain skill and discretion. Dr. Deol cheerfully undertook the former and he has shown intelligence and discrimination in the use of necessary facts and the rejection of superfluous detail. The writer deserves to be congratulated on the success of his effort.

The Indian freedom movement is at once the finest chapter and a unique phenomenon in the history of the freedom movements of all times. Its most unique feature was non-violence and this in spite of the fact that many strands went into its making of which the terrorists and the terrorist movement was one. The Ghadar Party and the Ghadar Movement was one of these strands.

The influence which the Ghadar Party and the Ghadar movement had on the Indian Freedom Movement is difficult to measure for various reasons, the most important of these being the educational, social, economic and political background of the organisers, leaders and workers of the party and the physical location and conditions of their work. These and many other factors and forces, not the least of which was the ever vigilant and efficient British Government of India, were responsible for a very limited success of the movement. The inability of the leaders of the movement to have a broader vision and to rise above parochialism contributed not a little in making the movement and the party obscure in the larger context of the Indian Freedom Movement. Nevertheless the activities of the Ghadar Party during a certain period represent an important phase in the Indian struggle for freedom. It is with this

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phase that Dr. Deol is mainly occupied in this work. He unfolds the story of the movement and the party and tries to assess its place in the general movement for Indian freedom. He also involves himself in evaluating the contribution and the impact of some of the more prominent organisers and leaders of the movement and the party. His book forms a valuable contribution to the existing political literature in this country and abroad. It will be found informative and useful by researchers, students, teachers and the general reader who are interested in Indian Political history and the course of Indian Political Movement.

It is only necessary to add that I am not to be understood to accept every statement of the author or to share every opinion of his. A common opinion on all matters treated in such a work is not to be accepted. But inevitable differences on contentious questions do not detract from the appreciation of a difficult work honestly done.

**I.D. Sharma**

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## PREFACE

The Ghadar movement is a forgotten chapter of Indian political history. The knowledge about its organisation, work, achievements and the role it played in the larger national movement in India is known to very few even among the intelligentsia. One of the reasons for this state of affairs may be that it was conceived and organised abroad, another may be that its activities were mostly confined to a particular region, yet another may be that the British power being well-established was able to deal with it with an iron hand. Even the historians have neglected to present this phase of the Indian struggle for freedom in its proper perspective. With a view to fill this gap in the history of the national movement and to make an effort to find some new factors and forces which contributed to the main stream of Indian nationalism through this tributary that the author selected this subject for his research.

The book is a Ph.D. thesis accepted by the Panjab University in the subject of Political Science. It gives an account of one of the important phases in the national movement—the epic struggle of the members of the Ghadar Party. The work is based on original sources, published and unpublished of the Ghadar Party, statements of and interviews with the prominent living members, leaders and organizers of the movement like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Baba Hari Singh Usman, Dr. P.S. Khankhoje, Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat, Mr. D. Chenchiah, Gyani Dr. Bhagwan Singh and others, judgements of various conspiracy cases, reports and records of the Government of India and official records of the Government of the United States of America bearing on political activities of Indians in the USA, particularly during the period of World War I (Micro-film copies of which were placed at the disposal of the author through the courtesy of the Director of the National Archives of India, New Delhi).

The Ghadar movement was not an ordinary terrorist movement. Its foundations were laid not in India, but in America

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mostly by the Punjabi peasants, who had migrated to Canada and America for economic reasons. They had little interest in politics, with some exceptions, of course, at the time of their migration from India. But their experience in the U.S.A. made them conscious of their subjugation to the British. Out of that consciousness was born the Ghadar Party and the Ghadar movement.

The Party believed that India could be liberated only by an armed insurrection. Consequently all its thinking and activity was directed towards this end. And when the movement failed due to various internal and external causes, many of its members in India joined either the Indian National Congress which became the vanguard of the national movement or other parties which believed in terrorism. Thus the Party may be said to have provided a vitalizing factor to the Indian national movement and contributed to the attainment of freedom. The book seeks to tell the story of this contribution in its different facets.

I believe that it is a pioneer study breaking fresh grounds in an unfamiliar field of the Indian national movement. I have worked under various limitations, particularly the restrictions imposed by the Government on consulting some records, more especially with regard to Court Martials. I am also conscious of some physical limitations. These limitations are bound to have bearing on the book.

In the completion of this work I owe so much gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. I.D. Sharma, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., Lajpat Rai Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh that I find no words to express it. Throughout my work with him he allowed me to draw freely upon his valuable time, deep and vast learning and wide experience. But for his inspiring and able guidance both the thesis and the book would not have been completed. I am also grateful to him for acceding to my request to find time in his academic preoccupations to write a FOREWORD to the book. I am equally obliged to my dear friend, Principal Sant Singh Sekhon for his most valuable suggestions and help given to me from time to time.

My thanks are also due to the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur and the administrative authorities of the National Archives, Government of India, New Delhi for allowing me to consult records from time to time.

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# 1

## *Genesis of the National Movement in India*

The growth of the Indian national movement is commonly linked with the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885, which cannot be said to be correct. It originated much earlier and its beginnings can be traced back to the first quarter of the 19th century. ‘The rise of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 was the expression of religious nationalism amongst the intelligentsia who had received Western education and had been introduced to Western ideologies through it.’<sup>1</sup> So the national movement in India was really a part of the national Renaissance started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and a band of other reformers. As Dr. Zacharias points out the renascence of India is fundamentally a matter of the spirit—the liberation of soul, which first manifested itself in the form of a general reform movement and “produced striking religious and social reforms long before it issued in a movement for political emancipation.”<sup>2</sup> In the 19th century many factors combined to give rise to the Indian national movement, which are summarised below :

### **Administrative Unification of the Country and its integration through Means of Communication and Transport :**

An administrative unification of India was one of those many factors which contributed towards the rise and fulfilment of the national movement. The British introduced far-reaching changes in the administrative set-up of the country, laying the foundations of a centralised state structure. Prior to the British, the village was the administrative unit more or less autonomous and self-

<sup>1</sup> Sharma, I.D. : *The Influence of Western Ideas on the National Movement in India.*, D.Litt Thesis, unpublished, Lucknow University, (1957), page, 190.

<sup>2</sup> Zacharias, H.C.E : *Renaissance India*, London (1933), page, 15.

sufficient. It existed as such for centuries. Kingdoms rose and fell, but the self-sufficient unit of administration, the village, survived. With the establishment of the British rule, the entire administration from the village to the centre was linked up in a chain and the administration came to be governed by the principle commonly known as the rule of law. The British established a judicial organisation for the application of laws. The Government of India was the central controlling authority for the entire country and the Provincial governments were merely its agents subject to its central control in legislation, finance and administration. Therefore, the Central Government was obliged to think in terms of the whole country while determining and formulating its policies, economic and non-economic. A regular civil service had to be organised. The presence of all India services, whose members could be transferred from one province to another and the unification and modification of laws contributed to the growth of the idea of India as one country and of her people as constituting one nation. These administrative reforms were instrumental in developing a national outlook transcending the feelings of locality and community.

The development of the modern means of transport and communication also contributed towards the growth of Indian nationalism. The development of Indian nationalism is closely linked with the development of the means of transport in the country. Before the British, there was little contact between town and village. During the British period a significant revolution in the means of communications took place. The British built a vast net-work of railways, roads, posts and telegraphs, for strategic reasons and developmental purpose.

This development of modern means of transport and communication proved a blessing in disguise to the Indian people, as it released powerful economic and socio-political forces. Karl Marx's prediction that "the railway system will, therefore, become in India, truly the fore-runner of modern industry,"<sup>3</sup> came true. The process of industrialization of the country started, giving birth to Indian industry owned by Indians. The basis of agriculture was changed and the age-old isolation of the village was broken. The newly established means of transport and communication provided opportunities to the people of India to develop wider social contacts. The growth of migration and social intercourse tended to

destroy the previous orthodox habits of isolation. The increase in social exchange led to the development of national consciousness and outlook. The British rule itself thus created conditions which gave rise to political and national awakening.

### **Impact of British and European Liberalism :**

The nineteenth century in Europe was the age of nationalism and liberalism. With the spread of the English language, the Indians came in contact with the West and with the work of great European thinkers and writers, like Milton, Burke, Mill, Macaulay, Herbert Spencer, Rousseau and Voltaire, and imbibed the ideas of liberty and the principle of the people's participation in the government. According to Lord Ronaldshay, the wine of Western learning went to the heads of the young Indians. Their whole outlook underwent a revolution. "Coming in contact with western people and western culture, the Indian mind could not fail to expand in the direction of Western ideas and institutions."<sup>4</sup>

The Indian educated classes naturally developed a feeling of discontentment towards the political conditions extant in India at that time. They took it for granted that nations should be free and self governing. They also learnt from British history that British liberalism had backed the cause of nations rightly struggling to be free in South America, in the Balkans, in Italy and in Ireland. They found that Britain was not only the most powerful champion of popular government in the West, but had also evolved a particular form of it, which, to the British at any rate, seemed the best of all possible forms. They learnt, finally, that this particular British form of Government, parliamentary responsible government, could be transplanted, that in fact, "since the morrow of the American Revolution, it had been gradually extended to the British self-governing colonies overseas."<sup>5</sup> Thus the philosophy of liberalism inspired Indians to fight for the democratic ideal of self-government. Such a result was foreseen by farsighted Englishmen—such as Lord Macaulay—who had looked forward to that proudest day in English History, "When having become instructed in European knowledge, they (Indians) may, in some future age, demand European institutions."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mazumdar, A.C. : *Indian National Evolution* ; Madras (1917), page, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Coupland Sir, R. : *India, A Restatement*, Bombay (1945), page, 88.

<sup>6</sup> Keith, A.B. : *Speeches & Documents on India Policy* Vol. I. London (1922), page, 265, (Speech of Thomas Babington Macaulay, House of Commons on 10th July, 1833).

### Socio-religious Reform Movement :

The ground for the growth of the Indian national movement was further prepared by the socio-religious reform movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. In fact, these movements sowed the seeds of nationalism on the Indian soil, because religious phenomena are not only systems of belief, but are also systems of tribal, national or voluntary group life. It is this historic aspect of religion which is a contributory to nationalism. In India the religious awakening served as a basis of Indian nationalism and proved its fore-runner. The religious and social reform movements started by men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy found their culmination in a political movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers. When Mahatma Gandhi declared that politics bereft of religion is immoral and based his movement on Truth and Ahimsa he did no more than make explicit what was implicit in the preceding phases of Indian nationalism. ‘It was not merely the political forces, and the sense of political subjection that gave birth’<sup>7</sup> to the Indian national movement. In fact the national movement was not an isolated phenomenon, it was one of the facets of the national Renaissance.

With the coming of the East India Company and subsequent establishment of British Rule, Hinduism and Indian culture touched a new low status and Hinduism had lost its vitalising power. Undoubtedly the Hindus had long since forgotten the sublime truths of the Upanishads and the Vedanta. Even before the Muslim conquest in the twelfth and later centuries superstitions and rigid beliefs had crept into Indian life. Evil practices like compulsory *sati*, enforced widowhood, untouchability and infanticide were eating into the vitals of the social body. The activities and preachings of Christian missionaries found them easy targets. They ridiculed Hindu religious beliefs and practices. Under these conditions, a few Hindu reformers took up the challenge and started various reform movements, notable among which were the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and Rama Krishna Mission. In the Punjab, the Singh Sabha movement tended in the same direction.

These socio-religious movements, representing a combination of revivalism and reformation, had a profound influence on Indian nationalism. “None of these spiritual movements had any direct political aims, but they brought together men who were seeking

fresh interpretation of the old faiths, and who naturally passed thence into state affairs.”<sup>8</sup> The reformist movements unfolded before the Hindus pictures of their glorious past, ancient civilization and hoary culture. With this self-consciousness came the sense of self-respect, which, in turn, brought dissatisfaction against the British Rule. They began to smart under their political subjection. “All these movements were really so many threads in the strand of Indian nationalism and the Nation’s duty was to evolve a synthesis so as to be able to dispel prejudice and superstition, to renovate and purify the old faith and Vedantic idealism, and to reconcile it with the nationalism of the new age. The Indian National Congress was destined to fulfil this great mission.”<sup>9</sup>

#### **Discrimination Against and Denial of Higher Jobs to Indians :**

The British rulers’ policy of racial discrimination was another contributory factor. The feeling of racial bitterness and hostility towards the British was the direct outcome of this racial policy. The situation took a serious turn after the mutiny of 1857. Prior to the mutiny, cordial relations had for sometime existed between Englishmen and Indians and racial prejudices were not so strong. “Even mixed marriages from which several well-known families have sprung and other unions more irregular and temporary, were much less infrequent.”<sup>10</sup> But all this underwent a radical change after the mutiny of 1857, which instilled in the hearts of Englishmen an utter distrust of Indians. They were looked down upon and were not admitted to European clubs and hotels, whatever their position. Young Englishmen, who came to India after 1857 “learnt to look upon Indians as creatures, half gorilla, half negro.”<sup>11</sup> Thus “India as a nation and Indians as individuals were subjected to insult, humiliation and contemptuous treatment.”<sup>12</sup> The British established separate cantonments and civil stations for themselves and evolved their own peculiar code of ethics. They were an alien people and failed to strike confidence among a certain section of the people who thought they were ruling the country more in the interests of England than those of India.

\* Dodwell H.H., Edited *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI. London (1932), page, 540.

\* Sitaramayya, Pattabhi,, *The History of Indian National Congress* Vol. I, Bombay (1946), page, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Besant, Annie, *India A Nation* Madras (1915), page, 45.

<sup>11</sup> Garret, G.T., *An Indian Commentary*, London (1928), page, 115.

<sup>12</sup> Nehru, J.L., *Discovery of India*, (First Edition), London (1946). page, 275.

In the matter of administration of criminal justice where Indians and Europeans were involved there was discrimination against Indians. Assaults on Indians by Europeans were not uncommon. What was worse, the Europeans either went unpunished or a nominal penalty was imposed on the European culprit because of pressure from the European community. The administration of criminal justice thus became an eye-wash where Europeans were involved. The remarks of Sir Henry Cotton are highly revealing on this point. "If a teaplantation is charged with an outrage upon a helpless coolie, he is tried by a jury of tea planters whose natural bias is in his favour, but if in any circumstances, such as the interference by the High Court, or otherwise, a conviction should ensue, the whole volume of English opinion finds expression in denouncing the verdict, the Anglo-Indian newspapers add fuel to the flame and give free vent to this protest in their columns, public subscriptions are raised to pay the expenses of the culprit, and influentially signed memorials are addressed to the government praying for his release."<sup>13</sup> All this resulted in the accentuation of racial discrimination, which naturally provided a fillip to Indian nationalism. In this connection, Mr. A.C. Mazumdar remarks, "The invidious distinction sharply drawn along the whole line between the ruling race and the ruled, and the repeated instances of glaring and irritating miscarriage of justice in cases between Indians and Europeans—a most deplorable phase, if not a foul blot, still extant—served as a constant reminder to the educated community, which every year received fresh accessions to its strength, weight and importance, that some solution must be found for this highly unsatisfactory, if not intolerable situation."<sup>14</sup>

The Act of 1833 provided that the higher posts in Indian administration would be open to all irrespective of any distinction of race, colour and creed. It contained a clause which laid down that henceforth *fitness* was to be the only criterion of eligibility and that no Indian 'shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place or employment under the Company.' But this clause of the Act remained confined to paper and no Indian was appointed to a single responsible post during the succeeding twenty years. At the time of the renewal of the Charter in 1853 the inhabitants of the three

<sup>13</sup> Cotton, Sir Henry : *New India*. London (1907) page, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Mazumdar, A.C., *Indian National Evolution*, Madras, (1917), page, 27 & 28.

Presidencies sent petitions of numerous signatories to the British Parliament urging it not to extend the charter of the Company further. The submission of these petitions was perhaps the first manifestation of the awakening of a public and political nature in the country. The resentment and bitterness caused by the non-fulfilment of promises and exclusion of the sons of the soil from a share in the administration proved a potent factor in the growth of the spirit of nationalism.

Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1958 repeated the assurance of appointing Indians to high posts. But this assurance also, like the earlier ones, remained a pious wish and did not in practice bring any change in government policy. To make things worse, systematic and deliberate attempts were made to exclude Indians from the Indian Civil Service. Surendra Nath Banerjee, who managed to get into the I.C.S., was disqualified through a case initiated against him. Aurobindo Ghosh, who passed the Civil Service Examination was rejected on technical grounds, to which detailed reference will be made later. These instances naturally created wide-spread resentment among Indians.

#### **Economic Exploitation :**

The economic policy pursued by the Government of India under both the Company and the Crown, led to distinct impoverishment of large section of the Indian people. That is why, "the interest of the educated class in nationalism has always been partly economic."<sup>15</sup> According to G.N. Singh, "It is an undeniable fact that the deteriorating economic position of the country and the anti-national economic policy followed by the government together with the policy of excluding Indians from the higher ranks of the services were responsible to no small extent for arousing anti-British feelings and the national spirit among the people in India."<sup>16</sup>

British control of resources in India, the supply of raw materials and food-grains and the existence of a vast market for manufactured products helped greatly in the industrialisation of Britain itself, as an American writer, Brooks Adam, remarks "The influx of the Indian treasure, by adding considerably to the nation's cash capital, not only increased its stock of energy, but added much to its flexibility and the rapidity of its movement. Very soon after

<sup>15</sup> Garret, G.T., *An Indian Commentary*, London (1928), page, 119.

<sup>16</sup> Singh, G.N., *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development*, Delhi-(1959), page, 110.

Passey, the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous." After enumerating the various mechanical inventions of the period, he adds. "In themselves inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries, waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money and money not hoarded but in motion. Before the influx of the Indian treasure, and the expansion of credit which followed, no force sufficient for this purpose existed; and had Watt lived fifty years earlier, he and his invention must have perished together."<sup>17</sup> "Possibly since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder, because for nearly fifty years Great Britain stood without a competitor."<sup>18</sup>

British policy of industrialisation caused considerable repercussions on the rural economy of India. In the pre-British period, the village was more or less a complete socio-economic-cum-political unit. Indian feudalism differed from European feudalism in the sense that under it private property in land did not exist. There was communal ownership of land. According to Wadia and Merchant, "In the Hindu period the land belonged to the village community and was not the property of the King. The King claimed only a part of the produce of the land." There existed an indispensable combination of agriculture and domestic industry.<sup>19</sup> The village produced what it needed. The village panchayat was a court of law and committee of general administration. This self-sufficiency of the village community gave to India her historic stability and continuity through the ages.

But the British broke up this self-sufficiency and completeness of the villages community. They changed its socio-economic structure and political pattern. The first blow which they gave to this community was the introduction of the landlord system. The communal ownership of land was replaced by landlordism of the British type.

The second step in this transformation was the commercialisation of agriculture. Various forces worked towards this change among which the development and extension of transport facilities,

<sup>17</sup> Brooks Adam, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, New York (1951), pages, 297-298.

<sup>18</sup> Brooks Adam, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, New York (1951), page, 300.

<sup>19</sup> Marx, Karl., *On India (Articles)* Bombay (1945), page, 82.

the increasing demand for India's raw materials by British industries, the peasant's need for cash for paying revenue and debts were the more notable.

A third consequence was the destruction of Indian handicrafts. The British rulers naturally patronised machine-made goods of their own country and imported them freely into the Indian markets. The Indians, too, started progressive use of goods manufactured by the British industry. "To follow European fashions was considered the hall-mark of enlightenment."<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, there was a legislative ban<sup>21</sup> on the entry of Indian goods into England. The prohibition of Indian goods in England, the disappearance of the native courts and Indian princes and the industrial development of the England gave almost a death blow to Indian industry. To add to the impoverishment of the people, the British followed a laissez-faire policy—a policy of free trade. They exported raw materials from India, and imported manufactured products back to India, thus doubling the exploitation. India, which had a flourishing trade with Europe, the Middle East, China and South East Asia because of its specialization in handicrafts, was reduced to an agricultural colony. About the nature of this flourishing trade in the past, M. Montgomery Martin comments (statement given before Parliamentary Enquiry in 1840), "I do not agree that India is an agricultural country. India is as much a manufacturing country as agricultural—her manufactures of various descriptions have existed for ages, and have never been able to be competed with by any nation, wherever fairplay has been given to them."<sup>22</sup> But under the British rule the collapse of these manufactures was sudden and complete. India was reduced to the position of an agent of British industrialism. In this connection Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru remarks that India "became a passive agent of modern industrial capitalism, suffering all its ills with hardly any of its advantages."<sup>23</sup>

The destruction of the Indian handicrafts industry put a heavy burden on agriculture. The artisans and craftsmen having no other job took to agricultural activities. The process of ruralization started and the balance between agriculture and industry was disturbed. The burden on land grew, leading to a decline in the people's standard of living. "This compulsory back-to-the-land

<sup>20</sup> Gadgil, D.R., *The Industrial Evolution of India*, Calcutta (Reprint 1948), page, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Indian Goods were banned by Legislation in 1721.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from Dutt, R.P. *India Today*, London (1940), page, 104.

<sup>23</sup> Nehru, J.L., *The Discovery of India*, London (1946), page, 251.

movement of artisans and craftsmen led to an ever growing disproportion between agriculture and industry; agriculture became more and more the sole business of the people because of the lack of occupations and other wealth producing activities.”<sup>24</sup>

As a result Indian economy was reduced to a colonial economy. According to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, “The classic type of modern colonial economy was built up, India becoming an agricultural colony of industrial England, supplying raw materials and providing markets for England’s industrial goods.”<sup>25</sup>

To complete the story of British economic exploitation of India, mention should also be made of the lavish and extravagant scale on which the civil establishment and other machinery of the government was paid for. The Indians were kept away from the key posts and the entire administrative set-up was highly costly with its “British officials, its continual employment of European experts at high salaries, the multiplication of costly offices, the unknown amount of their occupants’ savings transmitted to Great Britain.”<sup>26</sup> To add to the great drain on Indian wealth, money was also sent out in the form of revenue, maintenance of the India office and payment of pensions to English officials and the interest on English capital spent on Railways and other undertakings in India.

In the words of Pandit Nehru again :

“Thus India had to bear the cost of her own conquest and then of her transfer (or sale) from the East India Company to the British Crown, for the extension of the British Empire to Burma and elsewhere, for expeditions to Africa, Persia etc; and for her defence against Indians themselves. She was not only used as a base for imperial purposes, without any reimbursement for this, but she had further to pay for the training of part of the British Army in England—“Capitation charges” these were called. Indeed India was charged for all manner of other expenses incurred by Britain, such as the maintenance of British diplomatic and consular establishments in China and Persia, the entire cost of the telegraph line from England to India, part of the expenses of the British Mediterranean fleet and even the receptions given to the Sultan of Turkey in the London.”<sup>27</sup>

Not only have Indian writers been critical of Britain’s financial

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* page, 249.

<sup>25</sup> Nehru, J.L., *The Discovery of India*. London (1946), page, 250.

<sup>26</sup> Besant Annie, *India, A Nation*, Madras (1915), pages, 77 & 78.

<sup>27</sup> Nehru, J.L., *The Discovery of India*, London (1946), pages, 255-256.

and economic policies in India, but many British writers <sup>28</sup> also have held similar view. There may be considerable exaggeration in the above view, but broadly speaking it is true that Imperial Britain flourished on the exploitation of the Indian people's economy.

### **Emergence of Educated Middle Class and Birth of Indian Nationalism :**

The transformation of the Indian economy led also to the decay of the old social classes and the rise of the new. In the agrarian sector, the new classes were Zamindars, absentee landlords, tenants, agricultural labourers and money-lenders. In the urban sector, the new classes were capitalist-industrial, commercial and financial, the industrial working class and a class of petty traders. In the social sphere professional classes of lawyers, doctors and teachers came into existence.

By virtue of the circumstances of their birth, indeed these classes were bound to be more or less conscious of their rights and class interests. They had specific grievances of their own. The Indian industrialists desired ever-increasing industrialization and protection of native industries. The peasant, where he owned land, demanded reduction in revenue, relief from hack-renting by the landlord where he was a tenant, and from the depredations of the money-lender. The educated classes stood for Indianisation of the services. Of all these classes the most prominent were the liberal professions, whose members were the direct off-spring of the new education during the British rule.

The introduction of western education in India was the dominant factor contributing to the emergence of Indian Nationalism. First attempts at introducing modern education in India were made by the East India Company through the Charter Act of 1813.

<sup>28</sup> For example, The Honourable F. J. Shore, once a Bengal Administrator writes : "The halcyon days of India are over, she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few" (Quoted from Lajpat Rai's *Unhappy India*, Calcutta-1928, page, 336). Similarly John Sullivan, another eminent English administrator, who served in India from 1804 to 1841 reported to the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1853 that "our system acts very much like a sponge drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames" (Quoted from Lajpat Rai's *Unhappy India*, page, 337).

Later on the 1835 resolutions of Lord William Bentinck, Wood's Despatch of 1854, the Report of the Education Commission of 1882 appointed by Lord Ripon and the Universities Act of 1904 were the different stages in the evolution of the educational policy of the British in India. The introduction of modern education through these measures was "an event of great historical significance for India."<sup>29</sup>

Among motives, which inspired the British to undertake this task, were the growing need of staff for their huge administrative machinery and their expanding trade and growing industries. With whatever motives the English started modern education, it became a potent force for Indian nationalism. The western education created an educated middle class consisting of doctors, lawyers, professors, journalists, managers, clerks, etc.

The English language brought Indians into contact with European literature, from where they learnt the ideas of nationalism, democracy, self-government and the rights of citizens. Many Indians from the different provinces went to Great Britain for higher education. During their stay in England, they were received cordially and treated on an equal footing. There they imbibed the spirit of equality, freedom and independence. They noted the way in which free men lived and moved. They also studied there the working of democratic political institutions. But when they returned to India, they found it difficult to feel at home in the oppressive and depressing atmosphere of India. They became disgusted and discontent haunted them. This 'discontent' proved infectious.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the English language served as a 'Lingua franca'—a common medium of exchange of feelings and thoughts of the people from the various parts of the country. In the absence of such a common medium, it would have been rather difficult for seventy-two representatives from various parts of the country to meet at Bombay in 1885.

Education helped the growth of Indian nationalism in another way also. The number of educated people went on increasing year by year. This increase in numbers made it almost impossible for the government to find employment for all of them in public departments. Consequently it led to discontentment among the educated

<sup>29</sup> Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, (1948), page, 123.

<sup>30</sup> Singh, G.N. *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional & National Development* Vol. I., Delhi,(1959), page, 109.

unemployed and they began to evince increasing jealousy of any monopoly of advantage being maintained in favour of the Europeans. That is why men like Surendra Nath Banerjee, who had been dismissed from the Civil Service and others like Manmohan Ghosh and Lalmohan Ghosh, who failed to get admission to this service, played a vital role in accelerating the national movement.

Thus education introduced by the British, created a middle-class intelligentsia and played a notable part in the birth of Indian nationalism. It proved to "the body-politic, what light and air are to the living organism."<sup>31</sup> It was the educated community which clamoured for increased rights and privileges and it was their agitation which was supposed to be responsible for the increased difficulties of the administration.<sup>32</sup> Lieut. Stanley E. Skinner, Hony. Magistrate, Hissar, reporting on the political agitation and unrest in India stated, "It is these newly created educated communities alone that are responsible today for all the present political agitation and unrest throughout the whole of India."<sup>33</sup> On account of the forces and factors discussed above all the new classes emerging from the social transformation under British rule met with despair and frustration. Of these, the middle class intelligentsia was the most vocal. The disappointment and national frustration had roused such high feelings of nationalism and English education created such a degree of political consciousness among the middle class intelligentsia that it found expression in the rise of the Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885 by the liberal intelligentsia supported by a section of the commercial bourgeoisie which signalled the first real growth of the Indian National movement on an all-India basis.

#### **Emergence of a Free Press and its Expositions of the failings and deficiencies of the alien Government :**

The Indian press, both English and vernacular, played a valuable role in creating and fostering national consciousness in the country. The press owned and edited by Indians both in English and the Indian languages<sup>34</sup> had grown rapidly with the

<sup>31</sup> Mazumdar, A.C. *Indian National Evolution*, Madras (1917), page, 371.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, page, 354.

<sup>33</sup> Home Dept. (Political), Govt. of India, *Proceedings August, 1907*, No. 33, page, 2 (Report on Political agitation and unrest in India by Lieut. Stanley E. Skinner, Hony. Magistrate. Hissar Distt.)

<sup>34</sup> "In 1877 there were in the Indian languages alone 62 papers in the Bombay Presidency and about the same number in Northern India, some 28 in

spread of education. Between the years 1870 and 1885, a tremendous expansion of the Indian press took place. It became critical of the government and its policies. There was the general complaint of the Anglo-Indians that the Indian Press, particularly in English, had been often seditious. The part of the press in developing national consciousness was known to the British rulers as well. "On 5 August, 1832, Mountstuart Elphinstone predicted to the Select Committee of the House of Commons that if the Indian Press were free, we should, as time went on, find ourselves in such a predicament as no state had ever yet experienced."<sup>35</sup>

There is no denying the fact that the Indian Press had to suffer under the various press laws and ordinances. Even so, it did not fail in influencing Indian patriots, in infusing in the educated classes patriotic feelings and national consciousness, particularly when there was no national platform in the early stages. Great was the impact of papers like the *Indian Mirror*, the *Bombay Samachar*, the *Hindu Patriot*, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, the *Hindu*, the *Kesari*, the *Standard*, the *Bengalee* etc., "In Bengal, particularly, quite a number of cheap news-sheets, written mostly in the Bengali Language, purveying all sorts of information and criticism, sometimes ill-informed and sometimes over-balanced, but seldom losing touch with the new spirit, rapidly sprang up, and congregations of dozens of eager, illiterate listeners to a single reader of these papers at a stationery stall or a grocer's shop in the leisurely evening became a common sight. Thus, from the simple folk to the lordly landed aristocracy all were permeated with the spirit of the press."<sup>36</sup>

Indian literature, too, voiced the cause of Indian nationalism. A Bangalee drama, 'Neel Darpan', drew a graphic picture of the terrible plight and hardships of the indigo-planters. Bankim Chandra Chaterjee's 'Anandamath' became the 'Bible of modern Bengali patriotism' and 'text book of revolutionary nationalism in Bengal'. The inspiring song of Indian nationalism, 'Bande Matram', first appeared in this book. In this connection Kohn Hans remarks, "The press, the theatre and the secret revolutionaries societies were especially active in Bengal in forwarding nationalist aims. The

Bengal and about a score in Southern India, and their total circulation reached the neighbourhood of 100,000. Newspapers in English found an even larger public" (Philips, C.H. India, London, (1948), page, 94.

<sup>35</sup> The Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI., Delhi (1958), page, 548.

<sup>36</sup> Mazumdar, A.C., Indian National Evolution, (2nd Ed.), Madras (1917), page, 22.

lives of Garibaldi and Mazzini were translated, whilst the goal of national liberation was proclaimed in such works as the History of India gained in a dream.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Policy of Lord Lytton :**

But the previous policy was reversed by Lord Lytton who followed a policy of repression. The first oppressive step which he took during his regime was the holding of an Imperial Darbar at Delhi in 1877 to announce Queen Victoria as the Empress of India. At that time famine was raging in the country and the people were suffering terribly from hunger and starvation. This provoked a Calcutta journalist to comment that ‘Nero was fiddling when Rome was burning’, though this Darbar proved a blessing in disguise afterwards in the sense that men like S.N. Banerjee got an idea of the possibility of a similar assemblage of Indian patriots for the National cause.

A second such measure was the enactment of the Vernacular Press Act in 1878 in order to stifle Indian public opinion. In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe had abolished the restrictions imposed on the press and restored its freedom. As a result the Indian press had made rapid progress and by 1877 there were 644 newspapers in British India, the majority of which were in the Indian languages. The Indian language press was nationalist and critical of the various measures and policies of the government, thus instilling a patriotic spirit among the educated people. The Government of Lord Lytton became alarmed at the growth of the power of the press and taking telegraphic permission from the Secretary of State to enact a special measure, passed the ‘Vernacular Press Act’. The Vernacular Press Act provided that the Government had “the power to work and to confiscate the plant, deposit, etc., in the event of the publication of undesirable matter.<sup>38</sup> This Act, which came to be known as the ‘Gagging Act’, did not allow any appeal against the orders of a Magistrate and as such was harsher than the Irish Coercion Act of 1870, which provided for an appeal. As a consequence a storm of indignation arose. A largely attended meeting<sup>39</sup> took place in Calcutta to protest against this ‘obnoxious’

<sup>37</sup> Hans, Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, London (1929), page, 360.

<sup>38</sup> Singh., G.N. *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development* Delhi (1959), Vol. I. page, 98.

<sup>39</sup> Regarding this meeting Mr. Surendra Nath Benerjee writes ‘It was one of most successful meetings ever held in Calcutta. It sounded the death-

measure. The agitation continued till the Act was repealed by Lord Ripon four years later.

The Arms Act of 1878 further widened the racial gulf between Europeans and Indians. It 'made it a criminal offence to keep, bear or traffic in arms without licence by Indians.' The Europeans and the Anglo-Indians were exempted from the provisions of the Act. Licences were very rarely issued to Indians and heavy penalties were imposed for the infringement of the Act. It was an attempt at the demilitarisation of Indians. According to Surendra Nath Banerjee, the Arms Act imposed upon Indians a "badge of racial inferiority." This measure injured the feelings of the people throughout the country and the racial discrimination, which it showed, was taken by the mass of the people as a blow to their national dignity and an anti-Arms Act agitation was started for its repeal. But the Act stood on the statute book, though it was slightly modified at a very late date.

Another measure which accentuated national discontent was the abolition of the cotton import duties in order to placate the Lancashire manufacturers of cloth. The law relating to this was passed against the majority vote of the Governor General's Council. The Kabul invasion followed by the Indo-Afghan War and the establishment of a scientific frontier, necessitating a huge expenditure of Indian revenues led to heavier financial burdens upon the already overburdened masses of India. The conditions in India at the end of Lord Lytton's term of office were on the brink of a revolution.

The Civil Service rules with all their implications had also a profound influence on the national movement. Section 87 of the Charter Act of the 1833 and the royal Proclamation of 1858 provided for the holding of the admission examination for the Civil Service exclusively in England. It was very difficult for Indians to go to England and thus compete with the British and that, too, in the English language. To further check the Indians from entering the Civil Service the age of entrance to the I.C.S. examination was reduced in 1877 from 21 to 19 by the then Secretary of State "thereby

knell of the Vernacular Press Act, and what is more important, it disclosed the growing power of the middle class, who could act with effect for the protection of their interests, even though the wealthier classes were lukewarm, and official pressure was openly arrayed against them. It indeed marked a definite and progressive stage in national evolution, and was the creation of builders of the Indian Association. Banerjee, S.N., *A Nation in Making, London, (1925)*, page, 62.

making it all but impossible for Indians to compete.”<sup>40</sup>

Apart from these disappointing rules, systematic and deliberate efforts were made to keep the Indians out of civil service. The two cases of Surendra Nath Banerjee and Arobindo Ghosh have already been mentioned earlier. But Banerjee's case would bear further elaboration here. He passed the Indian Civil Service Examination held in England in 1869, but he was disqualified on the basis of a technical discrepancy (discrepancy in age) and was removed<sup>41</sup> from the list of successful candidates.

Mr. Banerjee's dismissal greatly agitated the national mind and aroused strong national feelings. About the impact of this incident on the public mind, Banerjee writes, “My case excited very strong feelings in the Indian community, and the general belief among my countrymen was that, if I were not an Indian, I would not have been put to all this trouble, and that the head and front of my offence was that I had entered the sacred preserves of the Indian Civil Service, which so far had been jealously guarded against invasion by the children of the soil. Many years afterwards a Lieutenant Governor told me that it was a wicked proceeding.”<sup>42</sup>

Inspired by such patriotic zeal, Mr. Banerjee started the Indian Association in 1876 at Calcutta. This association soon became the rallying point of leading members of the educated community. It organised a big meeting in the Town Hall, Calcutta, on March 24, 1877, which became the forerunner of similar and even more crowded meetings held all over India. At this meeting a memorial on the civil service problem was adopted. Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh was detailed to take the memorial personally to England and place it before the Commons. The Indian Association launched a country-wide agitation against the enter-me-not rule of the I.C.S., Mr. Banerjee toured the country and addressed public meetings all over the country.<sup>43</sup> The real significance of the civil

<sup>40</sup> Chintamani, C.Y., *Indian Politics Since the Mutiny*, Allahabad (Re-print 1947), page, 27.

<sup>41</sup> He preferred a Writ of Mandamus to the Queen's Bench, as a result of which he was taken into the I.C.S. and posted as an Assistant Magistrate in November, 1871. But he had hardly served for two years, when he was dismissed on certain flimsy charges. Similarly Arobindo Ghosh also got through the I.C.S. Examination but was disqualified in the riding test.

<sup>42</sup> Banerjee, S.N., *A Nation in Making*, London (1925), page 29.

<sup>43</sup> Meetings were addressed by him at Lahore, Amritsar, Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Aligarh, Benaras, Bombay, Gujarat, Ahmedabad, Poona and Madras.

service agitation lay in the fact that it provided the means for awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India.

### **Ilbert Bill Controversy and its Consequences :**

Fuel was added to the fire by the controversy raised by the Ilbert Bill. Briefly the facts of the controversy are : The Liberal Government of Gladstone sent Lord Ripon in 1880 to succeed Lord Lytton and to soothen the hard feelings of Indians created by the measures of Lord Lytton. Ripon made peace with Afghanistan and repealed the Vernacular Press Act of Lytton. Lord Ripon found another invidious provision in criminal justice. According to the then existing law, the Indian magistrates and judges could not try Europeans outside the Presidency towns, but their European subordinates could do so. In order to remove this racial discrimination and disqualification of the native magistrates, a representation was made by Mr. B. L. Gupta (I.C.S.) in 1882 (to the Government of Sir Ashley Eden in 1882). Consequently Sir C.P. Ilbert, Law Member of the Government of India, introduced a bill in 1883 in the Imperial Council commonly known as the Ilbert Bill.

"The Bill proposed to remove from the Code of Criminal Procedure at once and completely every judicial disqualifications based merely on racial distinctions and consequently to confer on many native or Indian born magistrates authority to deal with Europeans, as with anybody else."<sup>44</sup> The Ilbert bill brought forth a strong protest from the European and Anglo-Indian Community. They were indignant and started an agitation. It was violently argued by them that the Indian judges were not fit to administer justice to a white man even when the latter was a criminal. Articles criticising and opposing the Bill were written in the Anglo-Indian Press, meetings were organised and to fight the Bill an association known as the European Defence Association, was formed and funds<sup>45</sup> were collected to fight for the safeguard of the class privileges which white men enjoyed in India in the administration of criminal justice.

Indian patriots also took up the challenge and started a counter agitation. According to Vincent A. Smith, "A strong counter agitation was started among the educated Indians, the

<sup>44</sup> Smith, V.A., *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford, (1923), page 756

<sup>45</sup> Rs. 1,50,000 were collected for the purpose.

result being an outbreak of bitter racial feeling, such as had not been experienced since the days of the mutiny.<sup>46</sup>" Under the pressure of the Europeans in India, the Government withdrew the Bill and a 'concordat' was embodied in the Act III of 1884 : The Indian Magistrates and judges were empowered to try European offenders, on the condition that European offenders could claim a trial even for very petty offences, by jury of whom not less than half were to be Europeans or Americans.

The Ilbert Bill agitation served as an eye-opener to Indians and brought home to them 'the assertion of racial superiority and its perpetuation' by the British. According to S.N. Banerjee, "it was a call to high patriotic duty to those who understood its significance."<sup>47</sup> This controversy influenced the Indian national movement in various ways. First, it revealed to the Indians that justice could not be expected from the British, where vested interests and the privileges of the ruling race were involved. Secondly, the British racial superiority maintained and perpetuated by the withdrawal of the original text of the Ilbert Bill made Indians realize their complete political subjugation. Thirdly, it brought home to Indians the value and effectiveness of organised agitation. They realized that their counter-agitation failed to achieve the desired object because of their poor organisation. "It was further felt that if political advancement were to be achieved it could be by the organisation of a national assembly wholly devoted to wider politics than hitherto pursued in the different provinces independently of each other."<sup>48</sup> Inspired by the Ilbert Bill controversy and taking a lesson from the European Defence Association, S.N. Banerjee called a 'National Conference' at Calcutta in 1883, which is said to be the forerunner of the Indian National Congress.

#### **The Birth of the Indian National Congress :**

No doubt the birth of the Indian National Congress marks a turning point in Indian history, but there were several other associations which had come into existence earlier. Notable among them were the British Indian Association of Bengal started in 1851, the Bombay Presidency Association of the same year, the Madras Native Association, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the

<sup>46</sup> Smith, V.A., *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford (1923), page, 757.

<sup>47</sup> Banerjee, S.N., *A Nation in Making*, London (1925), page 168.

<sup>48</sup> Mazumdar, A.C., *Indian National Evolution*, Madras (1917), page 39.

Indian Association of 1876, started by Surendra Nath Banerjee. But these associations were mostly regional in character and did not have any systematic programme and plan of action for national advance.

The initiative for founding the Indian National Congress was taken by Mr. A.O. Hume,<sup>49</sup> now known as the "father of the Indian National Congress." As an official of the Government of India, he had closely watched the situation in India and the prevailing unrest and received information about the national discontent and "underground conspiratorial organisations" from reliable governmental sources. He "became convinced that some definite action was called for to counteract the growing unrest."<sup>50</sup>

There is sufficient authoritative proof of the fact that Lord Dufferin played a part in the founding of the Congress. The original idea of Mr. Hume was to bring together leading Indian public men to discuss social affairs of the country. He met Lord Dufferin and explained his scheme to him and Lord Dufferin suggested to him the inclusion of political matters also in the programme of the Congress. In this connection Sir William Wedderburn observed on the basis of Mr. Hume's own notes, that "whereas he (Hume) was himself disposed to begin his reform propaganda on the social side, it was apparently on Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organisation as the matter first to be dealt with."<sup>51</sup> Lord Dufferin was motivated to charge Mr. Hume with this mission due to the difficulty he experienced as Head of the Government of India to ascertain the real wishes of the people. He had an idea that such an organisation would, in due course of time, assume the same role in India as His Majesty's Opposition in England.

As a result of Mr. Hume's efforts and the efforts of his friends, both Europeans and Indians, an association known as the Indian National Congress, was formed in 1885 at Bombay, which became the spearhead of the Indian nationalist movement. The objects of the Indian National Congress were as follows :

<sup>49</sup> Mr. Hume was Secretary to the Government of India from 1870 to 1879 in the Home Department and then in its newly created Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce and resigned his job in 1882.

<sup>50</sup> Wedderburn, A., *Allen Octavian Hume, Father of the Indian National Congress* London, 1st Publication (1913) page 50.

<sup>51</sup> Wedderburn Sir William, *Allen Octavian Hume, Father of the Indian National Congress*, 1st Edition, London (1913), pages 59 & 60.

"(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's own cause in the different parts of the Empire.

(b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(d) The determination of the lines upon and the methods by which during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest."<sup>52</sup>

The matters discussed and decided upon in the first session of the Indian National Congress were "enquiring into the working of the Indian Administration by a Royal Commission, the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State as at present constituted, the reform and expansion of the Imperial and the local Legislative Councils, including the right of interpellation and the submission of the budgets to the Councils, the simultaneous examination for the civil service, the reduction of military expenditure, the reimposition of the cotton import duties and extension of the Licence Tax together with an Imperial guarantee to the Indian debt and separation of Burma from the Indian Viceroyalty."<sup>53</sup>

Thereafter, the Indian National Congress met annually and decided upon political reforms to be demanded from the Government. The methods, which they adopted to carry out the decisions annually made, were appeals and prayers. They carried on their work by means of public debates, propaganda, petitions, demonstrations and deputations. They did not rely upon agitation or unconstitutional means. Whatever methods they devised, it goes to the credit of the Indian National Congress that it collected Indians annually, forged a common front by providing a common platform, and gave a systematic form and organisation to the Indian national movement.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Satya Pal and Prabodh Chandra's *Sixty years of Congress*, Lahore (1946), page 125.

<sup>53</sup> Mazumdar, A.C., *Indian National Evolution*, Madras (1917), page 63.

# 2

## *Rise of Extremism in the National Movement*

### **Causes**

The nationalist movement was run by the Indian National Congress upto 1905 as led by the moderates. They believed in purely constitutional methods for securing redress of grievances and demanded piecemeal reforms in the Indian administrative system. They had faith in the British sense of justice and fairplay and in the efficacy of moral persuasion as the means of gaining their objectives. They further believed that if the British public and parliament could be convinced of the justice and resonableness of their demands, they could be conceded. But even during this period there were certain factors at work, which were the result of a different outlook in the young people, who began to question the soundness and effectiveness of the methods of representation, prayers and moral persuasion and advocated a change in the above methods, requiring it to adopt more direct and extreme methods.

### **Dissatisfaction with the Policies of the Government :**

The most important factor was the dissatisfaction of the young people with the pace and content of constitutional advance. The Indian Councils Act passed in 1892 had belied the aspirations of the Indian people, particularly the younger elements in the country. It increased the number of additional members in the Imperial and Provincial Councils, but the principle of election that it introduced was indirect and persons who entered the legislatures did not really represent the people. In connection with this act Mr. Schwan a Member of House of Commons from North Manchester, declared in the House on the 28th March, 1892, "No reform on the Indian councils which does not embody the elective principle

will prove satisfactory."<sup>1</sup> Similarly the Act conceded the right of discussing the budget to the members but not the power of voting on it. The members were also empowered to ask questions subject to six days' notice but the Governor-General and Governors had the power to disallow any question, without assigning reasons. Thus, whatever little concessions were given under the Act of 1892 were hedged in by many restrictions. In 1893 at a single sitting of the Imperial Legislative Council, in the absence of all the elected Indian members, two measures were passed, which were objected to by the Indians. These were the granting of the 'Exchange Compensation Allowance' to Europeans and the closing of free coinage of silver by the Indian mints. The enactment of these two measures was condemned by Mr. Tilak as 'the crime of June 26, 1893'. The first measure led to an increase in the Home Charges, which added to the already heavy burden<sup>2</sup> of the Indian tax payer and the other resulted in currency and exchange troubles.

During this period two sections, 124 (A) and 153 (A), were added to the Indian Penal Code arming the Government with quite arbitrary powers. The Natu Brothers were detained without charge or trial under these sections. This detention was highly resented and induced Lal Mohan Ghose to remark that "while 'lettres de cachet' were abolished in France in 1789, they were practically instituted in India in 1818 and 1821 and were revived by Lord Curzon."<sup>3</sup> The Sedition Act and the official Secrets Act imperilled the liberties of even the most peace-loving citizens. Little wonder then that the younger elements in the nation felt that they were chasing a will-O'- the wisp in looking for political liberty under the guidance of the moderates. As Lala Lajpat Rai remarks "after more than twenty years of more or less public agitation for concessions and redress of grievances they had received stones instead of bread."<sup>4</sup> They were further convinced that "such a rate of progress seemed to contemplate a gradual evolution of centuries, not years, and started thinking whether a more revolutionary method would not yield quicker and greater results."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Keith, A.B., *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy* (London), Vol. II (1922), page, 60.

<sup>2</sup> The burden increased from £7 to 16 million in 30 years.

<sup>3</sup> Besant, Annie : *India A Nation*, Madras (1915) page 127.

<sup>4</sup> Lajpat Rai : *Young India*, New York (1916) page 158.

<sup>5</sup> Zacharias, H.C.E., *Renaescent India*. From Ram Mohan Roy to Mohan Das Gandhi, London (1933) page 128.

### **Rejection of Congress Methods :**

Prior to 1905, the Congress had demanded administrative reforms, like abolition of the India Council, expansion of the Legislative Councils, holding of the Indian Civil Service Examination in India, separation of the judiciary from the executive, reduction in the salt duty and land revenue. But it had regarded the connection with the British to be in the interests of India. It believed that the English had given the Indians a progressive civilization. The early Congressmen had faith in constitutional methods. They wanted at all costs to avoid a clash with the government. They worked under the impression that the British were lovers of liberty and possessed a deep sense of justice and fairplay. But the apathy of the Government to the demands of the Congress and the reforms under the Act of 1892 disillusioned the younger members about the effectiveness of these methods. In this context, the late Mr. B.G. Tilak observed, "Political rights will have to be fought for. The moderates think that these can be obtained by strong pressure."<sup>6</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai, on his return from the Congress deputation sent to England in 1905 also agreed with Mr. Tilak and warned the Indian people "that the British democracy was too busy with its own affairs to do anything for them, that the British press was not willing to champion Indian aspirations—and that they would have to strike the blow for freedom themselves."<sup>7</sup>

The discontent against the government was aggravated by the famine of 1896-97 and outbreak of plague. It fostered the extremist tendency among the people. The famine<sup>8</sup> engulfed the entire country, except lower Burma and the extreme south of the Peninsula, and has been described as "the most intense and severe famine ever known under British rule."<sup>9</sup> The relief machinery of the government, proved quite inadequate, slow-going and poorly organised. Relief measures fell far short of the requirements, as is evident from the fact that while the famine affected about sixty-nine and a half million, relief was provided to only four million.

To add to the misery of the people and to national discontent,

\* Quoted from Desai, A.R., *Social Back-ground of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay (1948) page 301.

<sup>7</sup> Lajpat Rai : *Young India*, New York (1916) pages 169 & 170.

<sup>8</sup> Sixty-nine and a half million people were effected by the famine, covering an area of 70,000 square miles.

<sup>9</sup> Fraser, Lovat: *India Under Curzon and After*, London (1911), page 4.

a virulent bubonic plague broke out in the western part of Bombay. The Government adopted measures which caused great resentment and bitterness among the people. The entire work of plague-prevention was entrusted to Government officials. British soldiers were also employed. House-to-house inspections were made by them and the affected men, women and children were removed to hospitals. The removal of women and children to isolated hospitals was greatly resented by the people. "The soldiers employed to enforce precautionary measures were said to have insulted women and defiled places of worship. The result was prostration of the people."<sup>10</sup> Thus the "famine in 1896, and the subsequent arrival in Bombay of bubonic plague, afforded an opportunity for anti-Government agitation."<sup>11</sup> Indeed the plague-preventive measures of the Government infuriated the people so much that plague-riots broke out, resulting in the murder of the European Plague Commissioner, Mr. W.C. Rand, and his associate, Lt. Ayerst.

### **Impact of Italy-Abyssinian and Russo-Japanese Wars**

During the 19th century British imperialism had so strongly established itself on the Asian and African soil that feelings of helplessness and despair prevailed everywhere in these continents. The myth of European supremacy and invincibility haunted the Asian and African races. But towards the close of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th, two important events occurred which shattered this myth. The first was the defeat of Italy by Abyssinia. In 1896 the Italian forces were defeated by the Abyssinian army in the battle of Adowa. This heartened the Indians and accelerated the pace of the national movement. According to Garret, "The rout of Italy by Abyssinia is supposed to have added to Tilak's agitation in 1897."<sup>12</sup> But the event which gave a greater fillip to Indian nationalism and helped the rise of extremism was the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. In that year Japan defeated Russia. It was considered a crushing defeat of the Russian colossus by the rising Asian power of Japan. Russia surrendered Port Arthur with 25,000 prisoners of war and her thirty ships reached the fathomless bottom of the Pacific. With this defeat a thrill of joy ran through the hearts of Indians, particularly the

<sup>10</sup> Satyapal & Prabodh Chandra ; *Sixty Years of Congress*, Lahore, (1946) page 143.

<sup>11</sup> *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, New Delhi (1958), page 550.

<sup>12</sup> Garret, G.T., *An Indian Commentary*, London (1928), page 134.

younger elements. According to Fisher, "Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 had thrilled the entire Orient with a new hope and ambition. Such a tonic to Orient pride was the most potent sort of stimulus to Indian nationalism."<sup>13</sup> The events exploded the myth of Western supremacy and invincibility. Indian leaders and patriots now saw, "the dawn of a new era for the whole of Asia."<sup>14</sup> The young nationalists began to admire the Japanese way of life and warfare and started seriously evaluating the chances of defeating the British by some form of violent action, if not by some regular war. Thus, these two events became potent causes of the militant trends amongst Indian nationalists.

Another factor, which contributed to the rise of extremism and militant nationalism was the discriminatory treatment meted out to Indians in the British colonies, particularly in South Africa. Indians had migrated to South Africa as indentured labour. With great toil and sweat, they built up the economy of the country. But they were treated as social outcasts and pariahs. Humiliating and inhuman restrictions were imposed on them. They were made to reside in prescribed localities outside the towns and had to pay the poll tax. In Thomson's words, the Indians in South Africa could, "not walk on foot-paths, nor travel in first or second class railway carriages, nor possess native gold, nor be out after 9 p.m. nor travel without passes."<sup>15</sup> Their humiliation reached a climax in 1907, when the Transvaal Government passed the Asiatic Registration Act, which required that all Indians must get themselves registered and give their finger-prints. Mahatma Gandhi called this Act a "Satanic Law". The Indians at home were watching helplessly the slavery and humiliation to which their fellow countrymen were subjected in South Africa. They became infuriated by the attitude of the Government of India, which stood as a silent spectator of this loathsome tragedy. They began to realize that they were humiliated abroad because they were slaves in their own country. So the situation in South Africa and the silence and apathy of the British Government further intensified anti-British feelings.

#### New Socio-Economic Conditions :

For a decade or two important social transformations had

<sup>13</sup> Fisher, *India's Silent Revolution*, New York (1920) page 27.

<sup>14</sup> Pradhan, R.G., *India's Struggle for Swaraj*, Madras (1930) page 69.

<sup>15</sup> Thompson, Edward, *The Reconstruction of India*, London—(1930) page 76.

been taking place in India. A large number of educational centres and industrial concerns were started in the towns, which led to some urbanization. The towns, being good centres of political awakening and having facilities of contact through the platform and press, became hotbeds of political propaganda and discontent.

During the nineteenth century, there was an increase in the number of educational institutions run either by the government, or by the missionaries or by groups of the enlightened people. The educated middle class steadily grew in number in the second half of the 19th century and afterwards and became the nucleus of an ever-growing progressive intelligentsia. The educated Indians had the leisure and the intelligence to study the historic role, organisation and evolution of social, economic and national movements in other countries, like China, Turkey, Egypt and Indonesia.

Moreover, educational progress greatly outstripped industrial development, which was hindered by the British in the interest of British industry. As a result a large section of the youth coming from the middle class remained unemployed. There was no scope for them in the agricultural sector, which had been already overburdened. The result was the development of a sense of frustration and disappointment among the educated community. According to A.R. Desai, "Political discontent born of the economic suffering due to unemployment among the educated middle class was an important factor in the growth of the political current of militant nationalism of which Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Pal and Ghosh were the principal leaders. It also led to the growth of the terrorist movement."<sup>16</sup>

The new industrial class was born of the development of commerce, of banking and expansion of industries, like textile, tea and mineral production. Discontent grew in this new class also as "they had to fight against commercial discrimination. They had to fight against free trade."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, at every step they came in clash with the British industrial interests, who were out to retain their monopoly of the Indian market. This was the factor which taught the Indian bourgeoisie their first lesson in nationalism. As Stalin pointed out, "The market is the first school in which the

<sup>16</sup> Desai, A.R. : *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay (1948) page 182.

<sup>17</sup> Krishna, K.B. : *The Problem of Minorities*, (1939) London page 146.

bourgeoisie learns its nationalism."<sup>18</sup> In order to protect their own interests, the Indian industrialists clamoured for protection, subsidies and swadeshi. In the opinion of Dr. A.R. Desai, "The nationalist movement which was hitherto mainly restricted to the intelligentsia, sections of the commercial bourgeoisie and educated middle class, secured a broader social basis from 1905 as a result of the entry of large sections of the middle class and politically conscious industrialists."<sup>19</sup>

The newly-created proletariat, employed as wage-earners in factories, plantations, transport and mines further swelled the ranks of the nationalists and gave an impetus to the movement. The working class became politically conscious in the first decade of the 20th century, as is evident from the general strike of the Bombay Textile workers in 1908, on the arrest of Tilak, which was welcomed by Lenin as the "first political action of the Indian Proletariat" and as "a protent of the future."<sup>20</sup> Even though the interests of the industrialists and the proletariat were incompatible, both became politically conscious enough to join hands against foreign exploitation. Thus, the growing classes of the educated, the industrialists and the proletariat, fed the fire of militant nationalism, which had been kindled by unemployment, famines, plague, mass poverty and repression.

#### **Lord Curzon and the Partition of Bengal**

The period of Lord Curzon's Governor-Generalship (1898-1905) is considered to be of a great significance in Indian political history. During his regime, Lord Curzon followed policies and adopted measures which strained the tolerance of the people of India to breaking point. He paid little heed to popular sentiments and demands and looked down upon Indian culture, holding a very poor opinion of Indian character. In February, 1905, while addressing the convocation of the Calcutta University, he observed "The higher ideal of truth, to a large extent, is a Western conception and that truth took a higher place in the normal codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wiles have been held in high esteem." This declaration was taken as a slur on the Indian character and was bitterly resented by the whole nation. Similarly he followed a policy which

<sup>18</sup> Stalin, J., *Marxism and the National Question*, Moscow (1947), page 24.

<sup>19</sup> Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay (1948), page 168.

<sup>20</sup> Dutt, R.P., *India Today*, London (1940), page 273.

aimed at the exclusion of the intelligentsia of India from all the higher jobs in the country. He believed that the highest ranks of civil employment must, as a general rule, be held by Englishmen. This led Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee to remark, "The history of the Civil Services is one unbroken record of broken promises."<sup>21</sup> Lord Curzon also emphasised that it was only the British, who by their birth and training, were fit to rule India and not the Indians and to hand over the administration of India to Indian hands would mean going against the wishes of God. Taking refuge in the theory of the divine right of the ruler, he showed no sympathy with the aspirations of the Indian people.

Holding these notions, Lord Curzon enacted various measures which became very unpopular. The first was the Calcutta Corporation Act of 1899, which turned the Calcutta Corporation into an official agency.<sup>22</sup> This measure created a European majority in the Corporation and brought it under the influence of the Government. Similarly, in 1904, the Indian Universities Act was passed, which also aimed at officialisation of the Universities and sealing their autonomy. The Calcutta Corporation Act and the Indian Universities Act received universal condemnation. The Police Commission appointed by Lord Curzon in 1902 "resulted in excluding the Indians from the special Police Services. On top of these measures came Lord Curzon's speech to the merchants in which he stated that administration and exploitation go hand in hand."<sup>23</sup>

Further fuel was added to the fire by the Official Secrets Act passed in 1904. The frontier Policy of Lord Curzon and the Mission to Lhasa were measures of the same kind. His holding of the Imperial Durbar at Delhi in 1902 immediately after the severe famine of 1899-1901 was condemned as a 'pompous pageant to a starving population'.

Another factor contributing to the rising tide of discontent and political frustration was the Partition of Bengal. The Government resolution passed on July 19, 1905, envisaged the division of the province of Bengal into two, Western and Eastern Bengal. Lord Curzon claimed that the partition of Bengal was being taken up on

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Vol. I.) Bombay (1946), page 68.

<sup>22</sup> The total strength of the members of the Corporation was reduced from 75 to 50. The twenty-five eliminated members were persons who were representatives of the people of Calcutta.

<sup>23</sup> Sitaramayya, Pattabhi: *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I. Bombay (1946) page 68.

grounds of administrative convenience and efficiency. But he had another motive also. In Western Bengal Hindus and in the Eastern part Muslims were in the majority. He wanted to drive a wedge between the two communities in order to crush the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal. According to Lord Ronaldshay, "It was interpreted by the intelligentsia of the Province as a subtle attack upon the growing solidarity of Bengal's nationalism."<sup>24</sup> Curzon himself declared during the course of addressing the meetings of Muslims in East Bengal that "his object in partitioning Bengal was not only to relieve the Bengal administration, but also to create a Mohammedan province, where Islam would be predominant and its followers in the ascendancy."<sup>25</sup> "The proposal of the partition of Bengal fell like a bombshell among the people."<sup>26</sup> Its impact on Bengalis has been described by A.C. Mazumdar in the following words : "It stirred the public mind in Bengal to its very depth, and the rich and the poor, the prince and the peasant, the educated and the uneducated, all rose as one man to oppose the violent dismemberment of their ancient province, and with it the dissipation of their cherished hopes of forming a united nation."<sup>27</sup> Protest meetings were organised to condemn this action of the Government and memorials<sup>28</sup> were sent to the Government as well as to the Secretary of State. Lord Curzon stood adamant against popular pressure. Indeed, he went a step further by characterising the opposition to his scheme as 'manufactured' and engineered by a few agitators.

In the teeth of bitter opposition the partition was effected on October 16, 1905. The day was observed as a day of national mourning all over Bengal. All this culminated in starting anti-partition agitation by the nationalist forces in Bengal.

To suppress the agitation and to earn support for the partition the government showed undue favouritism to Muslims. Many concessions were given to them. A large number of government posts were set aside for them. They were even prompted against the Hindus, which resulted in communal riots at many places, like Comilla, Jamalpur and Dacca. As a result of the riots, a few lives

<sup>24</sup> Ronaldshay, The Earl : *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II., London (1928) page 322.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted by Mazumdar, A.C. : *Indian Evolution*, Madras (1917) page 207.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* page 205.

<sup>27</sup> Mazumdar, A.C. : *Indian National Evolution*, Madras (1917) page 205.

<sup>28</sup> One of the memorial was submitted over the signatures of 70,000 people.

were lost, temples were deserted, images broken, shops plundered, and many Hindu widows carried off. Some of the towns were deserted, the Hindu population took refuge in 'pukka houses'—women spent nights hidden in tanks, the crime known as 'group rape' increased and throughout the country-districts there reigned a general terror which still prevailed at the time of my visit."<sup>20</sup>

The partition of Bengal came at a time when Russia was defeated by Japan. Thus, apart from the nature of this measure, the time<sup>20</sup> chosen for it was ominous and dangerous. The two combined to inflame the youth and to turn it to militancy. Lala Lajpat Rai and Gokhale were sent to England to appeal to the British Government to undo the wrong of the partition of Bengal. The Secretary of State, Mr. Morley, told them that partition could not be annulled. Lajpat Rai returned disappointed and told the people that they would have to give the blow themselves. Gokhale admitted that "young men are beginning to ask what was the good of the constitutional method, if it was only to end in the partition of Bengal." "The effect of the policy of repression and terror was clearly anticipated and declared at one of the meetings at Calcutta (1906) by Rai Narendra Nath Sen, when he remarked "that the only result of such repression would be to convert young men to anarchism."<sup>21</sup>

#### Militancy in National Movement : Hindu Orthodoxy :

As a cumulative effect of the factors mentioned earlier, militant nationalism grew during the first decade of the present century. There were three important sponsors of the militancy move. They were Lokmanya B.G. Tilak, B.Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai. Because of them the movement came to be known as the militant national movement of Bal—Pal—Lal. They advocated the Sakti cult, the cult of the bomb. Disappointed with the methods

<sup>20</sup> Nevinson, H : *The New Spirit in India*, London (1908)page 193.

<sup>21</sup> According to Dr. Zacharias, "1904 (was) the year of the battle of Tsushima, when a little Asiatic power, Japan, had vanquished the giant Russia, of which England herself had for a generation shown such undoubted nervousness. Japan's smashing victory could not fail to thrill India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, nor to be taken by her as a turning point in the political relationship between the East and West." (Zacharias, H.C.E. *Renaescent India from Ram Mohan Roy to Mohan Das Gandhi*, London (1933), page, 128.)

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by G.N. Singh, *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development* Vol. I. Delhi (1959) page, 155.

of mendicancy, they advocated more self reliant methods and argued that an ounce of lead can work more miracles than a ton of argument and moral persuasion. Apart from the influence of the forces generated by the British rule, particularly the policies of Lord Curzon, there was another basis of this militant movement, namely of Hindu orthodoxy. The religious revivalism was initiated by such towering protagonists of ancient Indian culture like those of Vivekanand, Dayanand and Mrs. Besant. Under the impulse of this revivalism militant nationalism recalled the memories of India's Vedic past, of the great achievements of Ashoka, and of the heroic deeds of Rana Pratap, Shivaji and the Rani of Jhansi. Durga Kali, Bhawani and other Hindu gods and goddesses were invoked. Hindu ceremonials and forms of worship were given a new political interpretation under a religious and philosophical garb. According to Arobindo Ghosh "Independence in all our movements is the goal of life and Hinduism alone can fulfil this aspiration of ours," and that "nationalism is a religion that comes from God". The effect of this revivalism was the creation of a new spirit—the spirit of patriotism, national pride and self-sacrifice. The places which became certain centres of militancy were Maharashtra, Bengal and Punjab, though Madras and Gujarat also could not remain unaffected.

In Maharashtra, the leader of the militant movement was B.G. Tilak who, according to Sir V. Chirol, was 'one of the most dangerous pioneers of disaffection' and 'father of Indian unrest'.<sup>32</sup> The institution of the Ganpati Puja started by him in 1893 turned the people towards violence in Maharashtra. As a result Hindu Akharas and Lathi clubs were organized. Tilak gave the inspiring slogan to the people, "Swaraj is my birth right, and I shall have it." He exhorted the people "to shed upon the earth the life-blood of the enemies"<sup>33</sup> and urged them to make every sacrifice to get rid of the British. He propagated his gospel through his Marathi Journal "Kesari" (Lion).

### The Poona Murders

His activities and preachings resulted in the murders of the Plague Commissioner, Mr. W. C. Rand and his assistant Lt. Ayerst, at Poona, and the District Magistrate of Nasik, Mr. Jackson.

<sup>32</sup> Chirol, Sir V : *Indian Unrest*, London—(1910) pages 40 & 41.

<sup>33</sup> *The Indian Sedition Committee* (1918), Calcutta, (1918) page 2.

In Bengal there were two wings of militant nationalism—the extremists and the revolutionaries—one led by Arobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal and the other by Barinder Kumar Ghosh Bhupendra Nath Dutt. The militant movement was started after the enforcement of partition on the 16th October, 1905. It intensified the anti-partition agitation in the shape of *hartals*, fasts, Swadeshi, boycott and national education.

The New Nationalist Party, formed in 1905, as a result of an open conference held during the Banaras Congress, when the younger delegates decided to work out a new programme of boycott both political and economic, did much work in the anti-partition agitation. The leaders of this party exerted great influence on the minds of the people, particularly the youth. It grew in strength during 1906-08 and opened national educational institutions—the most important of which was a college at Calcutta under the Principalship of the late Arobindo Ghosh. Their activities gained popularity and 500 *Anusilan Samitis* were established, which spread the gospel of violence more widely, resulting in murders of Europeans, attempts to blow up trains and sabotage.

In the Punjab, the movement was directed by Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. The movement in the Punjab was different because the basis of the movement was agrarian grievance and there were no secret societies as there were in Maharashtra and Bengal. The colonization bill in Punjab provided a ready excuse for launching an agitation against the Government. To organise the agitation the Indian Patriots Association was formed by Ajit Singh and Syed Hyder Riza. As a result riots broke out at Lahore and Rawalpindi in 1907.

Similar riots broke out in Madras and other parts of the country. Even London was affected by the new spirit of violence resulting in murder of Sir William Curzon Wyllie and Dr. Lalkaka in July, 1909.

#### **The Movement for Swadeshi and National Education**

The anti-partition agitation, inspired a movement for Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods. The spirit of Swadeshi had been present already. The nationalist leaders decided to stimulate that spirit. They also decided to launch the boycott movement—boycott of foreign goods, particularly British. Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal and others toured the entire province.

Mass meetings were held. Intensive propaganda was carried on and Swadeshi and boycott pledges were taken. The pledge was : "Invoking God Almighty to be our witness and standing in the presence of after-generations, we take this solemn vow that so far as practicable, we shall use home-made articles and abstain from the use of foreign articles. So God help us.<sup>34</sup>" The Swadeshi Movement—love of Indian things and boycott of goods of foreign origin, was launched first in Bengal, from where it spread to other provinces. The movement received great impetus in 1906, the resolution on the partition of Bengal was passed a second time by the Congress. The Congress further resolved that "having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the partition, was and is legitimate.<sup>35</sup>" The Congress later even "urged the encouragement of indigenous industries even at some sacrifice.<sup>36</sup>"

These movements became more popular among young men in schools and colleges. Students offered themselves as volunteers for national service and picketed foreign cloth shops. Foreign cloth was burnt in huge bonfires in market places and on crossings and roads. The imports of cotton and other British goods went down and the Indian handloom and textile industries received great impetus. Old and young, men and women, took an earnest part in the movement. At many places the students even refused to answer the question paper at an examination, until Swadeshi paper was supplied to them on which to write their answers. Girls returned presents sent to them by their relatives, where they happened to be of foreign make. The family priests refused to perform marriage ceremonies, if either of the couple was clad in cloth other than swadeshi. The government took stern action and gave exemplary punishments even for petty offences.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Banerjee, S.N. : *A Nation in Making*. London (1925), page 228.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted from P. Sitaramayya. *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Vol. I) Bombay (1946), page 43 & 44.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, page 44.

<sup>37</sup> To quote one particular instance, "Four youths destroyed foreign sugar valued at 1 s. 2 d and were sentenced to three and four months' imprisonment with heavy fines." (Nevinson, W., *The New Spirit in India*, London, (1908), page 185).

The boycott movement, also included the boycott of government services, honours, titles and withdrawal from government educational institutions. Explaining the psychology of the boycott, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote, "We desire to turn our faces away from the Government House and turn them to the huts of the people. We want to stop our mouth so far as an appeal to the Government is concerned and open our mouth with a new appeal to the masses of our people. This is the psychology, this is the ethics, this is the spiritual significance of the boycott movement."<sup>38</sup>

In spite of repression by the Government the movement achieved great success.

The following sums up the impact of the partition of Bengal and the twin movements : "The anti-partition agitation with its vehement invective, its appeal to Hindu sentiment, its cry that Bengal as motherland, once rich and famous, had been torn in two, despite the protests of her children, its proposals for enforcing a punitive boycott of foreign goods and supplanting them entirely by 'Swadeshi' indigenous products, its enlistment of students and school-boys in picketing operations, gave ample cover for the sedulous preaching of revolutionary doctrines".<sup>39</sup>

Simultaneously with the movement for Swadeshi and boycott, a movement for national education also gathered strength. In this movement Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal was the moving force. This movement was necessitated by the officialization of the Universities, restrictions imposed on teachers and students participating in politics and adoption of other strict educational rules. The Congress passed a resolution<sup>40</sup> on national education at its Calcutta Session in 1906.

This resolution enabled the spirit of national education to

<sup>38</sup> Quoted from A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay (1948), page 303.

<sup>39</sup> *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, Delhi (1958), page 551.

<sup>40</sup> The Resolution passed by the Congress was : "Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls, and organise a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country on national lines and under the National Control."

(Quoted from Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *History of Indian National Congress* Vol. I. Bombay (1946), page 85).

take a concrete shape and a number of educational institutions<sup>41</sup> came to be established all over the country. In these new educational institutions, education tending towards the revival of Hinduism and eulogising the heroic deeds of the Hindus of the past, like Shivajee, was imparted. Thus, these national institutions became the generating centres of the extremist and revolutionary spirit. In addition to the direct part played by National Education, there was an indirect role, too. To cite one particular case, when Babu Bipin Chandra Pal visited Rajamundry in 1907, "an address presented to him by the students of the Government Training College led to the rustication of several students, who became soldiers in the national cause."<sup>42</sup>

The Congress, too, could not remain unaffected by the rise of extremism. This new spirit was responsible for the Surat split in the Congress in 1907. The two groups of the Congress, the moderates and the extremists came into conflict over the extension of the boycott movement. The extremists wanted that the boycott should be extended to Government services and to all other associations with the Government. But the moderates, who were in a majority, were not prepared to go all along with the extremists. Both the groups wanted to capture the presidency of the Congress. This conflict for the capture of power in the Congress resulted in a riot in the pandal at the Surat Session of the Congress on 27 December, 1907.

Be that as it may, the next day the moderates called a convention and formed a committee to draft a constitution which was adopted next year by the Madras Session of the Congress. Consequently, the extremists left the Congress and worked separately from the parent body till 1916, when the two rejoined at Lucknow.

Some of the leaders of the extremist group, like Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and P.S. Khan Khoje went to foreign countries either under deportation orders or otherwise. It were they who were responsible for taking up revolutionary activities in foreign countries and organising a revolutionary movement from abroad.

#### **Indians going Abroad :**

*Causes of Emigration : Emigration from India to foreign*

<sup>41</sup> In East Bengal alone 24 National High Schools were opened. A Society for promotion of National Education in Bengal was organised under the Presidentship of Ex-Justice Sir Guru Das Banerjee.

<sup>42</sup> Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I Bombay (1946), page 69.

countries, like the Malay States, China, South and East Africa, Canada and the United States had started perceptibly towards the end of the 19th century. Indians migrated first to the Malay States and China, where they worked as policemen and watchmen. They further pioneered the emigration movement to Canada and the United States. E. David E. Brown, General Superintendent of the Trans-Pacific Services of the Canadian Pacific Railway (who lived for 14 years in Hong Kong), in his evidence before the Royal Commission, Canada (1908) on Immigration from India, said "that Indians were employed very largely as police in Hong Kong, and that it was from among their number that the movement (of emigration) had started in the first instance."<sup>43</sup>

The same view is expressed by S.A. Waiz, "An enterprising Sikh, who was of an adventurous nature and who had been to Australia, was one of the first Indian settlers to cross the Pacific. He was in Hong Kong early in the twentieth century and heard about Canada, the land of opportunity which fired his imagination to go and see for himself. He and a few of his companions lured by this spirit went to Canada landing at Vancouver, British Columbia."<sup>44</sup> These facts demonstrate that the emigration to Canada and the United States was not direct. Initially the Indians migrated via China. The movement of emigration started towards the close of the 19th century. In the beginning of the 20th, the number of emigrants began to swell rapidly. Most of these emigrants were from the Central Punjab.

The factors responsible for the emigration movement were economic pressure, wages paid in Canada and the United States, trade rivalry between Britain and the United States and the ambitious bent of mind of the Punjabis, which are summarized below :

The chief reason for this movement to foreign lands seems indeed to have been economic. Prior to annexation by the British, the Northern and North-Western Parts of Punjab constituted a sparsely populated region, in which cultivation was confined more or less to strips of land along river banks or small patches around irrigation wells. Towards the end of the 19th century, canals were constructed in these parts and cultivators from the thickly populated areas in the Central Punjab were settled on lands irrigated by those canals, mostly as free-holders. The usual size of the

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Records: Department of Labour, Bureau of Immigration. Immigration file No. 52903/110,1910 (Report of Royal Commission, page 75).

<sup>44</sup> Waiz, S.A. *Indians abroad*, Second Edition, Bombay (1927), page 647.

holding in the Lyallpur District was a square comprising about 28 acres of land. Larger gifts were given at places of scions of impoverished families of the old chieftains.

Large groups of peasants migrated from the Central Districts, like Amritsar, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana to the North-Western parts, viz, Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Sargodha, Montgomery and Multan. The immediate effects of this migration were favourable to the people of the home districts as well. It reduced the pressure on the land there and of ancestral debts. This relief was, however, temporary. Soon the saturation point of this limited colonization was reached, and the migration ceased. This, coupled with the increase in population, increased the burden on land in the older districts, leading to further fragmentation of holdings, which became even more uneconomic than they had been. As a result, agricultural indebtedness increased. The situation was further aggravated by a series of failures of the monsoons between 1905 and 1910, resulting in famine in regions which entirely depended on the rains. It became increasingly difficult for the peasant to eke out a living on his small patch of land. Thus, it was under economic pressure that emigration started from these areas. The Royal Commission, Canada, 1908, appointed to enquire into the methods by which Oriental labourers had been induced to go to Canada, also endorses this, though indirectly, when it states, "The Indians migrated to Canada because of better opportunities regarding employment."<sup>45</sup>

#### **Reports of High Wages paid in Canada and the U.S. and Demand for Labour in America :**

It has been noted that this emigration was confined to the British Colonies of the Malay States, Hong Kong and Shanghai. But accounts of high wages paid in Canada and the United States offered a lure for remigration to those countries.<sup>46</sup> This movement gained further strength from the accounts brought home by troops returning home from England via Canada after attending the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Queen Victoria in 1897, who had noticed the prosperity of and prospects for lucrative employment

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Records : U. S. Department of Labour Bureau of Immigration Washington, File no. 52903/110(1910), page 75.

<sup>46</sup> The Indian leaders were also convinced about this. Lajpat Rai, one of the foremost leaders in Punjab, also reached the conclusion that the Indians were attracted to America by the high rates of wages that prevailed there.

in that country.<sup>47</sup> Within a few years stories of the wealth of Canadians had spread far and wide among the Punjab peasantry. In Canada, the daily wage for manual labour was three fourths of a dollar during the last decade of the 19th century. It rose to one and a half dollars in the beginning of the 20th. In the U.S.A. the wages were still higher, one to three dollars a day. The exchange rate of the dollar was a little over three rupees. This was sufficient attraction for many Indians to leave their country and migrate to Canada and the U.S.A.

Another factor which influenced the emigration-movement was trade rivalry between Great Britain and the United States of America. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Indian market attracted the attention of some American industrialists who condemned British policies in India and blamed the British for keeping India industrially backward and failing to give an industrial bias to education in India.

They began giving expression to sympathy with the Indian national movement and invited Indians to visit their country for observing life in America. Such groups of sympathisers in Chicago and New York formed themselves into the "Indo-American National Association"<sup>48</sup>, which had the following five objects :

- (a) To assist Indian students in America.
- (b) To present Indian questions in the American Press.
- (c) To secure facilities for Indians visiting America and for Americans visiting India.
- (d) To convey the sympathy of Americans to the people of India through the Indian Press.
- (e) To help to secure for Indians from the British Government a measure of self-rule.<sup>49</sup>

These objects proved a source of inspiration not only to ordinary Indians but were also responsible to draw to America two eminent Indians, namely, Swami Vivekanand and Swami Ram Tirath. Their visit resulted in mutual appreciation and mutual understanding of the sentiments of peoples of the two countries. On their return to India they exhorted Indians to go to America

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Records : U.S. Department of Labour, Immigration File No. 52903/110(1910), page 75.

<sup>48</sup> This association was formed on the 5th September, 1907, Dadabhai Naoroji was chosen as Honorary President and he accepted the office. (Home Department, Govt. of India, Proceedings for October, 1910 No. 17, pages 1 & 2).

<sup>49</sup> Home Department, Govt. of India (Political) Proceedings for October 1910, No. 17, History Sheet of Myron H. Phelps, page 1.

for a study of American life, particularly their educational methods and policies.

The same year a society called the "Society for the Advancement of India."<sup>50</sup> was established by Myron H. Phelps<sup>51</sup> which was incorporated under the State law and had objects similar to those of the 'Indo-American National Association'. Mr. Phelps, Secretary of this society, wrote a series of "Letters of an American to the Indian people" published in "Gaelic American" in which he drew a parallel between the history of America and that of India and described the American struggle for Swaraj."<sup>52</sup>

By now these associations had come to feel that the time had come when direct relations should be established between the two peoples. Consequently one of them, namely the Indo-American National Association, sent Mr. Phelps on deputation to visit India, to become acquainted with Indian affairs and bring back his reaction. He travelled in the country and visited important towns"<sup>53</sup> in India. Mr. Phelps invited Indians to America to get industrial education. He even exhorted the Indians to work for the political emancipation of their country. His interview with Mr. C.A. Kincaid, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Political Department, reflects his concern for kindling political consciousness amongst the people of India. Mr. Phelps told Mr. Kincaid that "his object in undertaking this tour through India was to rouse the political enthusiasm of the people of India by working in a quiet manner without making any noise" "My plan of operation is a very simple one. I hold thoroughly private and secret interviews with the well-known nationalist leaders of each city. I visit and discuss with them ways and means by which the political emancipation of the country can be brought about as early as possible."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> This society was formed in November, 1907. Mr. H. Phelps was the Corresponding Secretary and Acting Treasurer. The other Directors of the society were Mary A. Phillips, Eugene Kremer, Joseph C. Pumelly and John Milton Scott.

<sup>51</sup> Mr. Myron H. Phelps was born at Lewiston, Illinois, U.S. on April 2nd, 1856. Graduated at Yale and Law School of California. A Lawyer and farmer in New Jersey near New York.

<sup>52</sup> Home Department, Political Government of India. Proceedings for October, 1910 No. 17. History of Myron H. Phelps, pages 2 & 3.

<sup>53</sup> Important towns like Bombay and Amraota (Central Provinces).

<sup>54</sup> Home Department (Political) Government of India, Proceedings October, (1911) Numbers 8-13, page 8.

**The Opening of India Houses :** In furtherance of the aims of the Indo-American National Association, 'India Houses' were opened at New York and Chicago. These houses provided free accommodation to Indian immigrants and students. For example, from March, 1908 to November 1908 India House at New York afforded hospitality to 69 natives of India, out of whom 45 were students. Of these 26 paid board of 2 to 5 dollars a week and others stayed free.<sup>55</sup> The students were also given financial help<sup>56</sup> or stipends and arrangements were made for their employment during the vacations.

The opening of these 'India Houses' gave a considerable stimulus to the migration of Indians to the United States of America.

**Ambitious Bent of Mind of Punjabi Peasants:** Another factor contributing to this emigratory movement was the ambitious bent of mind and enterprising nature of the Punjabi peasantry, who formed the largest part of Indian immigrants in Canada and the United States of America. The Sikh peasant of the Punjab was highly conscious of political ascendancy, which his class had enjoyed till half a century ago, and which, as the main-stay of the Khalsa Army, he had converted into economic advantage. The British kept him economically statisfied, first by giving him preference in recruitment to the Indian army, and secondly by settling him in the canal colonies. But even so, a nostalgia for past glory continued to affect him, giving an ambitious twist to his mind which under the circumstances found satisfaction in emigration to the Malaya States and China in the police, military or allied occupations. From those lands the obvious next stage was emigration to the Eldorado of Canada and the United States of America. Influenced by such impulses, a large number of Punjabis migrated to the

<sup>55</sup> Home Department (Political) Govt. of India, Proceedings October, 1910, November 17, History Sheet of Myron H. Phelps of America, page 9.

<sup>56</sup> Some idea about the help afforded by India Houses can be had from the following financial statement of India House (New York) from November, 1907 to 31 October 1908.

<i>Receipts</i> (From all sources)	... \$ 2624.37
<i>Disbursements</i>	
Office expenses etc.	... \$ 631.97
India House Maintenance etc.	... \$ 1968.36
Cash in Bank	... \$ 24.04
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>... \$ 2624.37</b>

U.S.A., Canada and some other lands.<sup>57</sup>

Emigration of Indians to Canada and the United States started in 1887, but upto 1904 no official records of such immigration were maintained. The number of emigrants to Canada became so numerous that the Canadian Government considered it expedient to keep a check on their entry into Canada in 1904.<sup>58</sup> After 1908 the entry of Indians into Canada was restricted and most of the Indians already in Canada went on to the United States of America. According to the Canadian census of 1911, there were in that year 2,312 Indians in Canada.<sup>59</sup>

In 1914 the American Congress appointed a Committee on Indian immigration to America. According to the report of that Committee, the details of Indians, who went to America, are as in the table on next page<sup>60</sup> :

An exile Indian political leader, Lala Lajpat Rai estimated the number of Indians more than 10,000 on the Pacific Coast alone.<sup>61</sup>

It is estimated that by 1911 the number of Indian immigrants in Canada and the U.S. had swelled to 20,000. A large majority of these were Punjabis who had left their service in the army. Of the total Indian immigrants in the United States 98 per cent were

<sup>57</sup> M.A. Darling, is also of the view that on account of the enterprising nature of the Punjabis, a large number of them went abroad from Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts. (*The Punjab Peasant in prosperity and Debt*. Bombay (1947) page 254).

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Records of Immigration and Naturalization services. Record Group No. 85 : immigration file No. 52903/110-A, 1910, Part III Immigration from India, page 75.

According to statistics collected by the Labour Commissioner of the Canadian Govt., Mr. Mackenzie, the number of Indian immigrants in Canada year by year was as follows :

From June 30 (July 1) 1904 to June 30, 1905.	... 45 Indians.
From June 30 (July 1) 1905 to June 30, 1906.	... 387 Indians.
From June 30 (July 1) 1906 to March 31, 1907.	... 2185 Indians.
From March 31 (April 1), 1907 to March 31, 1908.	... 2623 Indians.

5240

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Bhagwan Singh (Gyani) (V & P.O. Wring district Amritsar) estimated the number of Indians in Canada as 4,000 in 1912.

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Records : U.S. Deptt. of Labour, File No. 52903/110, (1910) Bureau of Immigration, Washington. Memorandum regarding Hindu Immigration to the United States.

<sup>61</sup> Lajpat Rai : *The United States of America*, Calcutta, 2nd Edition (1919) page 453.

Table showing details of Indians who went to America

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number admitted</i>	<i>Debarred</i>	<i>Returned</i>
1899 to 1901	34	1	0
1902	84	0	0
1903	83	0	1
1904	258	7	2
1905	145	13	0
1906	271	24	2
1907	1072	417	0
1908	1710	438	9
1909	337	331	1
1910	1782	411	4
1911	517	862	36
1912	165	104	11
1913	188	236	32

Punjabis of whom 75 per cent were ex-soldiers. They were mainly concentrated in the West Coast States of California, Oregon and Washington, and employed mostly in mines and sawmills and as farmhands or pickers in orchards.

# 3

## *The Origin of the Ghadar Party*

There were several factors both external and internal, responsible for the origin of the Ghadar party.

### **Discrimination against Indians**

The First was the discrimination against Indians in Canada and the United States. These emigrants did not find conditions in the countries of their migration as attractive in actual practice as they had been led to expect. In the Malay States, which were colonies of the British, Indians had gone as soldiers, policemen and garden-labour, where they expected to receive favourable treatment. They were treated hardly better than animals, both in respect of housing and payment. The treatment of Indians in the British colonies had also been responsible for feelings of hatred and repulsion. For example, Baba Gurdit Singh in his book, "The Voyage of Komagata Maru" gives an interesting and illustrative account of how an Indian coolie abroad was treated worse than a horse. "Once when I visited these coolies' quarters, I was struck dumb to find that human beings, helpful in the production of wealth, could thus be denied even a contemptible beast's accommodation and be consigned to the mercy of common epidemics. To relieve my eyes of this disgusting sight, I cast my look (eyes) at an adjoining marble stable kept scrupulously clean. After pacing hither and thither for a while, I came across a European and could not resist the temptation of asking him why he did not condescend to grant at least such stable-like accommodation to his garden coolies to save them from sure death. He told me, as if to chastise my manifest foolishness, that a horse could bring him Rs. 1,500 whereas a coolie not more than Rs. 40 or Rs. 50/- (presumably on a monthly basis). I also learnt on enquiry that the horse cost him Rs. 4 per day for its fodder and upkeep, while a coolie was made

to live and keep fit on one anna and six pies a day. So one horse cost as much as 42 human beings."<sup>1</sup>

In the United States of America where a strong colour bar existed against the Negroes, Indians also became its victims and a colour prejudice grew against them after they had been living and working there for some time. According to the late Lala Lajpat Rai, there were three types of prejudices against the Indians in the U.S. "First, there is colour prejudice, secondly, there is the race prejudice, thirdly there is the prejudice of religion."<sup>2</sup> Some Indians were able to amass huge fortunes in the U.S.A., but money could not bring them respect and prestige. Everywhere they were insulted and despised by their white colleagues or neighbours. In hotels and parks, in the theatres and trains, they were discriminated against. But a few enterprising Indians set up their own businesses and became prosperous businessmen, too. Some of them even employed white women as sales-girls or agents. The employment of white women by Indians was very much resented by the white people and the view came to be held that Indians might be given employment but they could not be allowed to employ white women. Naturally this discrimination was keenly resented by the Indians, who were, as a people, proud of their civilization and history. It caused the Indian immigrants in the United States to believe that it was owing to their being in a state of subjection to the British.

#### **Clash of interests between American and Indian Labour**

The second factor was the clash of interests between American and Indian labour. However, the Indian immigrants were themselves partly to be blamed for the discrimination. The low terms on which they were only too willing to sell their labour had unfavourable and unhealthy effects on the American working class. The American labour organisations were struggling for high wages and better conditions of work. They organised strikes for redressing their grievances. When the American trade unions struck for higher wages and better working conditions, the Indian labourers in America went to work in the place of the strikers and accepted low wages, because they were much better compared with those back at home. Though most of the Indian immigrants were unskilled, the skilled ones also were forced to accept unskilled jobs

<sup>1</sup> Baba Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, English rendering, Calcutta First Ed. (Year not given) page 3.

<sup>2</sup> Lajpat Rai : *The United States of America* Calcutta (1919) page 459.

because of language handicaps. This helped the American employers but hurt American labour, as "managements tended to introduce devices to break down skilled jobs into semi-skilled work."<sup>3</sup> This brought the Indian emigrants into conflict with American labour.

Conditions in this respect became critical particularly during the years 1906 and 1907. During this period, America was in the grip of an economic crisis. The employers found it difficult to employ labour on the old terms. To meet the depressing economic situation, they demanded of workers longer hours on lower wages. American labour was not prepared to accept the new terms of their masters, but Indian workers were only too ready to fall in line with the demands of the employers. Also, the Indian workers made few demands regarding conditions of work. Used to hard work on meagre pay, and with habits of docility and obedience, they consented to conditions verging almost on slavery. This further resulted in straining their relations with American labour. They came to be known as strike-breakers and blacklegs, were expelled from American labour groups and were frequently man-handled too. Sometimes they were bodily thrown out of the premises by American workers, kidnapped, put in cars and left several miles away from the towns.

In 1910, a monthly journal '*The Whiteman*' was started at San Francisco (California). It was devoted to the Movement for the Exclusion of Asiatics from the United States. It was endorsed by the Labour Organizations. As many as 84 labour unions subscribed to this magazine, which carried on vigorous propaganda against the Indian emigrants. In one of its issues,<sup>4</sup> it said, "The economic, moral and social life of the white race in California and elsewhere must be protected. The surrender of our lands and opportunities to Asiatics is a mark of national decay. The association of white women with Mongolians, Hindus and Negroes is racial pollution."<sup>5</sup> This question of discrimination against Indians came to the surface in the general elections of 1910.

This is illustrated by the election statements of many candidates. Frank McGown, candidate for Republican nomination for Attorney General, states, "For political, industrial and sociological

<sup>3</sup> Florence Peterson : *American Labour Unions*, New York, (1952) page, 6.

<sup>4</sup> August (Issue), Vol. 1. Number 2.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Records : Department of Labour : Immigration File No. 52 903/110, 1910. "*The Whiteman*" August. 1910, Issue. Vol. I Number 2.

reasons, I am unalterably opposed to Asiatic immigration.<sup>6</sup>" Similarly Bernard J. Flood, another candidate for Republic Nomination as Justice of Peace, wrote to '*The Whiteman*', "I am decidedly opposed to making California the hunting ground of Asiatic coolies. I am opposed to the admission of Hindus, Japanese and Chinese and no law could be too stringent or too well enforced to suit me. This is a white man's country, let us keep it for the white man's children."<sup>7</sup> At Vancouver, British Columbia, anti-Indian riots broke out in the later part of 1907.

In 1910 the Asiatic Exclusion League was formed at San Francisco (California) to work for the exclusion of Asiatics from the United States of America.

The following resolution passed by one of the clubs in the U.S.A. throws further light on this point :—

**Resolution "Good Fellowship Club"**

"Whereas the Pacific Coast and particularly San Francisco, is fast becoming the dumping ground for the most undesirable people of Asia, and

"Whereas, said alarming influx is the result of the utterances of Commissioner of Immigration, H.H. North, who said there were a dozen jobs for every Hindu that landed, therefore be it,

"Resolved, by the Good Fellowship Club of San Francisco, in regular session assembled this 30th day of August, 1910, that we protest to the Secretary of Commerce & Labour against the wholesale admission of Hindus, who are fast becoming a menace to this commonwealth, the removal of Commissioner North be requested for his laxity in not strictly enforcing the law and keeping these obnoxious aliens from our shores, and further,

"Resolved, that the Secretary be and he is hereby directed to forward a copy of these resolutions to the Secretary of Commerce and Labour, the Asiatic Exclusion League and the Press".

President  
Patrick Hallinan

All this made the plight of Indian labour pitiable, indeed in these countries. An American newspaper described the plight of Indian immigrants as under :

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* "*The Whiteman*," August 1910, Vol. I. Statement of Frank McGown.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* "*The Whiteman*" August 1910, Vol. I. Statement of Bernard J. Flood.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Records : Group No. 85 Immigration File No. 52903/110, 1910 Copy of Resolution passed by the Good Fellowship Club, 444 Fourth Avenue San Francisco. Sept. 1, 1910.

British industrialists and as a result of the efforts of this association, the American industrialists started showing sympathy with the Indian National movement. Inspired by economic motives, they even started taunting Indians as slaves. This association also became instrumental in the introduction of Indians to Irish patriots and Russian anarchists, who later helped the Indian immigrants in organising the Ghadar Party.

#### **Formation of Hindi Associations**

When the American industrialists failed to obtain from the British Government any trading concessions and facilities or co-operation from the rising Indian capitalist class, they stopped financing the 'India Houses' and the Indo-American National Association, which accordingly went out of existence in 1909. But though these organisations had dwindled away, they had developed a sense of getting together among the Indian workers and students to discuss their difficulties. They then formed their own societies at New York and Chicago, which were called as the 'Hindi Associations'. These provided a common platform to the Indian immigrants for mutual co-operation and help.

#### **National Factor : Movement in India**

The seventh was the national factor. The movement in India during those years also exerted a powerful influence on the Indian immigrants in their efforts to form the Ghadar Party. Most of the Indian immigrants who had migrated to the United States during the years 1906-1908, were from the Punjab, where an extremist movement against the British rule had been launched by the late Lala Lajpat Rai and the late Sardar Ajit Singh. At that time the Indian national movement was taking a militant turn. There was the terrorist movement in Bengal, the extremist movement in Maharashtra led by B.G. Tilak and the general strike of the workers of Bombay. The movement in the Punjab had a strong impact on the soldiery as well. Therefore, the Punjabi emigrants, the majority of whom were ex-soldiers, were particularly fired with the spirit of a militant national movement.

#### **Immigration Laws passed by the Canadian Government and Order-in-Council of 1908**

The eighth factor was the policy adopted by the Canadian Government. Upto the first decade of the 20th century Indians were freely allowed to migrate to Canada and the United States,

particularly as these countries needed labour for construction of railways, clearing of forests and other manual jobs. By the end of 1910, 10,000 Indians had landed on those shores. By dint of hard labour they made good earnings in Canada and acquired landed properties, the value of which in 1908 was assessed at Rs. 2 crores and 15 lakhs. Two big companies had been formed by the Indian immigrants dealing in land, mines and other properties. There were fifteen to twenty offices of Indians working as property dealers. These Indians enjoyed almost equal rights with Europeans. The British Government apprehended that this type of free mixing of Indians with the Europeans and their enjoyment of equal privileges might result in making them restive of the British rule in India and even breed sedition. Therefore, the Canadian Government began to take steps to check the influx of Indians into Canada.

In 1906, the Canadian legislature passed the Immigration Act to control the entry of Asiatics into Canada. This act was indiscriminately applied to all Asiatics, including Indians, who were British subjects. Several other discriminatory measures, were taken against Indians. In 1907 British Columbia deprived Indians of the right to vote in provincial elections. In 1908 municipal franchise was also taken away from them. The Victoria (British Columbia) Municipal Committee even decided that Indians should not be provided any work.<sup>10</sup>

In 1907, W.L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister for Labour was sent to England to discuss the question of Indians in Canada with the British Government. He held conferences with Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, John Morley, Secretary of State for India, and Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary. Having met them, he stated that the British Government was in agreement with the Canadian Government that the entry of Indians into Canada should be restricted, and Canada should remain a white-man's country in the interests of the political stability of the British Government. On the basis of his visit to England, an Order-in-Council was issued in Canada in 1908, which practically closed Canadian shores to Indians. That Order-in-Council reads, "From and after the date thereof the landing in Canada shall be and the same is hereby prohibited of any immigrants who have gone to Canada, otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives or citizens, and upon through tickets pur-

<sup>10</sup> Waiz. S.A. *Indians Abroad*. Bombay (1927) page, 661.

chased in that country or purchased and prepared in Canada."<sup>11</sup> In addition, there was a provision that "no immigrant of Asiatic origin shall be permitted to enter Canada, unless in actual and personal possession in his or her own right of 200 dollars, unless such person is a native or subject of an Asiatic country in regard to which special statutory regulations are in force or with which the Government of Canada has made a special treaty or convention."<sup>12</sup>

The first provision of this Order-in-Council affected the Indians most, because there was no direct ship service from India to Canada. The second provision also acted as a barrier to their entry into Canada. Two hundred dollars were equivalent to Rs. 600. For an Indian peasant it was difficult, if not impossible, to find so much money. In fact, it meant that any Indian intending to go to Canada should have over one thousand rupees, as the cost of passage from India to Canada was Rs.450/- . The Japanese and the Chinese were able to get these provisions relaxed in their favour because of the pressure of their governments. But the Indians could not do so, as they had no Consul of their own to fight for their rights. They were slaves at home and could not be treated as citizens abroad.

One incident in particular brought the disabilities of the Indians to light. The Indians living in Canada sent for their families. When they reached Canada, they were not allowed to land and were ordered to return to Hong Kong. It was a pitiable scene to see that fathers who had come to receive their children and husbands who had come to receive their wives on the shore could do nothing except heave sighs and shed tears. This tragic incident must have been revolting indeed to their spirits.

Apart from restricting the entry of new emigrants into Canada, efforts were made to get rid of those already there. In 1908, the Canadian Government tried to persuade Indians to leave Canada and settle in the Honduras, on the plea that there were better prospects for them and the climate also was more suitable. The Indians sent a party of three to make personal observation of the land of Honduras. The party returned disgusted and reported that the Honduras was full of malarial marsh-lands. This attempt consequently did not meet with success.

These immigration laws and discriminatory measures created

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Baba Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata-Maru*. Calcutta, First Edition, (year not given). page 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, page 9.

disillusionment among the Indian immigrants and the attitude of the Canadian authorities became increasingly hostile towards them. In order to carry on agitation and put up a fight against the inequitable discrimination against them, two societies of Indian immigrants were formed in Canada on the 15th of December, 1911, the United India League and the 'Khalsa Dewan Society', Vancouver. On the 22nd February, 1913, these societies decided to send a deputation of three persons Messrs Balwant Singh, Narain Singh and Nand Singh to Ottawa, London and then to India for the redress of their grievances. Those visits produced no result. These societies, however, through their propaganda against the British Government did a lot of spade work in Canada for the Ghadar Party. In 1912 Gyani Bhagwan Singh, who was the Granthi at Peking and Hong Kong, arrived in Canada. He proved to be an eloquent and persuasive speaker. He organised weekly meetings in the Gurdwara at Vancouver and called upon Indians to unite and as a mark of this unity to salute each other with Bande Matram and not with their sectarian salutations. He told them that the time for petitions was over and it was time for taking up the sword to wage war for national rights. According to the findings of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case (1915):

"One Bhagwan Singh, noted seditionist, arrived there at the end of 1912 or beginning of 1913 and commenced a series of lectures against the British Government in India. He also started lecturing in the Vancouver Hall, remaining there for three months, filling his audience with revolutionary ideas. Bhagwan Singh was eventually deported, but not before the seeds of mischief had been sown among the Indians in Vancouver."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1.Judgment dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III A(I) The Beginning of Conspiracy and War, page 1.

# 4

## *The Formation of the Ghadar Party*

The Ghadar Party was formed in 1913. Organizations of Indian nationals in the U.S. existed even prior to its formation, but they did not believe in violent methods for the achievement of their ends, as the Ghadar Party did. The Indian immigrants working in Oregon, California and Washington were beginning to develop political consciousness. Their working, living and eating at common places tended to remove religious barriers to their unity and encouraged the growth among them of a feeling of nationalism. St. John (Near Portland, Oregon) and Seattle (Washington) soon became centres of political activity. At St. John, Pandit Kanshi Ram was working as a mate of a gang of about twenty Indian workers in a lumber mill. Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Harnam Singh Tundilat, Bhai Udham Singh, Shri Ram Rakha and Bhai Isher Singh were similarly employed in another lumber mill. They used to assemble every Sunday and hold discussions on social and political matters. Out of them, Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna had more definite political leanings, as he had already worked in the Namdhari movement<sup>1</sup> in India. At Seattle (Washington) also similar stirrings could be felt among the Indians working there. Shri Tarak Nath Das had come to Seattle in 1909 after the closing down of the 'Indian House'. He began to publish from there an English

<sup>1</sup> The Namdhari movement, also known as the Kooka movement, was a movement of Sikh religious revival, started in the last few years of Sikh rule by Bhagat Jawahar Lal and his disciple, Baba Balak Singh—Hazro (N.W.F.P.). After the annexation of the Punjab, the Movement underwent a change under the leadership of Ram Singh, Village Bhayani, Distt. Ludhiana. Apart from social and religious aims, it had adopted the following political objects as well : "Not to accept service with the Government, not to send children to Government schools, not to use courts of law but settle disputes in panchayats, not to use foreign goods and not to use the Government postal service [Quoted from Khushwant Singh's, *The Sikhs*, London (1953)] pages 91-92.

monthly, 'Free India', under the leadership of Shri Surendra Mohan Bose, an exile from Bengal. This monthly advocated armed insurrection against the British rule in India.<sup>2</sup> In 1911 Tarak Nath Das formed the 'East India Association'.<sup>3</sup> The aims of this association were the advancement of national education, development of Indian industry, agriculture and trade and ending of foreign exploitation. All this, it believed, could be done only by establishing real self-government in India. This centre served the Indians in Canada and the neighbouring parts of the United States round about the river Columbia.

The United States presidential election in 1912 further created an atmosphere, which made the Indians feel the need of an organization. It was a year of depression and increased unemployment. The American labour started manhandling Indian workers whom they considered intruders. At St. John (Oregon) night attacks were made on Indian workers and they had to leave their homes to save themselves. On one such occasion in a factory in Washington State all the Indian workers ran away, but one Bhai Kanahiya Singh from Patiala, armed with a pistol, put up a fight single-handed against the attacking party. Thereafter, he continued working there for several days all alone. At Takoma (Washington) some Indian workers were employed on the construction of a railway line. Having seen through the game of the gangsters among American labour, they decided to fight rather than flee. They secured five pistols and some rifles. When the American rioters attacked them, they were given a hot reception and they withdrew crestfallen. This news spread in other States, like Oregon and California, creating confidence among Indians that the best way to deal with gangsters was to give them an armed fight. This led to the corollary that the white rulers of India could also be similarly fought and defeated.

#### **Conference held at Portland**

In 1911 Shri G.D. Kumar<sup>4</sup> came to Seattle (Washington) from

<sup>2</sup> Department of Home Affairs (Pol.) Government of India, Filed, April 1912, Proceeding No. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Interview by the writer with Gyani Bhagwan Singh, of village Wrang, District Amritsar dated 18th March, 1961. Gyani Bhagwan Singh also testifies that Dr. Tarak Nath had formed an association for serving the national cause before the Ghadar Party had come into existence. Gyani Bhagwan Singh was the President of the Ghadar Party after Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and Editor of the Paper 'Ghadar' since August, 1914.

<sup>4</sup> G.D. Kumar's real name was Gurur Ditta Kumar, afterwards changed to

Canada. He visited important working centres of Indians along with Bhai Harnam Singh (Kotla Naudh Singh) and exhorted them to work openly and conscientiously for the cause of India's freedom. He declared that the time of prayers to get redress of their grievances had passed and that they should form an organisation. Consequently, in the beginning of 1912 a meeting was held at Portland (Oregon). This meeting was attended by Bhai Harnam Singh (Kotla Naudh Singh) and his companions from Bridal Veil (Oregon), by Pandit Kanshi Ram, Ram Rakha and others from St. John (Oregon), by Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Udham Singh Kasel and others from Monarik Mill and by others working at Portland.

#### **Founding of "The Hindi Hindustani Association"**

This meeting resulted in the formation of 'The Hindustani Association' whose office was set up in a rented house at Portland (Oregon). Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, Shri G.D. Kumar and Pandit Kanshi Ram were elected President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively, of this organisation. It was also decided that a weekly in Urdu, 'The India' should be published.<sup>5</sup> The aims of this association were declared to be the "receipt of vernacular papers from India, importation of youth from India to America for education with a view to devoting their lives to 'national' work in India and ( holding of ) weekly meetings to discuss politics."<sup>6</sup>

In winter, 1912, the Monarik Mill was closed for one month. As a result Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna and Bhai Udham Singh Kasel were thrown out of their jobs. They came to Bhai Kesar Singh at Astoria (Oregon) and canvassed him to form an association there. Eventually there also a branch of the 'Hindustani Association'

Guru Dutt Kumar. A Native of Bannu-Teacher of Hindi and Urdu in the National College, Calcutta for some time. Migrated to Victoria B.C. on 31st October, 1907 and started a grocery there. Opened Swadesh Sewak House in November, 1909 at 1632, 2nd Avenue West, Fairview, Vancouver. In June, 1911 migrated to Seattle (Washington) U.S.A.

<sup>5</sup> Statement given by Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat of Village and Post Office Kotla Naudh Singh, District Hoshiarpur dated 12th January, 1961. (Through the Courtesy of Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur). Baba Harnam Singh was Secretary of the Ghadar party branch at Bridal Veil (Oregon). Later he joined Yugantar Ashram as a member of the Editorial Board of the 'Ghadar'. Also worked as a Machine man in the Ghadr Press at San Francisco.

<sup>6</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I, Judgment dated September 13, 1915, Part III, A(I) The Beginning of the Conspiracy and War, page 2.

was formed and Bhai Kesar Singh, Munshi Karim Bakhsh and Shri Munshi Ram were elected President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The meetings of the association were held every Sunday, where social and political problems affecting the Indian community were discussed. The association had hardly held five to six meetings, when Shri G.D. Kumar fell ill and was hospitalised. This stopped the publication of the paper and the meetings also became infrequent. During those days Lala Thakar Dass (Dhuri) came to Portland (Oregon) and advised Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna and Pandit Kanshi Ram to send for Lala Hardyal from California and to entrust the work of the association to him. In a meeting held at Portland (Oregon) this advice of Lala Thakar Dass was accepted.

### **The formation of the Party**

Lala Hardyal agreed but for some reasons could not join until the last week of March 1913. He came to St. John (Oregon) on the 25th March, 1913, along with Bhai Parmanand of Lahore. Pandit Kanshi Ram collected all the Indians working there on the 25th night to hear them. Bhai Parmanand suggested that students should be invited from India by offering scholarships and sent back trained fully in political work.<sup>7</sup> This proposal was discussed at length but was ultimately rejected. The other proposal put forward by Lala Hardyal that they should gird up their loins to liberate India and work on revolutionary lines, was carried. The meeting came to the following further conclusions.

The alien Government was the cause of all the sufferings of the Indian people, and these could be ended only by ending British rule in India; that the Indian youth educated in schools and colleges controlled by the British Government were incapable of fighting for national independence; that in the U.S. where the Indians had acquired political consciousness and money, an organisation needed to be formed with the aim of ending British rule in India through an armed revolution, that after the success of the revolution, a democratic government of the American type could be set up in which every Indian would enjoy liberty and equality, irrespective of religion, caste and position.

Lala Hardyal provided the movement with a philosophical basis. Hitherto the British had succeeded in making the Indian

<sup>7</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of My Life* (English rendering), the Central Hindu Yuval Sabha, Lahore (1934), page 62.

people believe that they had been appointed ruler of India by divine dispensation and that it was treason to fight against them. It was in this belief that the Indian Army's rebellion of 1857 was accepted as a mutiny or Ghadar—meaning treason by the Indian people. The new movement aimed at getting the Indian soldiers' mutiny accepted as a real revolution by ennobling the word 'Ghadar' itself. It was in this spirit that they decided to adopt 'Ghadar' as the nomenclature for their movement.

To propagate this political programme among the Indians it was decided to publish a weekly newspaper called the 'Ghadar' in as many Indian languages as possible. The headquarters of the organisation were located at San-Francisco (California) and the office was named 'Ghadar Ashram' or 'Yugantar Ashram'. It was planned also that centres of Indian workers along the river Columbia be visited and they be organised for the purpose. The Indians present at the meeting promised full implementation of the scheme. At this meeting Lala Hardyal mentioned that the Punjabis working in Californian farms, namely, Bhai Jawala Singh, Wasakha Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh, Pandit Jagat Ram, Bhai Rur Singh and Bhai Kartar Singh (Latala) had such a feeling and were also ready to work for national independence. Independently, at this time, Kartar Singh Sarabha was also persuading Indian students to serve the mother-country on similar lines. Jitendra Nath Lahiri from Calcutta, a post-graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, also played an important part in winning the Indian students for the national cause. Lala Hardyal, who came to address a meeting of the Indian students at Berkeley in the last week of December, 1912, greatly appreciated the constructive suggestions made by Lahiri. Addressing the audience, Mr. Lahiri stated, 'Mr. Hardyal. Don't you know that hundreds and thousands of Indians are living outside India? Don't you know that most of these are Punjabis? Don't you know that they are the best of fighters? Don't you know that during the last war of Independence in 1857, the Punjabis helped the British and thus destroyed the chances of our country's freedom? I dread, think of our fate in the coming war of independence, if the Punjabis are again ranged against our freedom movement. Here is the wonderful human material for you to inspire them with patriotism. No Indian leader is better fitted than you to prepare and lead the new Ghadar party from the U.S.A. and other foreign countries.'\*

\* Statement given by D. Chenchiah. 6, Arulamual Street, T.Nagar, Madras —17, dated 9th September, 1956, page 4. D. Chenchiah was an active

On the 31st March, 1913, the first meeting (of the Association) was held at Bridal Veil (Oregon). Lala Hardyal and Pandit Kanshi Ram came to attend it from St. John (Oregon). About twenty Indians working there in a lumber-mill attended the meeting and Lala Hardyal explained to them the fact of India's subjugation to the British and its effects. They decided to set up a branch of the party of which Bhai Harnam Singh and Amar Singh (both from Kotla Naudh Singh) were elected Secretary and Treasurer respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The next meeting was held at Linton (Oregon) on Sunday, the 7th of April, 1913, where Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna and others were working. The Indians working at Portland and St. John (Oregon) also came to this meeting which was attended by about one hundred Indian workers in all. A branch was established here also. Funds for the party were collected and committees were formed for further collection of funds from St. John, Bridal Veil and Portland.

On Sunday, the 14th of April, 1913, another meeting was held at Wina (Oregon), where over one hundred Indians were working. Lala Hardyal addressed them and explained to them the need of an organisation. One among them, an aged havildar remarked : "We follow you. There is no use in wasting any more time in discussing this issue of the paper. Some of us should go to all the Indians in Canada and the U.S., tell them that they should return to India in batches, and explain the whole thing to their brother-soldiers and with their help turn out the British from India. What is the number of the British in India? There is hardly one British to five hundred Indians."<sup>10</sup>

This apparently illogical proposal of the Havildar helped in framing the programme of the Ghadar Party at a later stage. At Wina (Oregon) also a branch was established of which Bhai Udham Singh Kasel was elected Secretary. It was decided that the next meeting should be held at Astoria, in which the dele-

student-worker of the Ghadar Party. He worked for the Party among the Indian students in the University of California, Berkeley and took part in the Siam-Burma Scheme of the Ghadar Party.

<sup>9</sup> Statement given by Harnam Singh Tundilat of Village and Post Office Kotla Naudh Singh, District Hoshiarpur, Punjab, dated 12th January, 1961 (Through the Courtesy of the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from *History of the Ghadar Party*. Part I. Jullundur (1961) page 89.

gates from the branches already established should participate.

Accordingly, on the 21st April, 1913 a meeting took place at Astoria (Oregon). The delegates from Bridal Veil, Portland, Wina, St. John and Linton attended. Kartar Singh Sarabha who had come there to work during the vacation at the invitation of Rulia Singh, a co-villager working there, also attended the meeting. At this meeting Lala Hardyal gave a call for volunteers who would give body, mind and finance (*Tan, Man, Dhan*) to the cause. According to the statement of Baba Kartar Singh Latala, Kartar Singh Sarabha was the first to volunteer and he (the Baba) was the second (in all nine volunteered). At the end a resolution was moved by Lala Hardyal proposing that :

“1. The name of the organisation should be the ‘Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast’, in short the ‘Hindi Pacific Association.’

2. The object of the association will be to end British rule through armed revolution and to set up a Republican Government based on liberty and equality.

3. The headquarters of the Association would be at San Francisco, which is a port and a centre of revolutionaries of the world.

4. The association will issue a weekly paper, the “*Ghadar*”, published in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and other Indian languages.

5. Elections to the association will be held annually.

6. There will be one elected committee in every factory or a gang where there are Indian workers, and this committee will be associated direct with the central committee.

7. There will be one Central Executive Committee elected by the representatives of the local units, which will control the paper, the press and carry out other tasks.

8. The Central Executive Committee will elect a party commission of three, which will be entrusted with the political and secret work of the party.

9. Every member of the party will contribute at least one Dollar a month.

10. There will be no place for religious discussions in the party, religion being strictly a personal affair.

11. Every member of the association will have the duty of helping the freedom struggle, wherever he may be.”<sup>11</sup>

The resolution was of course readily adopted. It was further

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from *History of the Ghadar Party Part I* Jullundur (1961) pages 90-91.

decided that the members of the party should work with a sense of sacrifice and economy. The party workers working in the office and outside were to be given free clothing and food, but no pay. The association elected the office-bearers of the Central Body.<sup>12</sup>

After the formation of the central body, a branch of the party at Astoria was also set up.<sup>13</sup>

### The Starting of the Weekly Journal the 'Ghadar'

The first issue of the 'Ghadar' was published on 1st November, 1913. The paper in its first issue plainly declared that its object was to make revolution and the Hindi Association stood for an armed fight against British rule. The word 'Ghadar' was easier of use and was readily picked up by the members, most of whom were uneducated and thus the movement came popularly to be known as the Ghadar movement.

### Formation of an Organising Committee and Commission for Secret and Political Work

This first issue of the 'Ghadar' published news of the conferences held by Indian workers in the States of Oregon and Washington. When it reached the Indians working on the farms in California, they were also prompted to join the newly-formed party. For this purpose they convened a conference at Sacramento on the 31st of December, 1913. It was attended by the Indians from California.<sup>14</sup> Five party representatives<sup>15</sup> from the Central Body attended the meeting.

This conference was addressed by Lala Hardyal and other leaders of the movement. At this conference "portraits of famous seditionists and murderers were displayed on the screen and revolutionary mottoes were exhibited. Finally Lala Hardyal told the

<sup>12</sup> President, Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, Vice-President, Bhai Kesar Singh, General Secretary, Lala Hardyal, Joint-Secretary, Lala Thakar Dass Dhuri, Treasurer, Pandit Kanshi Ram.

<sup>13</sup> The following were elected as office-bearers of this Branch : President, Bhai Kesar Singh, Secretary, Munshi Karim Bux and Treasurer, Lala Munshi Ram.

<sup>14</sup> The prominent among those who attended the meeting from California were Bhai Jawala Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Wasakha Singh, Bhai Nidhan Singh, Bhai Rur Singh, Bhai Chanan Singh, Pandit Jagat Ram Hariana, Bhai Karam Singh, Bhai Kartar Singh Latala and Bhai Bhagat Singh.

<sup>15</sup> They were Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna President, Kesar Singh, Vice-President, Lala Hardyal, General Secretary, Pandit Kanshi Ram, Treasurer, and Munshi Ram, Organising Secretary.

audience that Germany was preparing to go to War with England and that it was time to get ready to go to India for the coming revolution."<sup>16</sup> It was decided to form branches of the Party all over America. The office-bearers of the central body were re-elected. All the previous leaders were retained, except the Vice-President.<sup>17</sup> An executive committee of six members was also constituted.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this executive committee, a party commission of three members<sup>19</sup> was formed. The functions of this commission were control of political work, organisation of secret work and supervision of the workers. This commission was empowered to keep secrecy even from the executive committee, if necessary. It looked after the organisational matters of the party too.

### **Branches of the Party in other Countries**

Branches of the Ghadr Party were opened in countries other than the United States of America. The 'Ghadr' was sent to almost all the States where Indians lived. It was read out among them and became instrumental in rousing the national feeling.

#### **Shanghai**

In Shanghai Indians were working as policemen or watchmen. A strike in 1907 had created some sort of consciousness among them and when in July 1914 the party sent two of its workers<sup>20</sup> for the party campaign, they met with ready response. In the meantime the *Komaghata Maru* incident had also occurred causing great excitement among them. Thus a Ghadar party branch was also formed in Shanghai.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgment dated the 13th September, (1915) Part III A(3). The Beginning of the Conspiracy and War, page 5, and The Indian Sedition Committee Report, 1918 Calcutta (1918), page 146.

<sup>17</sup> Bhai Jawala Singh from California was elected Vice-President in place of Bhai Kesar Singh, obviously to give representation to the members from California.

<sup>18</sup> The members elected to the Executive Committee were Santokh Singh, Kartar Singh Cheema, Nidhan Singh, Wasakha Singh, Munshi Ram and Harnam Singh. (Statement given by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna of Village and Post Office Bhakna Disst. Amritsar (Through the Courtesy of the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur).

<sup>19</sup> These members were Bhai Sohan Singh Bhakna, Bhai Santokh Singh and Pandit Kanshi Ram.

<sup>20</sup> They were Bhai Sunder Singh and Doctor Mathura Singh.

<sup>21</sup> Gajjan Singh Bhakna and Wasakha Singh Dadehar were elected as its organisers.

### Hong Kong :

At Hong Kong most of the Indians were employed in the police and army and as watchmen. Here political awakening came through Indians on their way to and from other places and was diffused among policemen, watchmen and the soldiery. The first manifestation of this political consciousness was the strike among the Indian police at Hong Kong over the issue of wages. In fact, national consciousness had developed there even earlier than in America and Canada. According to Bhai Harnam Singh (Gujarwal), it was in 1907-8 that political propaganda started there. At first it was confined to watchmen but later it spread to the soldiery. In 1913 the paper 'Ghadar' and other Ghadar literature from America inspired the Indians at Hong Kong to set up a unit of the Ghadar Party. A committee consisting of four members was formed.<sup>22</sup> At Hong Kong there was 9000 Indian soldiers at that time, which included two regiments of Punjabis, the 25th and the 26th. Gyani Bhagwan Singh Granthi at Hong Kong at that time, worked among the troops exhorting them for the fight. Bhai Bishen Singh, a Head Clerk in the 26 Regiment was the leader of the disaffected soldiers.

### Phillipines

At Manila in the Phillipines also a party unit came into existence. When all other routes of access to America were closed for Indians, the way through the Phillipines was still open. An Indian could go to the Phillipines and stay there for six months which enabled him to acquire Filipino citizenship. Then as a Filipino citizen he could not be refused admission to America. However, after some time, this way was also stopped by the American Government and naturally led to disaffection among Indians in the Phillipines. Some Indians from Manila were involved in the *Komagata Maru* affair also. As a result of the propaganda by the 'Ghadar' a party unit was formed and the first President of the Unit was Hafiz Abdulla of Jagraon. Gyani Bhagwan Singh, the second President of the Ghadar party, also went there and preached armed revolution.

### Siam

In Siam also there was a considerable number of Indians, mostly Punjabis. They worked there as cloth merchants and were

<sup>22</sup> The members of this Committee were Hira, Labh Singh, Bhagat Singh and Hardit Singh.

also employed as 'mistris' and labourers in the construction of the railway line at Bangkok. The British officials entrusted with the issuing of licences for the sale of cloth started discriminating against the Indians. This created hatred and dissatisfaction among the Indians and when the paper 'Ghadar' reached here and was read out to them, they were also drawn into the movement. A unit of the Ghadar Party was formed, the leading lights of which were Jiwan Singh, Inder Singh, Chet Ram, Dharam Singh, Karam Chand and Babu Amar Singh.

### Panama

Some Indians, when not allowed to land in Canada and America, went to Panama and soon there was a considerable inflow of Indians to that country. This was not to the liking of the British authorities there, so the British Government in India issued a declaration on October 27, 1911 on the advice of the British Consul-General in Panama, informing the people in the Punjab that there was no work for Indians in Panama.<sup>23</sup> Two or three more orders of a similar nature were issued. This created favourable soil for the 'Ghadar' propaganda and funds began to be collected for 'Ghadar' and the Ghadar Party and sent to the Ashram direct. In June 1913 Gyani Bhagwan Singh, later President of the Ghadar Party, came to Panama and started a party unit. This Panama unit included Punjabis, Sindhis and Bengalis, prominent among them, being Rala Singh of Jullundur, Kabal Singh of Rurka, Nidhan Singh of Mahesri and Khuda Bax of Hooghly (Bengal).

### Organisation of the Party

According to the statement of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the first President of the Ghadar Party, the party was democratic in character. Its organisation was based on democratic principles. In mills, farms, gardens and gangs of railway labourers, where there were some party members local committees were formed, such as at

<sup>23</sup> Department of Commerce & Industry. (A) November 1911 Proceeding No. 1-3. page 595. Resolution No. 8037-8054-102 dated 27th October, 1911, passed by the Government of India, reads : "Telegraphic information has been received from His Majesty's Secretary of State, The Consul-General at Tucuman, Panama reports the arrival of Indian labourers at Colon for whom no employment could be found. The Consul-General asks that intending emigrants may be warned that they will be disappointed in their expectation of obtaining work." The above communication is published for general information.

Bridel Veil, Linton, St. John, Wina, Astoria and Sacramento. These committees were directly linked with the central committee. The representatives of local committees elected members of the Central Executive Committee, which was the supreme controller of the party. The office-bearers were elected through voting by the members.<sup>24</sup> Elections to the local committees and the central committee were held annually. The members of the Central Committee further elected the members of the various sub-committees dealing with different types of work.

<sup>24</sup> Statements given to the writer by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna of Village and Post Office Bhakna, District Amritsar dated the 5th January, 1961 and Baba Sunder Singh of Village and Post Office Ghal Kalan, District Ferozepur, dated the 13th February, 1965.

# 5

## *Aims and objects of the Ghadar Party*

The aims of the Ghadar party were laid down in the resolutions passed at the conferences held at Astoria and Sacramento on the 21st April, 1913 and the 31st December, 1913, respectively. They were first, to liberate India from the British rule through an armed insurrection. Secondly, to establish and maintain a system of self-government in India based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thirdly, to work for a social order securing the greatest good of the greatest number. According to the Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities, the objects of this organization were, "to encourage the establishment of a system of Government in India, which shall be free from all foreign control, and which shall have as its aim the greatest good of the greatest number, and which shall guarantee freedom of thought, speech, press and organization and ensure the minimum necessities of life to all, to publish a periodical review of political, economic, social, and intellectual conditions in India by voluntary contributions, and without sale."<sup>1</sup>

In the first Lahore Conspiracy Case the trial court under the heading "The objects of going to India," found that the object which the revolutionaries set before them as defined by the 'Ghadar' was to "drive away the infidel and be the independent rulers of India. Happiness is afforded by Republican Governments like—China—and Southern America."<sup>2</sup>

The news, poems and articles published from time to time in the 'Ghadar' also bear testimony to the aims of the Ghadar party.

<sup>1</sup> *Un-American Activities.* 7th Report. The Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on un-American Activities to the 1953 California Legislature, Sacramento, Senate Publications, page, 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915. Part III A(3). The Object of going to India.* page, 3.

In the first issue of this paper, published on 1st November, 1913, it was declared under the article, "Our name and Work", "A new epoch in the history of India opens today, the 1st November, 1913, because today there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's language, a war against the British Raj" "What is our name? "Mutiny" (Ghadar). Where will the Mutiny (Ghadar) break out? In India. When? In a few years. Why? Because the people can longer bear the oppression and tyranny practised under British rule and are ready to fight and die for freedom..."<sup>3</sup> In one of the articles published in the 'Ghadar' it was laid down :

"The object of this movement is that the people of India should start a mutiny, uproot and destroy the British Government like a worm-eaten tree, and establish a national Government."<sup>4</sup> The first President of the Ghadar Party, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, told the jailor in Montgomery jail that the aim of the party was to acquire self-government by any means and strive for a Republican Government.<sup>5</sup>

Even in the judgement of the first Mandalay Conspiracy Case, with reference to the paper "Ghadar" it has been observed, "from the first issue, it (the Ghadr) openly preached turning out of the British and establishment of a republican Government in which all communities of India will have representation."<sup>6</sup>

An extract from the San Francisco Case of 1917 also throws light on the ideals which the Ghadrites set before them. The objects of the revolutionaries in the U.S. were "to prepare the means for a military enterprise to be carried on from within the territory of the United States against India"—"to incite mutiny and armed rebellion in India and to destroy the said Government and authority."<sup>7</sup>

The Declaration of War ("Ilan-i-jang) which was prepared for

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Records bearing on political activities of Indians in the U.S.A. during World War I. File No. 9—10—3 Section 7. Copy of the 'Ghadar' enclosed with letter of Deptt. of State, Washington dated December 6, 1917, page, 6 (of file) and Home Department, Govt. of India (Political) A Proceedings, January. 1914, Numbers 42-43 Translated copy of the "Ghadar" page, 4 (of file).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III A(3). The objects of going to India. page, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I, Judgement dated the 13th September. 1915 Part II. page, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Mandalay (Burma) Case No. 1 Judgement dated the 27th July, 1916, page, 259.

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Case Judgement dated the 7th July, 1917, page, 2 & 3 (For Northern Distt. of California).

distribution at the time of starting the armed insurrection, also declared emphatically :

"Now is the time to rise and put Europeans to death and free your country of them.....I am telling you of a war declared.....it has spread all over India.....can you sit idle, while a war is going on ? You will join in this war. You should unite together, uproot the present Raj, and establish a republic."<sup>8</sup>

#### **Principles and policies**

The party was secular in character. Its membership was open to all. Every lover of freedom was entitled to become its member, irrespective of caste, creed or community. Apart from Punjabis, many Bengalis and some Madrasis were also members of the 'Hindi Association'.

Its members were enjoined to rise above parochialism, cultivate the national sentiment and join the organization not as members of any particular sect or community, but only as Indians. There was no place in it for religious preaching of any kind. The theist and atheist, the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian could all join the party but they must not entertain any sectarian feelings.

Every member was to be free to eat anything he relished. He might be a strict vegetarian or a non-vegetarian. Nobody had any right to interfere in the liberty of another with regard to his right to eat.

The National anthem of the party would be the 'Bande Matram' from a song written and included in a novel 'Anandamath' by the famous Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, which was later to become the rallying slogan of the Indian National Congress also.

The Ghadar Party had an international outlook, too.<sup>9</sup> It was to fight not only for Indian independence, but also to assist the freedom struggles being waged in other countries. It was "to prepare the means for a military enterprise and assist armed rebellion in Ireland and other British Dominions beyond the seas."<sup>10</sup>

\* Quoted from the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Part III A(3) The Objects of going to India, page, 3.

\* Statement given to the writer by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna (First President of the Ghadar Party) of Village & Post Office Bhakna, District Amritsar and Dr. Bhagwan Singh Gyani of Village and Post Office Wrang, District Amritsar dated 18th March, 1951, and Ghadar Party Golden Jubilee celebrations at Jullundur on the 31st March & 1st April, 1964. Welcome Address of Baba Gurmukh Singh, published in the "*Tribune*" of 1st April, 1964.

<sup>10</sup> San Francisco Case Judgement dated the 7th July, 1917 page, 2 and 3 (For Northern District of California).

### Duties and Obligations of Membership

The members of the Ghadar Party were to discharge the following duties :

They were to help physically and morally the freedom struggles launched in any part of the world, and be everywhere sympathisers of liberty and equality.

They were to make every sacrifice, physical, mental and financial for the attainment of Indian Independence and not to hesitate from doing anything in that way.

They were to expel the despotic and autocratic British Government in India and establish republican government. In fact to work for the abolition of the British rule in India was the first and the foremost duty of every member of the Ghadar Party.

They were not to retreat from the ideals of the party, even against repeated defeats. The Ghadar Party was to continue the fight to the last man.

They were under obligation to place their lives and properties at the disposal of the party. According to the statement of Baba Kartar Singh Latala, Lal Hardyal imposed another condition on the members in the first meeting of the party that only the unmarried could join the party,<sup>11</sup> though later this condition was not strictly observed. It was in observance of this condition or obligation that Baba Kartar Singh Latala never married, though he has lived to be over eighty at present. It appears that Lala Hardyal meant to impose this condition mainly on the Indian students in American Universities.

The principles of the Ghadar Party and the duties of its members indicate the secular and national character of the Ghadar movement. According to the statement of Nawab Khan (approver) "The Ghadar Party is not against Islam. The Muslim and the Sikh members of the Ghadar Party take their meals together and nobody objects."<sup>12</sup> The following extracts from the 'Echo of Mutiny' can be quoted to testify to the non-parochial character of the Ghadar Party movement :

1. "We do not need Pandits and Kazis,  
for we do not want our ship to be sunk.

The time for prayer and recitation is gone; the hour for

<sup>11</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Kartar Singh of Village and Post Office Latala District Ludhiana Punjab, dated the 26th February, 1961.

<sup>12</sup> Mandalay Case (Burma) No. I Judgement Evidence dated the 27th July, 1916, page, 48.

- raising the sword has arrived.”<sup>13</sup>
2. “You have indulged excessively in sectarian conflict, and neglected the interest of the nation.
- In your simplicity, you have ignorantly raised disputes between Veda and Kuran.
- Your discords have ruined the nation, and you are so unwise as not to understand this.
- Your temples and mosques are crumbling down, where is the power of your religion or creed?
- At what are you so puffed up about, even knives and daggers have been snatched away from you?
- You have sworn to abstain from beef and bacon, while the white in your midst consume both freely Hindus and Muslims, refrain from these quarrels, awarness of your land and nation.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Echo of Mutiny* (Ghadar Di Gunj) No. 1, 1914, page, 4 (Yugantar Ashram, San Francisco).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, page, 17.

# 6

## *The Plan and programme of the Ghadar Party*

At a meeting held on the 21st April, 1913 at Astoria (Oregon) it was decided that the central headquarters of the Ghadar Party should be set up at San Francisco (California). There were several reasons why San Francisco was regarded as the most suitable centre for the party. First, Lala Hardyal was residing there and most of the Indians were employed in California State. Secondly, this town was an important centre of economic and political activity in the western part of America. Thirdly, it was a port and as such provided easy contacts with the revolutionaries of other countries. Lastly, the revolutionaries of other countries, like China, Ireland, Poland and Russia, who had fled from the prosecution of their governments had come here and formed revolutionary societies to work for the liberation of their countries. Thus it was a sort of capital of the revolutionary Movements of the world. Accordingly house No. 436, Hill Street, was rented at San Francisco (California) for the Central Office. It was named Yugantar Ashram (Hermitage of the changing era) or the Ghadar Ashram. The office of the Ghadar Party remained here till 1918, when the party built its own building at 5, Wood Street, in the same town.

### **Issue and Aim of the Paper 'Ghadr'**

In the first resolution passed at Astoria (Oregon) on the 21st April, 1913, it had been resolved that a weekly paper the 'Ghadr' should be published in different Indian languages. Lala Hardyal was entrusted with this work, which he could not execute till November 1913, owing to indifferent health. The first issue of this paper was published on the 1st November, 1913 in Urdu. In January 1914, it came to be published in Punjabi as well. Later its publication was extended to other languages, like Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi.

According to Gyani Bhagwan Singh,<sup>1</sup> at one time the 'Ghadr' was published in nine languages, including English.

Lala Hardyal was the editor of the 'Ghadr'. Kartar Singh Sarabha and Reghbir Dyal Gupta were his assistants in the beginning. Kartar Singh Sarabha was associated with the 'Ghadr' right from its first issue.<sup>2</sup> Gupta did the job of writing the 'Ghadr' in Urdu and Sarabha in Punjabi. Later on Harnam Singh (Kotla Naudh Singh), Pandit Jagat Ram, Prithvi Singh, Mehbub Ali, Inayat Khan, Khem Chand, Kartar Singh Latala, P.S. Khankhoje and Hari Singh Usman joined them. Khem Chand gave the 'Ghadr' a Gujarati, P.S. Khan Khoje a Marathi, and Pt. Jagat Ram a Hindi rendering. After Lala Hardyal had fled to Germany, Ram Chandra took his place and Bhagwan Singh and Barkatulla joined him. After only three issues, the demand for the 'Ghadr' increased so much that the cyclostyle machine could not meet it. Therefore, another house,<sup>3</sup> was rented, where an electric litho printing machine was installed.

According to the trial court of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case, the 'Ghadr' was 'a frankly revolutionary paper.'<sup>4</sup> The chief aim of the paper was to prepare the Indians in the U.S.A. and other countries for a revolutionary insurrection in India. The poems published in the 'Ghadr' from time to time bear testimony to this objective. The following extracts from these poems deserve notice :

"The time to draw the sword has come—the time has come to wage war—the time has come to set up rebellion, let us jump into the battle-field."

"Make rapid preparations for mutiny, so that every trace of this iron rule may be obliterated."

"Deputations have ended in smoke—take up the sword and shield in your hands."

"Fight for the country—kill the whites."<sup>5</sup>

The 'Ghadr' was distributed free of charge among Indians in America. After some time the circulation of the paper was extended

<sup>1</sup> Interview by the author with Gyani Bhagwan Singh of Village & Post office Wrang, District Amritsar dated the 18th March, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Part III A(1) The Beginning of Conspiracy & War page, 4.

<sup>3</sup> This House was No. 1324 in Valencia Street (San Francisco).

<sup>4</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III A(3) The Objects of going to India, page, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, page, 2.

to other countries, like Canada, Japan, China, The Phillipines, Malaya, Siam, Argentina, Panama, England and India. In 1916, its publication rose to ten lakhs a week. In the initial stages the paper could be sent to India without much difficulty but afterwards the Government of India became very strict, banned its entry in India and searches were made of the parcels and other luggage coming from the U.S.A. In order to overcome this difficulty, Lala Hardyal, according to the statement of Baba Kartar Singh Latala, proposed the plan that :

"A secret press should be installed somewhere near the Punjab. The 'Ghadr' should be despatched to an Indian cloth firm in England. That firm should send it in its parcels to its office at Delhi. From Delhi, our representative should collect it. It should be published in bulk in that secret press and thus be circulated in India. Bhagat Singh and I left for India for this purpose in July 1914, but due to the early beginning of the war, we could not implement this scheme in India."<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the 'Ghadr', the Ghadar Party published some other literature as well in the form of booklets issued from time to time. Notable among these were the 'Ghadr Di Gunj' (The Echo of Mutiny), the 'Ghadr Sandesa' (Message of Ghadar) and 'Ilan-i-Jang' (The Declaration of war).

Usually an issue of the 'Ghadr' consisted of eight pages, and had some regular features. On the first page, it displayed articles exposing British exploitation of India and other political stunts of the British. One page was devoted to the reproduction of material from V.D. Savarkar's 'The Indian War of Independence, 1857'. Half a page was used for discussion of problems of Indians in the United States. Each issue contained articles on important events in India, an article entitled "A Rough Account of the British Raj" and some poems usually of a seditious nature. The last page dealt with charges against the British rule under fourteen heads, which continued to be the same during its existence. A few of the items designed to exhort people to join the party are cited here.

"1. The English are dragging away 50 crores of rupees every year from India to England. 3. For the education of 24 crores of

Statement given to the writer by Baba Kartar Singh Latala of Village and Post Office Latala District Ludhiana (Punjab), dated the 26th February, 1961.

Baba Kartar Singh was an active worker of the Ghadar Party. He also worked as a Machine-man in the Ghadar Party Press.

persons the expenses are 7½ crores and for sanitation two crores, but for the army 29½ crores are spent. 4. Famines are increasing and within the last ten years two crores of men, women and children have died of hunger. 11. Expeditions have been sent against Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, Persia and China with the money of India and at the sacrifice of lives of Indians only. . . 14. Fifty seven years have passed since the mutiny of 1857 and another is urgently needed now.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Part played by the ‘Ghadar’ in the Ghadar Movement

The ‘Ghadar’ played a very important part in the movement. In fact, it was the pivot of all the activities of the Ghadar Party in the initial stages. In order to fulfil the purpose for which it existed, it published the notices of proposed meetings of the Party. For example, the issue of the ‘Ghadar’ of the 23rd December, 1913, announced the holding of a meeting of the Party at Sacramento (California) on the 31st December, 1913, in which an address by Hardyal on ‘Patriotism’ was to be given. Similarly, a meeting was held at Stockton (California) on the 15th February, 1914, the circular of which was published in the issue of the ‘Ghadar’ dated 27th January, 1914. The decisions made at various meetings were published in subsequent issues of the ‘Ghadar.’

The ‘Ghadar’ was also instrumental in the creation of national consciousness among the Indians living abroad who were previously without this consciousness. The already politically conscious Indian immigrants in foreign countries were led into organisation on revolutionary lines. It preached the formation of secret societies. It said in one of the poems published in it, “Establish secret societies.” “Let us form a secret society of those who prefer death and make the foundation firm by opening branches everywhere.”<sup>8</sup>

The ‘Ghadar’ also provided a link between the Indian immigrants in the U.S. and other countries and kept the protagonists of the party informed about its programme and activities. It exhorted Indians abroad to work for the national cause. Some extracts

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by the Indian Sedition Committee Report 1918 Calcutta (1918) page, 168, and

Home Department Government of India (Political A) Proceedings for January, 1914 Nos. 42-43. Copy of the Translation of the contents of the Ghadr dated the 1st November, 1913, page, 3 & 4.

<sup>8</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III A(1) *The beginning of the Conspiracy and War*, page, 5.

from the articles published in the 'Ghadar' deserve to be noted :

"Rise, O Lions, pluck up courage

Serve your country and perform your duty. The enemy is swallowing you . . . ."<sup>9</sup>

"Rise, rise. Set out for your country. Prepare for a mutiny"

"It is our duty to prepare for a big mutiny and to drive the Europeans out of the country."<sup>10</sup>

This the 'Ghadar' instilled a revolutionary spirit and zeal in Indians abroad and prepared them for armed national revolution for achieving independence. In the judgement in the First Lahore Conspiracy case, the findings, about the role of the 'Ghadar' also throw light on the part played by it in the Ghadar Movement. "It advocated going to India with the express object of creating a rising in conjunction with the enemies of the Empire, and advocated the murdering of all Europeans and loyal Indian subjects and it advocated the overthrow of the existing Government and the founding of a republic." "According to the Indian Sedition Committee Report, the 'Ghadar' was "of a violent anti-British nature, playing on every passion, which it could possibly excite, preaching murder and mutiny in every sentence, and urging all Indians to go to India with the express object of committing murder, causing revolution and expelling the British Government by any and every means."<sup>11</sup>

Another poem, which has been called sanguinary by the trial court of Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, was found in accused Nand Singh's pocket book. It can also be quoted to illustrate the manner in which 'The Ghadr' exhorted Indians abroad to lay down their lives for national independence.

"Kill or die" . . . . It runs . . . . "The Government of these tyrants will not last much longer . . . . The time of its departure has come . . . . Let us kill the whites. Take the country even at the cost of your lives . . . . Be ready for a rebellion . . . Kill the wicked and tyrannic European . . . . It is very easy to kill him. Do not leave any trace of him. Do not leave him till you have taken his life. Extricate the whole nation . . . set fire to all the churches . . . kill,

<sup>9</sup> Home Department, Govt. of India (Political A) Proceedings for January 1914 numbers 42-43, Copy of the Translation of the contents of the 'Ghadar' dated the 1st November, 1913, page, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Part III A(3) The Objects of going to India. page, 2 & 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Part III A(3) The Object of going to India. page, 1.

<sup>12</sup> The Indian Sedition Committee Report 1918, Calcutta (1918) page, 145-146.

all Europeans, men and women, show no mercy . . . kill them to finish . . . Sacrifice them on the altar of the sword . . . Spare neither parents nor offspring . . . You should flay Europeans alive, so that they may remember it for ages to come . . . Without a rebellion our lives will always be unhappy. Make a rebellion hastily, you have not more than a year at your disposal. Kill the whites and fill the rivers with their corpses. We will go up to England shouting kill, kill.”<sup>13</sup> About the important part played by the paper in the movement Sir Michael O’Dwyer comments the ‘Ghadar’ newspaper was used to spread the gospel of revolt among the people in the Punjab and the Indians abroad.”<sup>14</sup>

### A Vague Plan of Action

The Ghadar Party had, however, no clearly chalked out plan of action. According to Bhai Parmanand, the Ghadarites were so swayed by the passion for freedom that without paying due attention to the formulation of a proper plan of action, they returned to India.<sup>15</sup> The inexperience of the Ghadarites and the too early (for their plan) outbreak of the First World War were other impediments in the formulation of a plan. This last was, perhaps, the most important cause. According to the statement of Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat, “the Ghadar Party leaders anticipated the outbreak of the War in 1920”<sup>16</sup>. When Gyani Bhagwan Singh, came to the Phillipines for recruitment of volunteers for revolution, he said that “the revolution in India was to be started in 1917 but owing to the outbreak of war, it will have to be launched soon.”<sup>17</sup> Thus the Ghadar Party expected that it would have about four to seven years at its disposal for finalising a suitable plan of action. In view of these unfavourable factors, it is wrong to say that the Ghadarites had no plan of action at all. They did have a plan, however vague, as is evident from the records of the conspiracy cases.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Part III A (3) The objects of going to India, page, 3.

<sup>14</sup> O’Dwyer, Sir Michael ; *India as I knew it. (1885 to 1925)* London, (1925) page, 190.

<sup>15</sup> Bhai Parmanand *The Story of my Life.* (English rendering) The Central Hindu Yuval Sabha Lahore (1934), page, 70.

<sup>16</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat of Village & Post Office Kotla Naudh Singh Distt. Hoshiarpur dated the 12th January, 1961.

<sup>17</sup> Home Department, Government of India (Political) Proceedings, April, 1915 No. 416-19. Report on Internal Political situation page, 21, and San Francisco Trial, (1917) Testimony of Witnesses, page, 179.

Although the party had a plan to liberate the whole of India, yet according to the plan of action, India was to be liberated in stages. For they knew that the organisations in India, except for a few groups in Bengal, were not of a revolutionary nature. The Ghadarites depended on the Indian army most, because it was easier for them to seduce the troops, as 75 per cent of the members of the party were ex-soldiers. Accordingly, North India was selected first for the proposed armed insurrection. In the Northern part, too, it was decided that one province should be liberated first and it should be used as a base for the liberation of other provinces.

According to the statement of D. Chenchiah, "After deep deliberation, considering the feeble resources at our disposal, we finally decided to embark upon liberating Kashmir to start with. Kashmir was preferred, because the social, religious and economic inequalities between the ruling class and the ruled were very wide in Kashmir. The masses were Muslims but the ruling class consisted of a small minority of the Hindus who monopolised trade and banking. They, Hindu minority, controlled the entire economy of Kashmir. The masses, i.e., the Muslim peasants were ignorant, poor, helpless and were exploited by the powerful minority who formed less than 10 per cent of the total population. We considered the Ghadar party could easily rouse the masses of Kashmir against their exploiters and thus bring about a revolution."<sup>18</sup> Having liberated Kashmir, the plan was to liberate the North-West Frontier, then the Panjab, the U.P. and so on. Since the Ghadarites did not think the war was so near, it was resolved by them that they must declare Kashmir a republic in 1925. Accordingly on the large map of India hanging on the wall in the Yugantar Ashram, the boundaries of Kashmir were marked in red ink prominently and on it was written in bold letters "Republic of Kashmir in 1925."<sup>19</sup> It was further planned to attack and approach Kashmir through China.

#### **Aspects of that Plan**

That plan of action had two aspects. First, to give the final

<sup>18</sup> Statement given by D.Chenchiah, 6 Arulamul Street, T.Nagar, Madras dated 24th September, 1956—Typescript, page, 9.  
(Through the Courtesy of the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* page 10.

blow to the British Government in India at the time when it would be involved in War with some other big powers and the bulk of the British troops would be absent from India. Secondly, to take whatever assistance they could get from anti-British powers.

The Ghadar Party leaders knew as early as in 1913 that war was inevitable between Germany and Great-Britain. At the meeting held at Sacramento on the 31st December, 1913, Lala Hardyal had said that "Germany was preparing to go to War with England and that it was time to get ready to go to India for the coming revolution." It is significant that as early as in December, 1913, Hardyal was aware of "the contemplated designs of Germany, and suggests some connection between his efforts to raise a rebellion and that country."<sup>20</sup>

Before leaving America, at a meeting held on the 25th March, 1914, at San Francisco, Lala Hardyal announced that "he would go to Germany and prepare there for the coming mutiny (revolution)."<sup>21</sup> Similarly after the outbreak of the World War, but before the British joined it, Barkatulla told Nawab Khan (an approver in the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I) "Great Britain would be compelled to join in the War, and that rebellions would break out in Egypt, Ireland, South Africa and elsewhere and it was a splendid opportunity to go to India, seduce the troops and start the rebellion there."<sup>22</sup>

Acting upon these considerations, the Ghadarites established contacts with the German Consul at San Francisco. At the meeting held at Sacramento on the 31st December, 1913, the German consul was a special invitee. Evidently they wanted to organise an insurrection at a time when Britain was to be engaged in War so that the capacity of the British to deal with insurrection in India may be minimised. Moreover, their plan included seeking foreign help, particularly from Germany in order to achieve independence. For instance, in the issue of the 'Ghadar' dated the 15th November, 1913, it was said "The Germans have great sympathy for our movement for liberty because they and ourselves have a common enemy (the English). In future, Germany can draw

<sup>20</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III A(1) The beginning of the Conspiracy and War, page, 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* page, 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* page 107.

assistance from us and it can render us great assistance also.”<sup>23</sup>

### Strategy and Tactics

A military strategy was worked out by Santokh Singh, General Secretary of the party after Lala Hardyal and a member of the secret commission. He met the German Consul at San Francisco (California) and decided upon a plan, which was that the Turkish troops in conjunction with the Germans, should capture the Suez Canal and blockade it. Simultaneously the Ghadar Party should start revolution in India. This part of the strategy is also confirmed by a press report of the speech of the Turkish leader, Enver Pasha, published in a Turkish paper, “Jahan-i-Islam” dated the 20th November, 1914.

“This is the time that the Ghadar should be declared in India, the magazines of the English should be plundered, their weapons looted and they should be killed therewith. The Indians number 32 crores and at best the English are only 2 lakhs. They should be murdered. They have no army. The Suez Canal will shortly be closed by the Turks, but he who will die and liberate the country and his native land will live for ever.”<sup>24</sup>

Another aspect of the strategy and tactics was the organisation of the mutiny by Indian troops everywhere outside India in order to minimise the power of the British Government to suppress an insurrection in India. It was also a part of the military strategy to use America as a safe-base for the intended revolution.

### Programme and Tasks

The Ghadar Party decided upon a programme of giving military training to Indian immigrants in the U.S., particularly Indian students. The role marked out for the students in the plans of the Ghadar Party was considered quite important. The students drawn into the Ghadar movement were from all parts of the country, which imparted to it an all India character and made it a representative body of Indians. These pro-Ghadar students established a separate hostel at Berkeley named Nalanda, after the ancient Indian University. They used to spend the week ends at the Head Office, where they assisted the workers, in despatching

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part II, page, 24 & 25.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by the *Indian Sedition Committee* 1918 in its Report Calcutta—(1918) page, 169.

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Ghadar Party, who had come to reconnoitre the position. Their real purpose was recognised after their departure.”<sup>81</sup> The quote Sir Micheal O'Dwyer, “They were really advance-agents, though we did not know this at the time,— of the Ghadr Party.”<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Indian Sedition Committee Report, 1918, Calcutta (1918) page, 146.

<sup>82</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, *India As I knew it*, London (1925) page 191.

## 7

## *The Komagata Maru*

The voyage of the Komagata Maru was not sponsored by the Ghadar Party. But undeniably this incident influenced the Ghadar movement and deeply aroused anti-British feelings among Indians in the United States and Canada, if not, indeed, in India or the Punjab. Its immediate impact was seen in the preparations for the homeward return of the Ghadarites. In the findings of the trial court of the first Lahore Conspiracy case, it has been observed that "there is no doubt that this episode was seized upon to further inflame the excited feelings fanned by the 'Ghadar' newspaper."<sup>1</sup>

The high influx of Indians into Canada during the first decade of the 20th Century was much resented by the White labour. With a strong physique and hardworking and parsimonious habits, the Punjabi immigrants quickly made money and acquired landed properties, the value of which "amounted approximately to two crores and fifteen lacs of rupees, in 1908."<sup>2</sup> Enjoyment by Indians of equal privileges with Europeans was another cause of resentment, for in the opinion of most Europeans, it lowered the prestige of the White race. This resulted in pressure of various kinds on the Canadian Government to restrict the entry of Indians into Canada.

General Eric Swain, later Governor of British Honduras, declared that no Indian could be allowed to put up in a British colony and to make money through business. Immigration Laws were passed by the Canadian Government to prevent Asiatics from entering Canada, which affected the Indians most. In 1908 two Orders-in-Council, No. 920 and 926 were issued. Order-in-Council No. 920 laid down that all emigrants seeking entry into Canada must

<sup>1</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgement dated the 13th September 1951—Part III A(2) Preparing for the Migration, page, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta, First Edition, (Year not given), page, 8.

come by continuous journey and on through tickets from the country of their birth or citizenship.

Order No. 926 prescribed that no immigrant of Asiatic origin shall be permitted to enter Canada unless in actual possession of his or her own right of \$ 200 (Rs. 600/-) unless such a person was a native or subject of an Asiatic country in regard to which special statutory regulations were in force or with which the Government of Canada has made special treaty or convention.<sup>3</sup>

These measures affected the Indians most because, firstly there was no direct steamship service to Canada from India, and secondly, very few Indians could have 200 dollars in cash at the time of landing in Canada.

This caused "considerable disappointment among the Indians generally and in particular the Sikh Community, which furnished annually the greater number of emigrants."<sup>4</sup> They ascribed it, naturally, to their dependent status as colonial subjects of the British empire. On 9th May, 1910, the Canadian Government passed an Act enabling the immigration authorities to prohibit the entry of any Asiatic into Canada. The impact of these legislative measures on the Indians can also be judged from the fact that "in 1911 there came to Canada 11,132 Chinese and 2,986 Japanese, of whom 1037 were women. Only one Hindu (Indian) was allowed to land during the same period."<sup>5</sup>

Steps were also taken to deny Indians the right to move the courts against the decisions of the Canadian Immigration Department. A new section, 23, was added to the Canadian Immigration Act which read "No court, and no judge or officer thereof, shall have the jurisdiction to review, quash, reverse, restrain or otherwise interfere with any proceedings, decisions or orders of the Minister or any Board of Inquiry, or Officer Incharge made or given under the authority in accordance with provisions of this act relating to the detention or deportation of any ejected immigrant, passenger or other person upon any ground whatsoever, unless such person is a Canadian Citizen or has Canadian Domicile."<sup>6</sup>

The practical effect of this section was not only to stop new

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from Waiz. S.A. : *Indians Abroad*, Bombay (1927), page 666.

<sup>4</sup> Isemonger. F.C. & Slattery, J. *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919) page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Waiz, S.A. : *Indians Abroad* Bombay (1927) (These figures are given by the Dominion Medical Officer stationed at William Head, Near Victoria, B.C.) page, 659.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from Khushwant Singh, 'The Sikhs', London (1953) page, 125.

workers coming in, but also to prevent even the wives and children of those already in Canada from joining their husbands or parents. Indians protested against these laws and petitions were sent to the Imperial Conference in 1911 (London) where members of the British Common Wealth of Nations were meeting in 'equal partnership'. A delegation waited upon the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden and Mr. Robert Rogers, the Minister of Interior, but the Canadian Government stood by its orders No. 920 and 926.

In January, 1912, this general discontent was given a strong fillip, when the Immigration Department refused to admit the wives of two prominent members of the Indian Community at Vancouver, named Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh, who had brought them along on their return from India. Their deportation was ordered, they were arrested and sent on Board the *S.S. Monteagle*, on which they had come. But a writ of *Habeas Corpus* was obtained for them from the Supreme Court of British Columbia and they were released. Subsequently the Canadian Government admitted them 'as an act of grace', but "the attempt at exclusion formed a strong basis of an agitation against the inhumanity of separating husbands from their wives and children."<sup>7</sup>

Two societies, the 'United India League' and the 'Khalsa Dewan Society'<sup>8</sup> came forth to carry on agitation against this discrimination. On the 22nd February, 1913, in a joint meeting, they resolved to send a deputation of three representatives, viz, Nand Singh, a native of Phillaur in Jullundur District, Balwant Singh, and Narain Singh of Tikriwal, Police Station, Barnala, Patiala State to approach the home Government in London for removing disabilities on immigration. The deputation visited England in May 1913, but without fruitful result.

Some sympathetic Senators also moved the question of Indians in Canada in the Canadian Senate. On the 2nd June, 1913, Senator Douglas described the action of British Columbia towards the Indians as 'Unchristian, Un-British and Un-grateful.'<sup>9</sup> Similarly Senator Cloran and Senator Lower also condemned this ill-treatment of Indians.

The situation took a more serious turn, when on the 17th October, 1913, fifty-six Indians arrived at Victoria on the *S.S. Panama Maru* of the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (Victoria). Investiga-

<sup>7</sup> Isemonger F.C. and Slattery J., *An account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919) page, 3.

<sup>8</sup> These societies were formed in December (15th), 1911.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Waiz, S.A. : *Indians Abroad*, Bombay (1927). page, 663.

tion by the Immigration officials was made *in camera* on board the *Panama Maru*. Only 17 were allowed to land, though all of them had come by the most direct route. Again 39 deportation orders were issued. At the wharf their relatives were not allowed to see them. Two applications for the issue of writs of *Habeas Corpus* were submitted to Justice Murphy and then Chief Justice Hunter (of British Columbia High Court) for these 39 passengers. Justice Murphy dismissed the application under Section 23. On the other hand the Chief Justice held that he was not bound by Section 23. Mr. J.E. Bird acted as Counsel for the detained Indians. Bird contended that Order-in-Council No. 926 was *ultra vires*, because the statute only authorised the Governor-in-Council to require as a condition of landing that the immigrant must have in actual and personal possession of his own right the amount of money specified. He further argued that the Order-in-Council was bad in the case of a person, native or subject of an Asiatic country in regard to which special statutory regulations were in force or with which the Government of Canada had made a special treaty, agreement or convention. He contended further that there was an Imperial Act of Parliament of 1858 which conceded to natives of India special privileges giving them all rights of British citizenship and that it was operative in Canada.

He also claimed that the Order-in-Council No. 920 passed under section 38 of the Immigration Act was invalid, it was bad in law, he contended, because it was impossible for Indians to purchase a through ticket from India to Canada.

The Chief Justice ruled that the Orders-in-Council were invalid and *ultra vires*, because they exceeded the powers conferred by sections 37 and 38. Eventually the applicants were released and enabled to enter Canada.

The news of the Chief Justice's decision greatly heartened the Indian elements interested in entry into Canada. Under the inspiration of this ruling, Gurdit Singh,<sup>10</sup> a contractor at Singapore, thought of chartering a ship in order to comply with the provision of continuous journey and through tickets. But before him, too, some similar attempts were made.

In December, 1910, Udhai Ram Joshi and Devi Chand<sup>11</sup> attempted to fulfil that condition of through tickets. They negotia-

<sup>10</sup> From Village Sarhali, District Amritsar, Punjab.

<sup>11</sup> Udhai Ram Joshi and Devi Chand were from Ludhiana and Hissar respectively.

ted with the Hong Kong agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway and persuaded them to instruct their Calcutta Agents to sell them through tickets via Hong Kong to Vancouver. They submitted to the Calcutta bank over a thousand pounds to provide emigrants with forty pounds each which were however intercepted.<sup>12</sup> Similarly in 1911 and 1912, some such attempts were made but without result.

#### **Hiring of a Japanese Steamer, the Komagata Maru, by Gurdit Singh and its departure for Canada**

Gurdit Singh had emigrated from India 15 years before and carried on business as a contractor in Singapore and the Malay States. He returned to this country (India) in about 1909. While returning he interested himself in chartering a ship for conveyance of Punjabis to Canada.<sup>13</sup> "Indeed this very project is believed to have been discussed by the Sikh delegates from Canada, while in the Punjab."<sup>14</sup> But he could not get a ship from Calcutta.

The Indians in Canada felt the need of making shipping arrangements for meeting the condition of continuous journey. Indian passengers returning from Canada and America started discussing such a scheme with the people at Singapore, Malaya, Shanghai and Manila. Eventually this plan was discussed by some of them with Baba Gurdit Singh at Hong Kong. In order to meet this demand, as also, of course, to make money, Gurdit Singh decided to charter a ship.

The launching of such an enterprise was not the outcome of Gurdit Singh's brain alone. It was decided upon by him on inspiration and advice generally of Indians in Canada. The proceedings of the Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India throw some light on this. "It is said that many (Canada) domiciled Hindus, who under the instructions by Immigration Department to the shipping companies, were refused passage to this country, jointly chartered a vessel and under the management of Bhai Gurdit Singh, have headed for Vancouver."<sup>15</sup> This has been endorsed even by the Director of Criminal Intelligence in his report of the 8th May, 1914, submitted to the Government of India.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Department of Industry and Commerce, Government of India Part A proceedings. December 1910, No. 2, Page 555.

<sup>13</sup> Indian Sedition Committee, 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918) page 147.

<sup>14</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919) page 36.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry Government of India Emigration B Proceedings, July 1914 Nos. 13-15 page 16 and 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, Proceedings, September 1914, No. 47 page 4 and 5.

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry Government of India Emigration B Proceedings, July 1914 Nos. 13-15 page 16 and 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, Proceedings, September 1914, No. 47 page 4 and 5.

This is corroborated by Baba Gurdit Singh when he says, "I went to Hong Kong in 1913. At Hong Kong a 'Sabha' was held in December 1913, where a proposal of chartering a steamship of our own was discussed."<sup>17</sup>

On the 29th January, 1914, the Gurudwara Sabha, Hong Kong, sent a telegram to Gurdit Singh. Subsequently the Guru Nanak Steamship Co., was formed, and Gurdit Singh was put incharge. He came to Calcutta and issued a poster<sup>18</sup> under the authority of the Managing Director of the Guru Nanak Steamship Co., for taking a ship direct to Canada. But the Government of India did not permit him to take passengers from Calcutta and he returned to Hong Kong.

On the 24th March, 1914, a Japanese vessel, the *Komagata Maru*, was chartered by Gurdit Singh through a German Agent, A, Bone, at Hong Kong. Before leaving for Canada, Gurdit Singh satisfied himself about the legality of his voyage. He consulted three foremost counsels of Hong Kong, viz. C.D. Williamson, E.J. Orit and C.E.H. Devis, who furnished the following advice.

"Referring to your interview with us this afternoon when you enquired whether there were any restrictions upon Indians who wish to travel to Vancouver, so far as this country is concerned, we have to advise you that in our opinion there are no restrictions upon immigration by Indians from the colony, unless they are under contract of service."<sup>19</sup> It must be pointed out here that no intending passenger was under any contract of service.

Gurdit Singh had hopes of collecting 500 passengers, but on the 25th March, 1914, he was arrested all of a sudden and his office was taken possession of by the Hong Kong police authorities. However, nothing objectionable was found with him and he was released on bail. On the 28th March, 1914, he was produced in Court but the case against him was withdrawn by the Police. By this strategem, however, the authorities succeeded in intimidating a larger number of intending passengers to give up the idea of their projected voyage. Consequently only one hundred and sixty five passengers enlisted from Hong Kong.

The ship left Hong Kong on the 4th April, 1914. It reached

<sup>17</sup> Gurdit Singh '*Voyage of Kamagata Maru*', Calcutta, First Edition (Year not given) page 15 & 16.

<sup>18</sup> This poster was published on the 13th February, 1914.

<sup>19</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta, First Edition (Year not given) page, 20.

Shanghai on the 8th April, where it picked up 111 more passengers. It steamed out of Shanghai port on the 14th, reaching Moji port (Japan) on the 19th April. From there it took 86 passengers, most whom had come from Manila. It reached Yokohama (Japan) on the 28th. There it took on board 14 more passengers, thus making a total of 376 passengers on the *Komagata Maru*. It reached Victoria Port on the 21st May, where it arrived at Vancouver during the dark on the 22nd May, 1914.<sup>20</sup>

"From the time the passengers went on Board the *Komagata Maru*, they were addressed in seditious language and were advised to rise against the British, if their entry to Canada was prevented."<sup>21</sup> On the way they were supplied with copies of the 'Ghadar' at various ports. At Yokohama, Balwant Singh (one of the delegates who had visited India earlier), Bhagwan Singh and Maulvi Barkat Ullah, Indian revolutionary in Japan, all active members of the Ghadar Party, met the passengers.

### **III-treatment of Indian Passengers of the Komagata Maru in Canada and Prohibition on Landing**

Before the ship arrived at Vancouver, the Canadian Government had made up its mind not to allow the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* to land. Neither Gurdit Singh nor his subordinates were allowed to deliver at the harbour master's office a true and full report of the ship immediately. The port officials prohibited all passengers, except Dr. Raghunath and Bhan Singh, a student, for they failed, in their opinion, to fulfil the conditions laid down by the regulations of the Dominion of Canada.

According to rules, a person travelling direct from his home to Canada and having \$ 200 in his possession was entitled to land, but the following classes of persons were exempted from the said restrictions : Preachers, traders, students, tourists, and government officials. There were about 50 persons belonging to the above exempted categories, viz. preachers (Granthis, Maulvis), students and traders also. Even they too were not allowed to land.

Gurdit Singh had to unload and load cargo, but this also was not permitted. He asked for permission to seek legal advice, but it was likewise denied. The passengers were not allowed even to

<sup>20</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta First Edition (Year not given), page 45.

<sup>21</sup> Isemonger F.C. and Slattery J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 37.

see their fellow countrymen at Vancouver. Eventually an appeal against the order of the Immigration Department was lodged in case of one passenger, named Mansa Singh, as a test case. A committee was formed by the Indian immigrants in Canada on shore, known as the "Shore Committee." It consisted of five members<sup>22</sup> and the ship's charter was transferred to two of its members. The last instalment of the charter-money of the ship mounting to \$ 22,000 was also paid by them.

They engaged a legal counsel, Mr. J. Edward Bird, to fight the case. But before the start of the legal battle, Inspector Hopkinson of the Immigration Department came to see Gurdit Singh. Having conversed with him confidentially, he promised to help Gurdit Singh on payment of £ 2,000 as gratification. Gurdit Singh agreed to pay, provided the hardships of the passengers were removed. Consequently it was agreed that £ 1,000 be paid in advance and the remainder when all passengers had landed. The settlement could not be implemented as Mr. Hopkinson wanted Gurdit Singh to keep it a secret, which Gurdit Singh refused. Consequently Mr. Hopkinson left the ship threatening. Perhaps this made the Immigration officials more hostile to the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* than would have been the case otherwise.

Their legal counsel was not allowed to interview the passengers. So he had to fight the case without relevant facts and instructions from his clients. This resulted in decision of deportation of all the passengers.<sup>23</sup> This all goes to show that the decision was not governed by any legal principles, but was given as a part of the national policy of Canada. The advice of the legal counsel tendered to Gurdit Singh also bears testimony to this view. 'It is not a legal question now, but has become largely a question of national policy of vital importance not only to the Government of this country but also involves conflicting imperial interests.<sup>24</sup>

The passengers suffered very much due to shortage of food, drinking water and other necessaries and absence of medical aid, which further added to their difficulties in execution of their plans. The Canadian authorities refused the supply of eatables and other

<sup>22</sup> These members were Bhag Singh, Hussain Rahim, Balwant Singh, Sohan Lal and Umrao Singh. The Charter of the ship was transferred to Bhag Singh and Hussain Rahim.

<sup>23</sup> The case of Mansa Singh was dismissed on the 17th July, 1914.

<sup>24</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta First Edition (year not given) page, 19.

provisions. Gurdit Singh gave the following telegram<sup>25</sup> to the king of Britain.

"No provision since four days. Reid refuses supply charterer and passengers starving. Kept prisoners. Gurdit Singh."<sup>26</sup>

In response to Gurdit Singh's telegram, a telegram was sent from Buckingham Palace to Canada. The Governor General of Canada wired the following reply.<sup>27</sup>

"Provisions supply started. Lawyers permitted to interview. Cargo allowed to unload."<sup>28</sup> But action according to this telegram started much later.

The case having been decided against the passengers, they agreed to leave on the conditions that they should be supplied with provisions for the return journey.

The immigration authorities refused this and ordered the ship to leave for India at once.<sup>29</sup> This attempt on the part of the authorities to force the passengers to commence their journey without provisions roused the starving passengers, who all belonged to the Punjab. They locked the captain of the ship in his cabin and refused to set sail.

A steam-boat, the 'Sea Lion,' came ashore on the 18th of July, 1914 carrying a large contingent of police force.<sup>30</sup> The police attempted to take possession of the ship in order to enforce the orders of the Canadian Government. "Some of them fired at the passengers without the slightest warning."<sup>31</sup> The unarmed and semi-starved passengers fought against the police using lumps of coal as weapons. Eventually the police were beaten back. The Indian Sedition Committee reports that "with the assistance of fire-arms, the police were beaten off."<sup>32</sup> But this has not been accepted by Baba Gurdit Singh in his "Voyage of Komagata Maru". Mr. S.A. Waiz endorses the statement of Gurdit Singh, in 'Indians Abroad', when he states, "They (Passengers) beat back the police

<sup>25</sup> This telegram was sent on 7th June, 1914.

<sup>26</sup> Department of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. Emigration A. Proceedings September, 1914 No. 13-15, page, 4.

<sup>27</sup> The Wire was sent on the 10th June 1914.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. Emigration A Proceedings, September 1914 No. 13-15, page, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Waiz, S.A. : *Indians Abroad*, Bombay (1927) page, 670.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, page, 670. This Police contingent had one hundred-five policemen including of the Police Chief and four Inspectors.

<sup>31</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta 1st Edition page, 104.

<sup>32</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918) page, 147.

men with fire-bricks and lumps of coal.”<sup>33</sup> Gurdit Singh states that Dr. Raghunath, one of the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* who was allowed to land, had come with the police party against his own countrymen.

In this ‘fight’ one of the passengers received a bullet wound from a pistol and two or three others were slightly hurt. The police, too, had small cuts and wounds.

The news of this fight was flashed all over the world. It was described by the Vancouver papers as the battle of Burrard inlet.<sup>34</sup> It even aroused racial feelings. ‘England was informed which sanctioned the use of the force to send us back.’<sup>35</sup>

On the night of the 20th July, 1914, a 3,600 ton cruiser, the *Rainbow* slipped quietly into Vancouver harbour and anchored alongside the *Komagata Maru*. Next morning when the passengers woke up, they found the *Rainbow*’s two 6 inch and six 4 inch guns trained on them. According to Baba Gurdit Singh, 30,000 militia men were arranged.<sup>36</sup>

This sad plight of their countrymen inflamed the minds of Indians all over the world. In America, Indian labourers and farm-hands left their work and rushed to Vancouver. The passengers had now two alternatives before them, to submit and go back without food and water and die of starvation on the high seas, or to defy the orders and die with the guns of the warship at the door of Canada. After discussion they decided to give a fight as far as they could, failing which they would set the ship on fire and burn themselves alive.<sup>37</sup>

The Commander of the force sent a message, “Leave our shore, you uninvited Indians or we fire”. The reply of the passengers was “If Canada will allow us to provision the ship we will go, otherwise, fire, we prefer death here than on the high seas.”<sup>38</sup>

Indians in Canada could not remain unmoved at this sad news. They assembled in the Gurdwara at Vancouver on the evening of the 21st July, 1914, passed a resolution and took a

<sup>33</sup> Waiz, S.A. : *Indians Abroad*, Bombay (1927) page 670.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted from Khushwant Singh : *The Sikhs*, London (1953) page, 15.

<sup>35</sup> Gurdit Singh : *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta First Edition page, 106.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, page, 107.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, page, 107.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, page, 108.

solemn vow, that if the ship was fired at, they would set fire to the city of Vancouver, "Duties were allotted to each man so that as soon as the *Komagata Maru* is on fire, so will be the city of Vancouver and all in it."<sup>39</sup>

#### **Return of the Komagata Maru Without being permitted to stop at Hong Kong and Singapore**

This intention of the Indians residing at Vancouver leaked out to the Government and the officials changed their mind. Accordingly, on the 22nd of July, 1914, the steamer was fully provisioned. After remaining for two months in Canadian Waters, the ship left Vancouver on her homeward voyage on the 23rd July, 1914, at 5.00 a.m. By this time the passengers were in a very bad temper, as many had staked all their possessions on this venture and had started in the full belief that the British Government would assure and guarantee their admission to a land of plenty. "This temper had been greatly aggravated by direct revolutionary influences. They were supplied some arms also by the Ghadar Party at Vancouver."<sup>40</sup> Gyani Bhagwan Singh states that he had bought 270 pistols with 500 cartridges each in the U.S.A. in order to deliver them to members of the party travelling by the *Komagata Maru* in Japan. The pistols were delivered through Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna at Yokohama (Japan)."<sup>41</sup> In the meanwhile war had broken out. On reaching Yokohama (Japan) on the 16th August, Gurdit Singh received a letter from the Government at Hong Kong informing him that it was considered inadvisable that any of the passengers should land at Hong Kong. Threats were given to enforce a local vagrancy ordinance against anyone who might attempt to land. Even the former residents of Hong Kong were not exempted. The ship then proceeded to Kobe on the 18th, where it reached on the 21st August and was paid a sum of 9,000 (Yen) by the British Consul General at Kobe(Japan) for the cost of provisions on the voyage from Kobe (on instructions from the Government of India) to Calcutta.

The ship left Kobe on the 3rd September and reached Singapore on the 26th September. Here also no passenger was allowed to land and people, like Gurdit Singh himself, who had business interests at

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, page, 110.

<sup>40</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918, Report, Calcutta (1918), page, 148.

<sup>41</sup> Interview by the writer with Gyani Bhagwan Singh of village and Post Office Wrang, District Amritsar, Punjab dated the 18th March 1961.

Singapore, were compelled to run to India. This naturally increased their annoyance. The agents of the party smuggled copies of the 'Ghadar' on board the ship at the ports touched by it on its way back. The reading of the paper by the passengers further inflamed them.

#### **Arrival at Calcutta and Government's Attitudes towards Passengers**

The *Komagata Maru* reached Kilpi on the 26th September, 1914. The next day, several European officers came on board with 20 Punjabi policemen clad in mufti clothes. They carried out a thorough search of the ship and the belongings of the passengers. On the 28th of the same month fresh searches were instituted and at 11 00 a.m., the 29th of September the ship was moored at Budge Budge, 17 miles from Calcutta. According to Sir Micheal O'Dwyer "Unfortunately the search was perfunctory and many revolvers and much ammunition were brought ashore, either concealed on the persons or among the clothes, covering the *Granth Sahib* or *Sikh Bible*."<sup>42</sup>

By that time the Government had fully armed itself with two legislative measures, viz, the Foreigners' Ordinance and the Ingress Ordinance.<sup>43</sup> These ordinances empowered the Government to restrict the liberty of any person entering India after the 5th September, 1914.

A special train was arranged to take the incoming passengers to the Punjab and they were ordered to enter the train. But only six passengers actually got into the train. The others, nearly three hundred, refused. They had left their homes with all their possessions in the hope of earning livelihood abroad. They could not return as paupers to their villages, where some had even sold their homesteads. They wanted to look for employment in Calcutta or some other large city.

They tried to march to Calcutta in a procession with the *Granth Sahib* in their midst, singing hymns which mostly meant "Look down, oh, Heavenly Father, Oh just look down at our plight."<sup>44</sup> The police party and a strong military force with Sir

<sup>42</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Micheal : *India as I knew it*, London (1927) page, 193.

<sup>43</sup> The Foreigners Ordinance and the Ingress Ordinance were passed on the 29th August and the 5th September, 1914. respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata Maru*, Calcutta 1st Edition Part II, page, 41.

William Duke, then Home Member of the Bengal Government, wanted the passengers to return. The passengers refused to return and fire was opened on them by the police. A riot ensued and there was general discharge of fire arms from both sides. The passengers used American revolvers. Fifteen passengers and three policemen were killed and some of the British officials were wounded. Most of the passengers were rounded up in a few days, but thirty of them, including Gurdit Singh, escaped.

### **The Komagata Maru and the Ghadar Party**

The entire episode was used by the Ghadar Party to fan anti-British feelings in and outside India. In order to enlist support for the programme of the Ghadar party, it sent funds to the Vancouver Gurudwara Committee for carrying on propaganda in support of the *Komagata Maru* passengers. According to the statement of Baba Sohan Singh, copies of the 'Ghadar' were sent to these passengers in bundles of rations. A Government report also endorses this. "Bundles of the newspaper 'Ghadar' were brought on board."<sup>45</sup>

When the Ghadar Party head-quarters received the news that the ship was being forced to return, its secret commission met and decided to send Sohan Singh Bhakna to Yokohama (Japan) with the object of supplying arms and ammunitions to the passengers and asking them to prepare the ground for the implementation of the party's programme in India. Accordingly, Sohan Singh Bhakna left San Francisco on the 21st July, 1914, that is, two days before the departure of the ship with 100 revolvers along with bundles of ammunition, which were delivered to the passengers at Yokohama (Japan).

The treatment of the *Komagata Maru* passengers at Vancouver and on return at Budge Budge gave an impetus to the Ghadar movement abroad. According to Sir Micheal O'Dwyer, "It gave a powerful stimulus to the Ghadar propaganda already at work among them."<sup>46</sup> Regarding the impact of this episode on the Ghadar movement the Indian Sedition Committee in its report points out, "It inspired some Sikhs of the Punjab with the idea that the Government was biased against them, it strengthened the hands of the Ghadar revolutionaries who were urging Sikhs abroad to

<sup>45</sup> Home Department Government of India Political Proceedings for September, 1914. Nos. 211-224, page, 13.

<sup>46</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Micheal : *India as I knew it*, London (1925), page, 194.

return to India and join the mutiny, which they asserted, was about to begin. Numbers of emigrants listened to such calls and hastened back to India from Canada, the United States, the Philippines, Hong Kong and China.”<sup>47</sup>

The *Komagata Maru* affair affected not only the Ghadarites but all the Indian immigrants residing in Canada. According to the findings of the trial court of the Third Lahore Conspiracy Case, a large meeting was held in Dominion Hall, Vancouver, in which “it was declared that if the ship is returned, then Indians should go to India, turn out the British, and smash their heads like watermelons.”<sup>48</sup> In this connection an Indian leader writes, “If the *Komagata Maru* incident had not occurred, there would not have been such an awakening among the Indians in Canada and the United States”.<sup>49</sup>

The *Komagata Maru* helped the movement in yet another way also. Some of the passengers of the ship turned *pucca* Ghadarites after the incident, among whom special mention can be made of Baba Gurmukh Singh who worked in the Ghadar Party movement in India in later years.

<sup>47</sup> *The Indian Sedition Committee* 1918, Report Calcutta (1918), page, 148-149.

<sup>48</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. III Judgement dated the 14th January, 1917, page, 36.

<sup>49</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of My Life*, (English Rendering) The Central Hindu Yuval Sabha, Lahore (1934) page, 75.

## 8

## *The Outbreak of World War I and the Ghadarites*

The first World War broke out on the 28th July, 1914 in which the belligerents were the Central Powers and the Allies. The Central Powers consisted of Austria, Hungary, Germany and the allies included Serbia, Belgium and Great Britain. Thus Great Britain and Germany found themselves in opposite camps, fighting each other. This afforded an opportunity to the Ghadar Party to implement its programme.

The *Komagata Maru* left Vancouver (British Columbia) on the 23rd July, 1914, only five days before the war broke out and it is wrong to infer from this that the *Komagata Maru* incident made the Indians return to India with the resolve of starting an insurrection. It was only one of the factors favouring the home-ward return of the Ghadarites. As early as on the 31st December, 1913, Lala Hardyal had declared at a meeting at Sacramento, that "Germany was preparing to go to War with England and it was time to get ready to go to India for the coming revolution."<sup>1</sup> In April, 1914, an Englishman in Canada wrote a letter to his brother, a police officer in Bengal, stating that he had learnt from conversation with Indians in Vancouver that revolutionary party there were quite confident of bringing about a general rising in India within the next two years and were waiting until England should be entangled in a foreign War.<sup>2</sup> These facts show that the war

<sup>1</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement dated the 13th September, 1913 Part III A(1) The beginning of the Conspiracy and War, page, 5 and Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report Calcutta (1918) page, 146.

<sup>2</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of The Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore* (1919) page, 35.

was the chief cause of the Ghadarites' return home. They regarded it as an opportune moment to call for action.

Of course, the *Komagata Maru* episode also contributed towards the homeward move of the Ghadarites in August, 1914. In this connection Bhai Parmanand writes in his 'The Story of my Life'. "The news of this occurrence (*Komagata Maru* incident) produced a deep impression on the minds of Indians in America."<sup>8</sup> "If the *Komagata Maru* incident had not occurred, there would not have been such an awakening among the Indians in Canada and the United States."<sup>9</sup>

### Over Sanguineness of the Ghadarites

The Ghadarites learnt from American newspapers that the bulk of British troops were being despatched from India to the battlefields in France and elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> The Ghadar Party leaders were only waiting for such an opportunity and decided to seize it. The Ghadarites were over-sanguine, too, about the political situation in India. They hoped that the revolutionaries in India would rise to join them on their return. The Punjab Government reported to the Central Government in mid-December, 1914, that, "the majority of these (returned Punjabi emigrants) had returned expecting to find India in a state of acute unrest and meaning to convert this unrest into revolution."<sup>6</sup>

### Report of the Delegation sent to India

On the 22nd February, 1913, at a joint meeting of the 'United India League', and the 'Khalsa Dewan Society' (Vancouver), it was resolved to send a deputation of three representatives, Balwant Singh, Nand Singh and Narain Singh to seek redress for the grievances of Indians in Canada. This deputation first went to Ottawa and then to England. In London on the 14th May, 1913, a meeting was held at Caxton Hall, Westminister where resolutions were passed against the Orders-in-Council cited earlier. The deputation later visited India to rouse public sympathy for Indians in Canada. But in fact it was a deputation of Ghadar Party mem-

<sup>8</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of my Life* (English rendering) Lahore (1934) page, 68.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* page. 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* page. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from *Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report Calcutta (1918)* page. 150.

bers who came to India for surveying the political situation in India and preparing the ground for the plan of the Ghadar Party.<sup>7</sup>

The deputation met Indian leaders and the Government in India but secretly it preached sedition in Punjab. On its return, it reported that "they toured the whole of India, where they met several leaders. Arrangements have been made that if restrictions imposed on entry into Canada were not removed, Hindus, Muslims and all Indians will jointly make struggle to drive out the British from India."<sup>8</sup> This was an exaggerated view of the position in India but in this the Indian leaders also were to be blamed, who gave false promises to members of the deputation.

### **Homeward Move : Preparations for Return**

Immediately on the outbreak of the war, the Ghadarites started making preparations for a homeward move through mass meetings and the 'Ghadar'. At a meeting held at Oxford (California) on the 26th July, 1914, Bhagwan Singh and Barkatullah announced that 'the time for rebellion had come, and the British were to be expelled, as war in Europe had commenced.'<sup>9</sup> It was declared that great Britain would be forced into the war and it was a splendid opportunity to go to India, seduce the troops and start the rebellion there.<sup>10</sup> At meetings held at Fresno (California) and Sacramento (California) on the 9th and 11th August, 1914 respectively. Indians were exhorted to leave for India at once to join the revolution. At the Sacramento meeting funds to the tune of \$ 6000 were raised to buy passages and arms.

In the issue of the 'Ghadar' of the 4th August, 1914, an article headed, "A Bloody and Dangerous War in Europe" was published. It proclaimed 'O Hindus (Hindustanis) do not allow this opportunity to slip through your hands.'<sup>11</sup>

In the issue of the 'Ghadar' of the 4th August, 1914, another article 'The Trumpet of War' was published, which declared "War has started between Germany and England. Now is the chance

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* page, 146.

<sup>8</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. III Judgement dated the 4th January, 1917, page, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915. Part III A(1). The Beginning of the Conspiracy and War, page, 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* page, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Official Records of U.S. Government of Indians' Activities during War, File No. 9-10-3 Section 7, Memorandum on the 'Ghadar' page, 7.

for India's freedom—O brethern, take your freedom now. If you do not, you will remain slaves for ever. So, dear ones, raise your hands and start the mutiny. Go to India and incite the native troops. Preach mutiny openly. Take arms from the troops of native states and, wherever you see the British, kill them'.<sup>13</sup> The same issue had another article which concluded "Wake, O Hindus, rub your eyes ; open your minds. Store your wealth in the Ghadr office and register your name in the army of the Ghadr. Cleanse your blood. How(long) will you remain seated in lethargy ? Be ready to spring like tigers."<sup>14</sup>

In the issue of the 11th August, 1914, the following was published in an article captioned : "Opportunity for mutiny in India." "The Hindus should, wherever they are, start the mutiny. They should mutiny in China, they should mutiny in India, and then on all sides be heard the cry, "Kill the English, kill the English."<sup>15</sup>

At this time the Ghadar Party leaders and workers were summoned to Yugantar Ashram for a meeting.<sup>16</sup> At this meeting the discussion veered on what the Party should do at the time, having a start of hardly one year. The question before the party was : 'Should the enemy be attacked when he is entangled in war or should the opportunity be lost by sitting silent.'

Considering all the difficulties and weaknesses of the party, it was resolved that the party should not lose this opportunity, as it was better to fail in the attempt than to do nothing.

According to the statement of Gyani Bhagwan Singh a party commission meeting<sup>17</sup> was convened to reconsider and revise the plans disturbed by the advent of war. In this meeting the following three decisions were arrived at :

(i) "In the name of Indian nationalism we should declare open war-fare against British rule in India and proclaim India a free and sovereign Republic. Upto now agitation had been carried on by the intelligentsia against particular grievances or

<sup>13</sup> Official Records of U.S. Government on Indians' Activities during War, File No. 9-10-3 Section 7, Memorandum on the 'Ghadr' page, 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, page, 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, page, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Pandit Kanshi Ram from St. John, Kesar Singh and Karim Bax from Astoria, Udhram Singh Kasel from Wina, Shiv Singh from Bridal Veil, Kaku Singh from Portland, Jwala Singh from California and Harnam Singh and Balwant Singh from Canada.

<sup>17</sup> The meeting was held at 430 Hill Street, San Francisco on August 15, 1914.

for specific needs. Now it was decided to advocate and foster rebellion on a mass scale which would be difficult for the British to suppress by force or to defeat by bribing its leaders."

(ii) "All means should be used, every advantage taken, no matter from what quarter it may come. Connections should be established with active revolutionary movements of other countries and the central powers such as Germany, Austria, with nations whose interests and relations were in direct conflict with the British."

(iii) "The collection of funds, armaments etc, should be intensified and students sent to be trained in the military academies of other nations, whenever and wherever possible. Appeals should be made to Indians everywhere to proceed to India and start fighting for freedom."<sup>17</sup>

The Indian students were working on the farms during the summer vacation when the war broke out. Having heard of the war, they managed to meet together within a week at Berkeley and discussed the opportunity provided by it. They arrived at the following conclusions :

"The Ghadarites should now return, as many as possible, as soon as possible, join the British Indian Army, and thus prepare their people for armed revolts. Those who could not join the army should carry on underground work and organise for the purpose of printing and dissemination of propaganda literature, securing recruits, arms and ammunitions, and carry on Guerrilla War."

"It would be possible, thus, to prevent the Indian armies being diverted to Europe to fight the enemies of Britain."

"If the British were defeated in Europe, and if our Guerrilla War developed meanwhile in India, our prospects of success in the struggle would brighten up."<sup>18</sup>

These statements show that the Ghadarites decided to accept the "Challenge to act," and to return to India "to do or die." Even the time was fixed by which all the Ghadarites were required to return. They settled that "all of them should go back to India at once, and upto the first week of November, 1914, not a single

<sup>17</sup> Bhagwan Singh, Gyani : *Brief Sketch of Life Lived*, of village and Post Office, Wrang, District Amritsar, page, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Statement of D. Chenchiah, 6, Trulamul St. T. Nagar, Madras-17 Part III page, 21 & 22 dated the 25th September, 1956. (Through the courtesy of Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur, Punjab).

Indian should remain in any foreign land. Those who would reach there earlier, would travel in the villages and try to win the favour of the common people. When all the Indians abroad would reach here, they would fix some date and the mutiny would break out all at once throughout India.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Advance Party**

The Ghadarites were directed by the party to go to India by any ship available. Before the departure of the main body from America, some members were sent as an advance party. A few of the members<sup>20</sup> of the advance party obtained passages immediately and proceeded to India.

### **Main Jatha Departure from San Francisco by S.S.Korea**

Three weeks later, the main body of the Ghadarites left San-Francisco by the *S.S. Korea*.<sup>21</sup> Before embarking they were grouped into sections.<sup>22</sup> Prior to the departure of the ship Maulvi Barkatullah, Pandit Ram Chand and Gyani Bhagwan Singh came to the ship and addressed the passengers as follows :

“Your duty is clear. Go to India and stir up rebellion in every corner of the country. Rob the wealthy and show mercy to the poor. In this way you will win universal sympathy. Arms will be provided for you on your arrival in India. Failing this you must ransack the police stations for rifles. Obey without hesitation the command of your leaders.”<sup>23</sup>

The Ghadarites, while on their voyage, spent most of their time in committing to memory the songs from the ‘Ghadar-di-Gunj’. Meetings were held and lectures were delivered. Two<sup>24</sup> of the Ghadarites disembarked at Yokohama (Japan) to obtain arms and there a new passenger, Pandit Parmanand of Jhansi joined them

<sup>19</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Emigration A. Proceedings December, 1914 number, 4, page, 10.

<sup>20</sup> They were Kartar Singh Sarabha, Jagat Singh, Piara Singh, Harnam Singh, Nand Singh, Sohan Singh and Jawand Singh. They came on different ships, namely Nippon Maru, Lai Sang, Foosang and Nam Sang.

<sup>21</sup> The *S.S. Korea* steamed off from San Franscisco on the 29th August, 1914 and it had on board 70 passengers.

<sup>22</sup> Nidhan Singh, Kesar Singh, Udhampur Singh, Jawala Singh and Nawab Khan were nominated as leaders of the different groups.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from F. C. Isemonger and J. Slattery : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore (1919)*, page, 44 & 45.

<sup>24</sup> They were Ram Rakha and Amar Singh.

on board the ship. A number of Indians from Vancouver joined at Kobe (Japan). The President of the Manila Ghadar Party, Hafiz Abdullah, met the passengers at Manila. There, on the shore, a meeting of Indians was held, which was addressed by Nawab Khan and Jagat Ram. The latter delivered the following message :

"For sometime past we have been sending you the 'Ghadar' newspaper in order to prepare you for mutiny and now the time for this mutiny has arrived. England is engaged in a life and death struggle with Germany. With her attention thus occupied we can without difficulty drive the English out of India. Don't let this opportunity slip by, for you will never get another such for centuries. Join us now and be ready to kill or be killed on arrival in India."<sup>25</sup>

The second party<sup>26</sup> left San Francisco on the 5th of September, 1914. About the same time another party left Victoria by the *S.S. Mexico Maru* for Hong Kong. Yet another party<sup>27</sup> came from Vancouver by the *S.S. Canada Maru*. Another party<sup>28</sup> came from Manila. From Hong Kong and Shanghai, the Ghadarites came to India by various ships.<sup>29</sup>

The other revolutionaries followed the main parties by various ships.<sup>30</sup> According to the findings of the Indian Sedition Committee, "Of all the October, November and December shiploads of returning emigrants, the *Tosa Maru* was the most dangerous. It contained malcontents, who had divided themselves into sections, each of which was to work under a leader in a particular area of

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from F.C. Isemonger and J. Slattery : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 45.

<sup>26</sup> This party came on board the ship, *S.S. Siberia*, which terminated its journey at Shanghai, calling at Honolulu, Yokohama and Nagasaki. From there the passengers got passages on a different ship.

<sup>27</sup> This party consisted of forty revolutionaries.

<sup>28</sup> This party also had 40 revolutionaries. Prominent among them were Jagat Ram, Rahmat Ali and Jiwan Singh.

<sup>29</sup> The passengers had to disembark at Hong Kong and Shanghai and take ships from there for India. The ships by which the revolutionaries travelled to India from Shanghai and Hong Kong were *Chag Sang*, *Nam Sang*, *Tosa Maru* and *Mashima Maru* respectively. The Chag Sang reached Calcutta on 12th October, 1914, carrying 57 revolutionaries, the Nam Sang on the 13th October including Ghadarite leaders like Sohan Singh Bhakna, Jawand Singh and Vir Singh, the *Tosa Maru* carrying 173 revolutionaries and the *Mashima Maru* on the 25th October carrying 63 passengers.

<sup>30</sup> These ships were *Yosaka Maru*, *Alicente*, *Australian*, *Orantea*, *Lopezy-Lopez*, *Kitano Maru*, *Ophir*, *Fushima Maru* etc.

the Punjab, But the internment of the majority of the passengers disorganised these elaborate arrangements.”<sup>31</sup>

Thus large numbers of revolutionaries came from America, Canada, Panama, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. In this connection one of the organisers of the movement says, “Hundreds of such people poured into India from every home-coming ship. There were old men in their ranks who had made large fortunes in America and now came back leaving them in the hands of others. There were also among them ‘Jacks’ whose sole occupation had been to earn and drink and who had not saved a pie. They now left their life of pleasure and took ships in a burst of patriotism. En route wherever the steamer stopped, at Hong Kong, Singapore, Rangoon, they would go there and stir up the Indian soldiers against the Government. One regiment in Singapore which was to be sent to the front was won over.”<sup>32</sup>

#### **Arrival at Calcutta and Government Action**

The British Government got the news of the coming Ghadarites as early as on the 13th August, 1914, when the Governor General of Canada sent the following telegram (dated 13.8.1914) to the Secretary of State for the colonies.....“received information that Yugantar Ashram arranging return to India of as many Hindus (Indians) as possible by next boat from San Francisco. Present crisis considered favourable opportunity to cause trouble in India.”<sup>33</sup> The Government of India sent a telegram on the 18th August, 1914, to the Governor, of Hong Kong, requesting him to Keep an eye on the Indians returning from the Far East and inform the Government of India about their departure.<sup>34</sup>

To deal with the situation the Goverment of India issued the Foreigners Ordinance,<sup>35</sup> which aimed at preventing the entry into India of undesirable aliens. In the beginning of September, the Government decided to issue another ordinance for controlling the entry of Indian emigrants. But prior to its enactment, the

<sup>31</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), page, 149 & 150,

<sup>32</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of My Life*, English rendering, Lahore (1934) page, 69.

<sup>33</sup> Home Department, Government of India. Political A. Proceedings, September, 1914, Nos. 211-224, page, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Home Department, Government of India. Political A. Proceedings, September 1914, Nos. 211-224, page, 1, Telegram No. 799, dated the 18th August, 1914.

<sup>35</sup> It was issued on the 29th August, 1914.

Government of India issued the following press communique :

"In view of the outbreak of War the Governor-General in Council has considered the steps necessary to ensure that the public peace is not endangered by the action of any person who, in the interests of hostile powers, might seek to return to India with the object of creating disturbance or of ascertaining facts likely to be of assistance to our enemies. The fact that such persons are few does not permit of their being ignored. The situation is one of emergency, and exceptional action is justified by the present state of war. The Governor-General has, therefore, decided to take certain general powers of control over all persons entering India after this date. These powers will only be exercised to protect the state from the prosecution of any purpose prejudicial to its safety, interests of tranquillity and will be restricted to such measures as are necessary to safeguard the security of the Empire. They will not extend to the prohibition of entry. An ordinance on those lines, is accordingly being issued to-day."<sup>36</sup>

On the basis of this communique an Ingress Ordinance<sup>37</sup> was issued on the 5th September, 1914, which empowered the Government to restrict the liberty of any person entering India after the 5th September, 1914. Under this ordinance the Government could restrict the movement of persons entering India whether by sea or land in order to protect the state from danger of anything prejudicial to its safety, interests or tranquillity.<sup>38</sup> The wording of the ordinance was kept indefinite in order to justify on general grounds appertaining to a state of war rather than the international situation.<sup>39</sup> It was a supplement to the Foreigners Ordinance, under which powers were also delegated by the Central Government to the local Governments, vide its Notification No. 1374, dated 12.9.1914.<sup>40</sup> After the enforcement of these ordinances, the Indian emigrants landing or entering India were dealt with as under.

The 'method of dealing with these under the Ingress Ordinance was to watch them from the port of landing and warn them to report themselves at a Central Enquiry office in Ludhiana. There

<sup>36</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political A. Proceedings September, 1914, Nos. 211-224, page, 11.

<sup>37</sup> This Ordinance was called the Ingress into India Ordinance, 1914, or the Ordinance No. V of 1914.

<sup>38</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political A. Proceedings, September, 1914, Nos. 211-224, page, 17 (Appendix).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

the antecedents of each man were investigated by our capable police officers and magistrates, who collected in a dossier all the information available as to his movements abroad, his character and relatives in the Punjab, and his general attitude. On the result of this enquiry it was decided whether he should be (a) interned in jail, if really dangerous, pending prosecution, or a change in his mentality or in the general situation or (b) if less dangerous, restricted to his native village, generally on the security of reliable relatives or of the village headman, (c) or discharged with a warning, if believed to be comparatively free from the Ghadar views, the local authorities being told to keep a watch on him.”<sup>41</sup>

According to the findings of the Indian Sedition Committee, between October, 1914 to 1917, under the Ingress into India Ordinance 331 persons were interned and 2576 were restricted to their villages.<sup>42</sup> F.C. Isemonger and J.Slattery have estimated that between 1914 and 1918, 370 were interned and 2212 were restricted to their villages.<sup>43</sup> According to the estimate of Sir Michael O’ Dwyer, “Out of eight thousand who returned in the first two years of the war, some four hundred were interned in jail, two thousand five hundred restricted to their villages.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus the sponsors of this Ghadar movement were arrested just on landing on the Indian soil. Most of the leaders were interned in jails, especially, Sohan Singh Bhakna, President, and Kesar Singh and Jawala Singh, Vice-Presidents of the party. This meant a great set-back to the Ghadar movement. In spite of the strict screening by the Government however, hundreds of Ghadarites managed to either slip through unobserved ports, or failed to report at the appropriate enquiry office or escaped through wrong reports. Prominent among them were Kartar Singh Sarabha, V.G.Pingle, Pandit Jagat Ram, Kanshi Ram, Prithvi Singh and Jagat Singh.

#### **Number of Indians returned to India**

Regarding the exact number of the Ghadarites who returned to India, there is a difference of opinion and government records are not complete in this regard. Upto October, 1914, the Government had no check on the entry of Indians via Ceylon. According

<sup>41</sup> O’ Dwyer, Sir Michael : *India as I knew it*, London (1925), page, 196.

<sup>42</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), page, 160.

<sup>43</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 147.

<sup>44</sup> O’Dwyer Sir Michael : *India as I knew it*, London (1925) page, 196.

to the trial court of the Second Lahore Conspiracy Case, since the 'Komagata Maru' incident till now '1915', not less than 6000 Indians returned to India.<sup>46</sup> Sir Michael says that during the first two years of the war the number of Indians who returned to India was eight thousand.<sup>46</sup> According to Lord Hardinge seven thousand revolutionaries returned to India from Canada and America.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. II, Judgement, dated 30th March, 1916, page, 27.

<sup>46</sup> O'Dwyer : Sir Michael : *India as I knew it*, London (1925) page, 196.

<sup>47</sup> Official Reports : Parliamentary Debates (Lords) 1917, Vol. XXI, page, 733.

## 9

## *The Party in Action in India*

The arrests of the leaders could not dampen the enthusiasm and resolve of the Ghadarites with which they had returned from foreign lands. Without bothering to asses their chances of success, they decided to go ahead with their programme. Prominent workers of the party took charge of different districts (Ilaqas). Kartar Singh Sarabha, Nawab Khan and Pandit Kanshi Ram were to work in Ludhiana and Nidhan Singh in Ferozepur District or in the Malwa region in general. Pandit Jagat Ram Hariana (Hoshiarpur) was assigned the Doaba area. Gujjar Singh Bhakna and Dr. Mathura Singh were appointed the leaders for the Majha region.<sup>1</sup> "Bhai Parmanand, then Professor<sup>2</sup> in the D.A.V. College, Lahore, provided the link between the Indian emigrants and the Hindu intelligentsia in the Punjab."<sup>3</sup>

### Gatherings of the Ghadarites in India

The activities of the Ghadarites, on arrival in India, may be divided into two phases. In the first phase, meetings were held at different places for chalking out the plan for revolution. In the Majha region the first meeting was held on the 13th October, 1914, under the guidance of Gujjar Singh Bhakna. But this meeting was poorly attended. Consequently it was decided to hold another meeting at Amritsar on Dewali Day, when a large gathering was expected. But prior to the gathering on Dewali, some Ghadarites assembled at Nanak Singh's house at Amritsar and decided to carry on Ghadar propaganda and recruit new comrades till the arrival of

<sup>1</sup> The Majha region consisted of the Districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Batala Tehsil and parts of Gurdaspur Tehsil.

<sup>2</sup> He was Professor of History in the D.A.V. College, Lahore.

<sup>3</sup> Macmunn : Sir George (Lt. General) *Turmoil & Tragedy in India 1914 and after*, London (1935), page, 99.

all the Ghadarites from America.<sup>4</sup> The meeting at Dewali time was also held at Nanak Singh's place on the 17th October, 1914. It was attended by Gujjar Singh Bhakna and his companions, Dr. Mathura Singh, Piara Singh Langeri (Hoshiarpur) and Harnam Singh of Sialkot. It was resolved that there was to be no out-break for the time being, as it would be premature.<sup>5</sup> The members dispersed and went to their homes with the following decisions made. They were to recount to their fellow-villagers the troubles of the 'Komagata Maru' passengers and win recruits to the Ghadar cause and were to hold themselves in readiness.

#### Fixation of the Date of Mutiny and Failure to Stick it

Meetings were held next at the annual Sikh Fair at Nankana Sahib (Gujranwala) and at Khasa (Amritsar). The Khasa meeting was attended by Kartar Singh Sarabha from Ludhiana and Amar Singh from Nawanshahar who were the leaders of Ludhiana and Jullundur Districts. There it was decided that a general out break should take place on the 15th November, 1914.<sup>6</sup> Arms were expected to arrive from abroad. As these did not arrive, when expected, the outbreak was postponed.

In the Malwa area<sup>7</sup> similar meetings were organised. But before the gatherings could start in this area, the first act of violence was committed by the Ghadarites at Chaukiman railway station on the Ludhiana—Ferozepur Railway line. The emigrants expected the arrival of a consignment of arms at this station. When one of them went to make enquiries about the consignment, he saw a police constable there. He thought that the arrival of arms had been reported by the Station Master and that the constable was waiting to arrest whoever came to take delivery. Actually the constable had been put on duty to look out for absconders from the Budge Budge riot. Consequently the Ghadarites decided to attack the Station Master out of revenge and at 8.30 P.M. on the 16th October, 1914, three persons<sup>8</sup>, two of them armed with revolvers, entered the Station Master's office. All the persons unconnected with the staff

<sup>4</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. II Judgement dated the 30th March, 1916, page, 30.

<sup>5</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J. *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 71.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* page, 71.

<sup>7</sup> The Malwa area consisted of Ludhiana and Ferozepur Districts and the states of Nabha, Patiala, Bhatinda, Malerkotla and Faridkot.

<sup>8</sup> These persons were Chanda Singh, Jagat Singh Binjhal and Jiwan Singh Ghumara.

were ordered to leave. The Station Master was shot dead. One water-carrier, Uttam, was wounded. The revolutionaries then carried off Rs. 50/- from the office. All the three were subsequently accounted for. Chanda Singh was killed in the encounter near Ferozeshah. Jagat Singh Binjhal was hanged for murders committed on that occasion and Jiwan Singh Ghumara was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in July 1915 for this robbery at the Chauki-man Station.<sup>9</sup>

The first meeting in the Malwa region was held at Ladhodal railway station near Ludhiana on the 17th November, 1914, as planned earlier by the leaders on board the *Tosa Maru*. It was attended by the Ghadarite leaders.<sup>10</sup> At this meeting Pandit Kanshi Ram prominent leader of the Ghadarites, urged immediate action as their men were short of funds and he even suggested that they should loot treasures. To consider this proposal further, it was decided to get together at Moga two days later.

Accordingly on the 19th October, another meeting took place at mogha. A proposal to loot three treasures simultaneously at Moga, Jagraon and Amritsar or Lahore was discussed. At this meeting Kartar Singh conveyed the feelings of Bhai Parmanand, who was of the opinion that an attempt to plunder the treasures would result in their immediate arrests. So efforts should first be made to procure arms. Kartar Singh suggested an attack on the Mianmeer arsenal in Lahore Cantonment, where his contactman, a havildar, promised to help them to get the magazine opened. According to Bhai Parmanand, while travelling by rail Kartar Singh once met a havildar and asked him point blank, "Why don't you leave off service." Having seen that Kartar Singh was a spirited lad, the havildar said, "Bring your man to Mianmeer. The keys of magazine are in my hands and I shall hand them over to you."<sup>11</sup> Eventually in a meeting at Moga it was decided to send Nidhan Singh and Pandit Kanshi Ram with Kartar Singh to reconnoitre the place for the proposed raid and to consult Parmanand. They were to report back the results at Badowal railway station.

<sup>9</sup> Department of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, Political A, Proceedings, June, 1915, No. 370, pages, 41-47 and Home Department, Government India, Political B Proceedings, December 1914, No. 227-229, page, 13.

<sup>10</sup> These leaders were Jagat Ram, Nidhan Singh, Nawab Khan, Kartar Singh and Amar Singh.

<sup>11</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of My Life*, (English rendering) Lahore (1934), page, 82.

### Scheme of Capturing the Mianmeer Arsenal and its Failure

Nidhan Singh and Pandit Kanshi Ram reported at a meeting held at Badowal railway station on the Ludhiana—Ferozepur railway line on the 23rd November, 1914. Their report was considered favourable and it was decided to act on it. The 25th of November, 1914 was fixed as the date for the raid on the Mianmeer arsenal. All the section-leaders were directed to bring their men to Lahore Cantonment on the night of the 25th. Kartar Singh distributed some five hundred rupees for expenses.<sup>12</sup> On the appointed date, they assembled at Lahore Cantonment. The following plan of action was to be carried out. "The keys of the magazine (with the assistance of the havildar and other sepoys) would be obtained and fire-arms, rifles, pistols etc., together with ammunition secured. The arms would then be distributed and an attack would be made on the European Regiment which consisted mainly of raw youths from England. After their massacre, more arms would be secured."<sup>13</sup> But that havildar did not appear. He had been suddenly transferred elsewhere. The enterprise, having thus miscarried, orders were given at midnight to different bands to go to Ferozepur.

After the failure of the proposed general rising on the 15th November, 1914, the Ghadarites' attention was turned to the Majha tract. It was decided to assemble at the Amawas fair at Tarn Taran<sup>14</sup> on the 17th of November. A large number of emigrants attended. But here another disturbing factor intervened. Gujjar Singh Bhakna was arrested at the fair. The Ghadarites dispersed with the idea of meeting again at a small Sikh temple, known as the Jhar Sahib, situated in the jungle near village Bhure in Amritsar District.

At the Jhar Sahib assembly it was planned that the leaders in Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur and Ludhiana districts should be contacted for fixing a date for a general rising. The 23rd of November was thus fixed as the provisional date. But because of the meeting to be held at Badowal on the same date, Nidhan Singh's group could not join. Eventually the 26th November was fixed as the final date for the general uprising.

<sup>12</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 69 (Kartar Singh explained that the money was a part of a sum of Rs. 1000/- given by the brother of Ajit Singh, seditious of 1907 of which Rs. 500/- were given to Jagat Ram for expenses of his men.)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* page, 69.

<sup>14</sup> Tehsil Headquarters in the Amritsar District.

**Scheme of the Sawars of the 23rd Cavalry to help the Ghadarites and Failure**

During those days the 23rd Cavalry was stationed at Lahore Cantonment. It was a regiment recruited from the Majha tract. The Ghadarites, who had come earlier than the 'Tosa Maru' passengers, had made contacts with several sawars of this cavalry. Their preaching of sedition in those areas and the *Komagata Maru* episode had shaken the loyalty of a large number of men in the 23rd Cavalry. Towards the end of October, 1914, a reservist sawar, Sucha Singh of Chola Kalan (Amritsar), returning from leave conveyed the news to his fellow sawars that a large number of emigrants intended to raid Lahore and capture the fort, for which purpose they wanted their assistance. He further informed them that the emigrants had guns, pistols and bombs in their possession. He discussed this with Lance Daffadar Lachman Singh who became sympathetic and finally decided to assist the emigrants in their enterprise. Similarly Prem Singh Surang also worked in the Cavalry and won over several sawars to the plan.

As a result of all this, the pro-Ghadar sawars organised a meeting on the 23rd November, 1914, behind the range and all those present vowed to join the Ghadar. On the other hand, at a meeting of the Ghadarites held on the 23rd November at Jhar Sahib, it was decided that the rising should take place on the night of the 26th November, 1914. On the same date another meeting of the sawars of the 23rd Cavalry was held in which the proposed plan was adopted.

The plan was that the sawars of the 23rd Cavalry having mutinied would ride out and join the Ghadarites with arms. Then after looting the arsenals, killing all the white soldiers and officials, they would launch the revolution at Lahore, while some will do the same at Tarn Taran. In the night of the 26th November, however, "the Lance Daffadar ordered that nothing was to be done yet, they were to wait until the next day and ascertain definitely that the revolution had broken out before committing themselves to the venture."<sup>15</sup> Accordingly when sixty Ghadarites assembled at Jhar Sahib (near village Bhure, District Amritsar) that night waiting for the sawars of the Cavalry, no sawars appeared. Then they decided to launch the scheme on the night of the 27th November and word was sent to the sawars to that effect. It was also agreed upon to

<sup>15</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore (1919)*, page, 73.

assemble at Kairon<sup>16</sup> on the following night. From there they proposed to attack Sarhali and Patti Police Stations for procuring arms and then loot the Taran Tarn Treasury.

On the 27th November, 1914, the Ghadarites numbering forty assembled near Kairon. They had planned that the gate of the Sarhali Police Station would be opened by a ruse through the help of Dare, a bad character of village Dadehar, District Amritsar. But he did not turn up. After reconnoitring and finding the police on the alert, they moved off without delivering an attack.

On the 27th night, four of the sawars of the 23rd Cavalry decided not to wait any longer and deserted at once, taking their swords and horses with them. The other sawars of the same mind were preparing to go "when Mul Singh, the regimental Granthi, came to them and dissuaded them from the plan on the ground that they being only a handful, could do nothing and would certainly be rounded up and captured."<sup>17</sup> The four deserters arrived at Bhure village next day. They were informed there by Kala Singh, a local member of the Ghadar Party, about the meeting held at Kairon mound on the previous night. Three of them went on to Tarn Taran to join the Ghadarites ; the fourth having separated from the others under some pretext, hastened back to the regiment and resumed duty. The three sawars were eventually arrested on the 30th November, 1914, at Jhar Sahib. Thus the rising planned on the 26/27th November, 1914, did not materialise. The sawars thought that instead of their taking the initiative, the Ghadarites should take the lead and they would not join in any rising until "some six or seven hundred of the emigrants attacked the lines."<sup>18</sup> The Ghadarites did not take the initiative because they had no arms and depended for fire-arms on the sawars. Fixation of an early date for the rising was also a cause of this failure. But for this the sawars of the 23rd Cavalry themselves were responsible. They had insisted on an early rising because they thought their regiment would soon be sent to the war front.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Scheme of robbing the Government Treasury at Moga and its Consequences**

During the same period there occurred another incident in

<sup>16</sup> A village in Tehsil Tarn Taran, District Amritsar.

<sup>17</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* page 74.

the Malwa tract. After the failure of the scheme to raid the Mianmeer arsenal (Lahore), a meeting was held at Ferozepur on the 26th November. At that meeting an attack was planned to be launched on the Ferozepur Cantonment regimental magazine. Nidhan Singh had arranged to secure the help of some Pathans in the Regiment. But he told those assembled there that the outbreak could not take place on that day and instructed them to come again on the 30th November. He himself left for Sur Singh village in Lahore District, to which a large number of returned emigrants belonged, to arrange more help for the attempt.

The other members of the group, however, decided to loot the Moga Treasury, in order, firstly, to fill in the time gap and, secondly, to procure money. On the 27th November, 1914, some of them left by the evening train for Moga, while a band of 15 started by road in three hackney carriages. By the roadside at Misriwala village near Ferozeshah, Basharat Ali, Sub-Inspector of the Ghal Police Station, Jawala Singh Zaildar, Fateh Singh Sarbarah-Zaildar, Gulam Qadir Sufaid Posh and some other people were staying in a house waiting for the District Superintendent of Police. When the first of the hackney carriages approached them, the Zaildar, Jawala Singh, remarked that the passengers looked suspicious. The Sub-Inspector ordered them to stop. Instead they drove on faster and the Sub-Inspector pursued them<sup>20</sup> on horseback. Overtaking them he insisted on searching them and sent for his attendant, Ida, to fetch pen and ink. This enraged the revolutionaries and the Sub-Inspector abused them and even slapped one of them, Rahmat Ali Shah of Patiala State. On this Jagat Singh, getting furious, whipped up a revolver and shot at the Sub-Inspector killing him on the spot. The second shot killed Zaildar Jawala Singh. The others fled. Six of the Ghadarites were able to escape but the remaining nine took refuge in the nearby reeds running along the canal bank.

In the meantime, the villagers of Misriwala rushed to the spot and a police party came from Ghal Police Station. The Ghada-

<sup>20</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. II Judgement dated the 30th March 1916, page 33.

<sup>21</sup> They were Jiwan Singh of Daula Singhwala (Patiala State) Bakhshish Singh of Khanpur (Ludhiana), Lal Singh of Sahibana (Ludhiana), Jagat Singh of Biojhal (Ludhiana), Dhian Singh of Amarpura (Amritsar), Kanshi Ram of Marauili (Ambala) and Rahmat Ali of Bazidka (Patiala State). They were tried, convicted and hanged.

rites hiding in the reeds were surrounded and there was an exchange of fire for some time. Ultimately the police set fire to the reeds. Seven of them tried to run away but were overpowered by the mob and captured. Two<sup>21</sup> still in the reeds continued firing. When the fire ceased, one of them was found dead, and the second dying.<sup>22</sup>

The Ferozeshah incident proved a serious setback to the Ghadar Movement. As a result the Government came in full possession of the plans of the Ghadarites. It reduced the strength of Nidhan Singh's group and resulted in the loss to the Ghadar Party of many active workers and leaders like Pandit Kanshi Ram and Rahmat Ali. The party was already short of good leadership owing to internments. During the investigation of the Ferozeshah incident the police got further information about the Ghadar Party workers, resulting in arrests of Nawab Khan on 19.12.1914, Jagat Ram of Haryana on 23.12.1914 at Peshawar and Prithvi Singh of Sabhu Patiala State, on 9.12.1914. This very incident caused the failure of the scheme of looting the regimental armoury at Ferozepur on 30.12.1914.

The revolutionaries then realised that their organisation was poor in finances. The rank and file of the Party went to their homes in disgust and as Kartar Singh Sarabha went to Hari Singh, an emigrant of Herian, near Jullundur Cantt, to induce him to get his men together, Hari Singh told him, "Your lack of organisation and methods have succeeded in disgusting the rank and file. They have grown tired of remaining idle and have returned to their homes."<sup>23</sup> There was no cohesion among the men scattered in the various districts and no definite plan and they lacked unity of command. Thus by December, 1914, the first phase of the Ghadar activities was over without achieving any success.

#### **Contacts between the Ghadarites and Bengal Revolutionaries and Mr. Sanyal's visit to Punjab**

The Ghadarites then realised that they should work under a

<sup>21</sup> They were Dhain Singh of Bansipura Bhangool, and Chanda Singh of Wariach, District Ludhiana.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry (Home), Government of India, Political A., Proceedings June 1915 No. 370, and Home Department, Government of India, Political Deposit Proceedings January, 1915, No. 43 page 11.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 75.

are also apparent from the fact that on the morning of the 8th January, 1915, two seditious hand-written notices in Gurmukhi were found on the gate posts of the Khalsa High School, Ludhiana. One of the notices said :

"The *feringhis* have looted the country and laid it waste,  
the people are harassed greatly, Oh people !  
They have taken all the riches of India,  
and have sent them to England, Oh people !  
The dacoits are looting day and night,  
the poor cultivators are starving, Oh people !  
Good pay is paid to *Goras*,  
to eat, drink and make merry, Oh people !  
All the rest even soldiers, Sikh or Mohammedan,  
have only *gram* to eat, Oh people !  
The *Goras* shrink back on the battle-field,  
standing at a safe distance they shout orders, Oh people !  
To fight and get killed, we are pushed to the front,  
in Egypt, Africa and Persia, Oh people !  
The English are not a great power,  
fight and defeat them, Oh people !  
When will ye Khalsas draw the sword  
and slay the *goras* ? Oh people !  
Heraos and brave men like Ajit Singh did not allow  
the revenue to be increased in the Lyallpur District, Oh people !  
They are wandering in foreign countries,  
for the sake of the country they are undergoing hardships, Oh  
people !  
To destroy the rule of the tyrant, Oh people !"<sup>3</sup>

Some of the students were even convicted and punished in the various conspiracy cases for revolutionary activities in collaboration with the Ghadarites. The part played by the students is significant, as is confirmed by the trial court of the Second Lahore Conspiracy Case in its comment on one of the students, Sajjan Singh, Narangwal, District Ludhiana. "He is, in our opinion, a thoroughly unrepentant young scoundrel, and a most dangerous individual, quite capable, given opportunities, of developing into another Kartar Singh of Sarabha. He became one of the most useful young lieutenants of Rash Behari Bose in Lahore and was

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the Home Department, Government of India, Political B. Proceedings No. 278-282 (Secret) Report on Political situation for the month of January, 1915, page, 39-40.

employed by him to tamper with troops, particularly with the 23rd Cavalry, among whom he disseminated seditious literature and whom he kept in touch to rise on the 19th February."<sup>4</sup>

Besides the students, the Ghadarites worked in the countryside also. They went around the villages, spreading revolutionary ideas among the villagers, distributing Ghadar literature among them and exhorting them to join in the rising to expel the British from India. Banta Singh and Harnam Singh 'Tundilat' addressed a public meeting at village Sangwal (Jullundur). Harnam Singh of village Rasulpur (Amritsar) and Thakur Singh of village Dadher (Amritsar) went to the villages of Lyallpur District to preach sedition. Harnam Singh reported back that the villagers there had been won over. In November, the Punjab Provincial Government reported to the Government of India that "some of the recently interned emigrants were moving about the country but were generally regarded with indifference. Village headmen had reported to the local authorities cases in which these persons were indulging in dangerous or inflammatory language. Secret meetings were being held, emissaries were visiting villages and gangs were being formed."<sup>5</sup>

In enlisting the support of the villagers, Sant Randhir Singh of village Narangwal, District Ludhiana, played a vital role. Though a religious man "he became an active seditious" at the beginning of 1914. At religious meetings held from time to time in the village, he preached Ghadar. At a meeting at Chamkaur (Ambala) in December, 1914, he "spoke of the emigrants returning from America and their purpose of arms expected from Bengal."<sup>6</sup> In the beginning of February, 1915, he went further and exhorted the people that it was not the time to sit quietly in their homes but to come into the field of battle, and a rising was soon to take place in which all of the brethren should join."<sup>7</sup> His religious influence won over many to the revolutionary doctrine.

Similarly, the Mahant of Jhar Sahib (near village Bhure, District Amritsar) was another religious personage who was won over and who in turn became an instrument of the revolutionaries for winning the sympathy and co-operation of the villagers. Another

<sup>4</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. II Judgement, dated the 30th March, 1916, page 309.

<sup>5</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), Page 150.

<sup>6</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 91.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

Mahant, Nath Singh, of Sur Singh village (Lahore) was also won over for active help. According to Isemonger and Slattery, "This man was won with comparative ease. From being a person seduced he became an active seducer of others."<sup>8</sup>

The Ghadarites told the villagers that with their co-operation they would succeed in overthrowing the British Government and in establishing their own government. The way in which they tackled and tried to convince the public is well illustrated by the following account:<sup>9</sup>

"Every time I met these men (Ghadarites), I questioned as to how they could overthrow such a powerful Government and their reply was that the mainstays of the Government were their own brethren. They would go to the native regiments and would preach mutiny. Men who had arrived from abroad would go and enlist in all the regiments. The Government was much pre-occupied by the European War, and the number of British soldiers in India was very small. Hence, we should soon be able to turn them out and form our own Parliament. In each village we should appoint representatives and decide cases in 'Parliament'. This would be successful as villagers knew best what was happening in their own neighbourhood. Each time we met, the conversation was on this topic. They also said that a number of their brethren had learnt in America the craft of making airships, dynamite, bombs, fire-arms and ammunition and would, on their arrival in India, start work at once."<sup>10</sup>

By the Ghadar propaganda, most of the people of such villages as Dadher (Amritsar), Sangwal (Hoshiarpur), Sur Singh (Lahore) and Dhudeke (Ferozepur), were actually converted to revolutionary thinking. In this connection S.N. Sanyal writes, "this time (his second visit to Punjab in January 1915) I noticed many villagers coming here (Amritsar, Headquarters of the Party). They were mostly zamindars or other labourers, but they were longing to work for the national cause."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 92,

<sup>9</sup> It had been given by Dalip Singh, an old Ludhiana student, who was led astray by the anti-British and socialistic conversation of Nidhan Singh, Parma Nand and others.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), pages 92 & 93.

<sup>11</sup> Sanyal : S. N. : *Bandi Jiwan*, Part I (Punjabi rendering by Gurdit Singh) (year not given) pages 79-80.

The exact number of the people thus affected cannot be ascertained. But it is quite evident that hundreds of people were approached by the Ghadarites in the towns as well as villages and scores were converted to their creed. It can be testified by the fact that of the 231 persons tried in the various conspiracy cases in the province, 121 were local recruits, and not returned emigrants.<sup>12</sup>

But on the whole, the Ghadarites did not meet with much success in enlisting mass support in the Punjab owing to lack of consciousness among the Punjabis. Moreover, the element which dominated the Punjabi masses at the time, was supporting the Government in their personal interests. But the fact of attempts made by the Ghadar Party for winning popular support shows that the Ghadarites did all that was possible under the circumstances to make the Ghadar movement a mass movement. It has been admitted even by the Trial Court in the Third Lahore Conspiracy Case that "the seduction of villagers was an essential part of the revolutionary (Ghadar) movement."<sup>13</sup>

### Work Outside Punjab

The work of the Ghadarites was not confined to the Punjab alone. Apart from the work done among the troops, the revolutionary movement outside the Punjab was conducted by the Bengali revolutionaries. Benaras was the centre of their activities. S.N. Sanyal, on his return from the Punjab (in December, 1914) reached the decision that in the United Provinces work should be started in Cantonments and among troops.<sup>14</sup>

Sanyal admits that prior to their contacts with the Ghadar Party, they did not work among the troops and that their movement was confined to the intelligentsia. In his *Bandi Jiwan* he writes, "till then we did not pay any attention to seduction of troops."<sup>15</sup> The Bengal revolutionaries learnt of this aspect of the movement from the Punjabis.

After forging contacts between the Ghadarites and the Bengal revolutionaries and on Sanyal's return from the Punjab in January

<sup>12</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J.: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 93.

<sup>13</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. III, Judgement dated the 4th January, 1917, page 49.

<sup>14</sup> Sanyal, S.N. *Bandi Jiwan*, Part I (Punjabi rendering by Gurdit Singh) Amritsar (year not given), page 57.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, page 59.

1915, Rash Behari Bose held a meeting of his comrades at Benaras. He announced that a general rebellion was impending, and informed his audience that they must be prepared to die for their country. Duties and areas were allotted to them. Damodar Sarup, a school teacher, was to be the leader at Allahabad. Two men were deputed to bring bombs and arms to Allahabad. Two others, one a Maratha, Vinayak Rao Kapile, were assigned to deliver bombs to the Punjab. Two, Bibhuti and Priya Nath, were to seduce the troops at Benaras, while one Bengali, named Nalini, was to do the same at Jabalpur. Arrangements were made to execute these plans,<sup>16</sup> when Rash Behari himself left for Lahore (Punjab) with Sanyal, who returned to take command at Benaras.

Besides, contacts were made with several villages of Thakurs in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>17</sup> In Rajputana, Rai Sahib Thakur Gopal Singh of Kharwa town was contacted, who promised assistance and said that he was ready to rise and join in the rising.<sup>18</sup> Through Shri Nama and Surjan<sup>19</sup> of Fatehgarh (District Hoshiarpur) the movement was linked with the Thakurs of Mandi State. Thakar Jawahar Singh<sup>20</sup> of Sane More, and Shri Sidhu of Suraj, were contacted by Nidhan Singh Chugha (Ferozepur). They expressed their readiness to join the movement.

At Fyzabad, the work of seducing the troops of the 9th Bhopal Regiment was taken up by Harnam Singh, ex-Havildar of the regiment. "The activities of the Benaras branch of the conspirators were confined to (i) distribution of seditious literature; (2) tampering with the fidelity of the troops; and (3) acting as a depot for the supply of bombs and ammunition from Bengal and other places to Meerut, Delhi and Punjab."<sup>21</sup>

This shows that the Ghadar movement was not confined to the Punjab alone but had ramifications all over North India, as is

<sup>16</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918) page, 134.

<sup>17</sup> Sanyal, S.N. *Bandi Jiwan*, Part I, (Punjabi rendering by Gurdit Singh) Amritsar (year not given) page, 110.

<sup>18</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 112.

<sup>19</sup> Surjan had acquaintances in Mandi State, as he had been a mule driver on the road there, before he went abroad.

<sup>20</sup> Thakur Jawahar Singh was a nephew of the Raja of Mandi. He was discontented on the question of the inheritance of the *Gaddi* of Mandi State.

<sup>21</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Home (Political) A Proceedings, April, 1916 Number 471. Benaras Case : Judgment in the case of Harnam Singh, an ex-Havildar of the 9th Bhopal Regiment, page 14.

evident from Government records : "The conspiracies at Lahore, Delhi and Benaras were all parts of one big movement, but the centre of the movement was in the Punjab."<sup>22</sup>

### Use of Revolutionary Literature

The circulation of the Ghadar literature was another aspect of the Ghadar Party's revolution in India. The paper 'Ghadar' formed the most important part of the Ghadar literature, to which reference has already been made in Chapter VI. It was distributed in India among villagers, students and troops. The Echo of Mutiny (Ghadar Di Gunj) containing inciting and blood-thirsty songs was also distributed. The paper which the Ghadar leaders in India produced in large numbers for distribution were Mutiny Message, (the Ghadr Sandesh) and Declaration of War (Allan-i-Jang). Both these papers exhorted the Indians to rise, kill the whites and establish a republic in India. They were widely distributed in Cantons in the United Provinces, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province.<sup>23</sup> The 'Allan-i-Jang,' specially prepared for the purpose, declared that mutiny had broken out in the whole of India and enjoined Hindus and Mohammedans to work for the common cause. It was a trilingual paper.<sup>24</sup>

Besides, various leaflets<sup>25</sup> were published and distributed. Initially, Ghadar literature was hand-written by the students from Ludhiana who had been won over by the revolutionaries. Later it was decided to install a printing press at Lahore. In fact this scheme of starting a press in India was prepared by the Ghadar Party as early as May, 1914. It was with this object that Kartar Singh Latala and Bhagat Singh were sent to India in July 1914.<sup>26</sup> But this plan could not be materialised owing to paucity of funds. Instead, six duplicators were purchased, which were used for publishing Ghadar literature written by hand. This work was

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, page, 19. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was also of the same opinion that it had penetrated as far down as Bengal and was known to the revolutionaries in Dacca vide 'India as I Knew It', London (1925), page 202).

<sup>23</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political B. Proceedings April, 1915, Nos. 416-419 Report on Internal Situation for the month of April, 1915, page 14.

<sup>24</sup> It was published in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi.

<sup>25</sup> These leaflets were 'Tilak', 'Nadir Mauka', 'Rikab Ganj' and 'Canada Da Dukhra.'

<sup>26</sup> Vide Chapter VI of the Thesis. Statement given to the writer by Baba Kartar Singh of village and Post Office Latala, District Ludhiana, dated the 26th February, 1961.

America. The German Consul at Seattle (Washington) was contacted. Baba Hari Singh Usman, of Badowal (Ludhiana), who had about nine years' army service to his credit and was conversant with military exercises and tactics was detailed for the purpose. In his opinion the money for purchasing arms was supplied to the German Consul by the Indians. He states that Rs. 6,00,000 were given to the German Consul by Shivjee Gupta, a man of fortune from Kanpur.<sup>37</sup>

According to the statement of Baba Hari Singh, incharge of the scheme, there was one private factory for preparing arms and ammunition at Berkeley. The manager of that factory was of German origin, though he was a naturalised citizen of the U.S. at that time. His sympathies were with the Germans. From his factory the German Consul purchased 15,000 rifles, 15,000 pistols with 15 lakh rifle and 7½ lakh pistol cartridges.<sup>38</sup> But according to U.S. records, the arms and ammunition were purchased from the following American firms of arms dealers : (1) Hirsch & Sons. St. Jones, California; Francis Bannerman, New York City; W. Stokes—Kirk, Philadelphia; Siegel Cooper Co., New York City and Kirtland and Bros. Co., New York City. The number of arms and ammunition thus purchased has been put as under :

(a) U.S. Springfield Rifles (45-70) Cal.	8080
(b) U.S. Springfield Carbines (45-70)	2400
(c) Repeating rifles system (25-70)	410
(d) Cartridges (Rifle)	3904340
(e) Cartridge belts	5000
(f) Colt Revolvers (Cal.) 45.	500
(g) Colt Revolver Cartridges (Cal.) 45	100000

Accordingly the rifles were 10,890 and revolvers 500.<sup>39</sup>

Two ships, the *Maverick* and the *Annie Larsen* were arranged for the purpose. The *Maverick* was purchased from the Craiz Steamship Co., for \$ 27,000. Baba Hari Singh states the *Maverick*

<sup>37</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Hari Singh Usman of Village and Post Office Badowal, District Ludhiana dated 15th February, 1961.

Baba Hari Singh Usman was a prominent worker of the Ghadar Party. He was also a writer for the Punjabi issue of the Ghadr. He was incharge of the supply of arms and ammunition from the United States to the Ghadarites in India for the planned revolution. During World War II he worked in the I.N.A. movement as well.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Official records of the U.S.A. Govt. bearing on political activities of Indians in the U.S.A. File No. 9-10-3 Section I Memorandum on 'Annie Larson.'

was purchased from the Standard Oil Co. on payment of Rs. 40,000. The '*Annie Larson*' was a German vessel.

The *Annie Larson* was loaded with all the arms and ammunition at San Diego (California) and the main work was undertaken by the Germans from the 1st to the 14th April, 1915. The long time taken for loading was due to the fact that it had to be done under cover of night and stealthily to escape detection by British intelligence. The *Annie Larson* was to deliver these weapons to the *Maverick* at Secorro Islands. The underlying idea was that the *Maverick*, being a ship of the Oil Company, was liable to less suspicion. When the *Annie Larson* was waiting for the *Maverick* at Secorro Islands, some American fishermen saw it loaded with arms.<sup>40</sup> Anticipating some trouble, it started from the Islands on the 28th April.

The *Maverick*<sup>41</sup> reached Secorro Islands on the 28th April, just missing the *Annie Larson*. The same fishermen informed them about the sailing of the *Annie Larson*. Those fishermen informed the U.S. authorities and this resulted in a raid on the party headquarters.

The *Maverick* tried to contact the *Annie Larson* without success and ultimately it reached Java (Indonesia) where the five Indians on board surrendered to the naval police.

The *Annie Larson*, on the other hand again, tried to make contact with the *Maverick* and returned to Secorro Islands. Not finding the *Maverick* there, it proceeded to Aberdeen (Washington) where its crew landed<sup>42</sup> and was detained by the authorities.

The Ghadarites in India having failed to receive arms on arrival, as they were told, set themselves at once to procure what they could in the country. Bengali revolutionaries were contacted for the purpose. In November 1914, Kartar Singh Sarabha went to Calcutta to purchase revolvers from Bengali revolutionaries. He was supplied Rs. 2,000/- for this purpose by Bhai Parma Nand of Lahore. The Bengal Revolutionary Party expressed its inability to supply revolvers. So Kartar Singh had to come back empty-handed.<sup>43</sup> Even in Bengal the revolutionaries were short of arms.

<sup>40</sup> Statement of Baba Hari Singh, Village & Post Office Badowal, Ludhiana, dated February 15, 1961.

<sup>41</sup> It had five Indians on Board, namely Hari Singh, Raghbir Singh, Mangu, Harnam Chand and Kishen Chand.

<sup>42</sup> It landed there on the 29th April.

<sup>43</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political, B.

Proceedings April, 1915, Nos. 412-15. Report on the Internal Situation, page, 9.

Occasions arose when the different groups planned the theft of pistols from each other.<sup>44</sup>

Shortly afterwards Jagat Ram (Hariana) was given Rs. 500/- and sent by Bhai Parma Nand to buy and obtain arms in Peshawar. The venture was unsuccessful and ended in his arrest at the Peshawar railway station.

Attempts were then made to loot arms from *thanas*, *chowkies* and arsenals. On the 25th November, 1914, an attempt was made to loot Mianmeer Arsenal (Lahore) but without any success. A scheme to raid the Regimental magazine at Ferozepore Cantonment on the 30th November, 1914 did not materialise on account of the police encounter on the 27th November, 1914, at Ferozeshah, to which detailed reference has already been made in the previous chapter. Other unsuccessful attempts were made to procure arms from the 23rd Cavalry (Lahore) on the 26th November, 1916 and Sarhali (Amritsar) Police Station on the 27th November, 1916. On the 11th June, 1915, a gang of eight, Roda Singh, Balwant Singh Sangwal, Bachan Singh, Dhudike and others attacked a military guard on Walla Canal Bridge, two miles from Amritsar. The attack was made when the goods train was crossing in order to avoid cries being heard. The sentry was shot dead, one sepoy was severely wounded with an axe and three received slight injuries. The body of the Naik incharge of the guard was afterwards found in the canal bearing three bullet wounds. The Ghadarites took away six rifles, seven bayonets and 240 rounds of ammunition.<sup>45</sup> Arrangements were also made to secure the traditional weapons of Central Punjab. Gujar Singh Bhakna had some hundred axes ('chhavees') prepared.<sup>46</sup>

When the revolutionaries did not succeed in obtaining the required arms and ammunition, either from outside or from the Punjab through raids, it was decided to prepare bombs. Dr. Mathura Singh and Harnam Singh volunteered for the purpose. Dr. Mathura Singh a Kohli Khatri of Dhudial (Jhelum) was a chemist at Nowshera Cantonment from 1906 to 1912. Then he went abroad and came in contact with the Yugantar Ashram. He returned to India in October, 1914. Being a chemist he had some knowledge of

<sup>44</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), page, 92.

<sup>45</sup> Home Department, Government of India : Political B. Proceedings June, 1915, Nos, 549-552, Report on Internal Situation for the month of June, 1915, page, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 79-80.

bomb making. Harnam Singh, on the other hand, was supplied a manual of bomb-making by Surendra Mohan Bose in Vancouver.<sup>47</sup>

The necessary material like potash (chlorate of potash), (suplhide of arsenic), sulphur, sulphuric acid, etc., were collected and put in inkpots. An experiment of this bomb was made on a canal, some miles away from Amritsar. It was successful. Accordingly orders for eighty iron bomb cases were placed with the Ragho foundry, Lahore. Chemicals were collected from Amritsar, Jullundur, Ludhiana and other towns. Village Jhabewal (Ludhiana) was selected as the place for manufacturing.<sup>48</sup> It continued to be a production centre till the 12th January, 1915, when it was shifted to village Lohatbodi in Nabha State. Some bombs were also smuggled into the Punjab from Bengal. This was arranged through S.N. Sanyal and V.G. Pingle.

### Dacoities

Committing of dacoities was not a part of the programme of the Ghadar Party in the beginning. The statements of approvers in the First Lahore Conspiracy Case, Nawab Khan, Mula Singh, Nand Singh and others show that the proposals to commit dacoities were discussed en-route to India after the outbreak of World War I. According to the statement of another approver, Jawala Singh, "They came not to commit dacoities, but to turn the British out, and dacoities were only incidental."<sup>49</sup> The revolutionaries tried to raise funds through appeals and donations, but without any results. So they had to resort to dacoities. Attempts were made to loot Government treasuries, but here, too, they could not succeed. Ultimately they had to commit dacoities in the villages.

On the 24th and 25th December, 1914, dacoities were committed at Pharala and Karan (Jullundur District). Jewellrry Worth Rs. 100/- from Pharala and jewellery and cash worth Rs. 2000/- from Karan were removed.<sup>50</sup> Similar dacoities were resorted to at

<sup>47</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political B. Proceedings January, 1915, Nos. 278 282, Report on Political Situation for December, 1914 and January, 1915, page, 5.

<sup>48</sup> The bombs were manufactured by Dr. Mathura Singh, Amar Singh, Nidhan Singh, Harnam Singh and other Ghadarites.

<sup>49</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgment (13th September 1915) Part III A(3). *The Object of going to India*, page, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Home Department, . Government of India Proceedings December 1915 No. 22 Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1914, page, 8.

Chowrian (Gurdaspur District) on the 27th December, in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur Districts, on the 1st and 4th January, 1915, in the house of the Canal Sub-Overseer, Montgomery District, at Sri Gobindpur (Gurdaspur District) on the 16th January and shops at Kapurthala town on the 21st January, 1915.<sup>51</sup>

Some of the important political dacoities detected by the police were as follows :

(a) The first of these was perpetrated on the 23rd of January in the house of a shop-keeper at Village Sanehwal in Ludhiana District. A group of 10 persons<sup>52</sup> attacked the place. The inmates were beaten, one of them died afterwards, but the booty did not amount to more than Rs. 150/-.

(b) In the early morning of the 28th January, 1915, a group of 13 Ghadarites<sup>53</sup> armed with bombs, pistols and other weapons attacked the house of Hamir Chand, a wealthy money-lender of Mansuran, Ludhiana district. After looting the house, the shops of Hamir Chand and his brother were also searched and looted. The villagers tried to oppose them but Kartar Singh Sarabha declared that the money was being collected to turn out the British. Ultimately Kartar Singh had to fire five or six rounds and throw a bomb to keep the villagers away. The booty with which they retreated here has been valued at Rs. 22,000/-.<sup>54</sup>

(c) On the 29th of January, 1915, a group of 11 plundered two houses of money-lenders at Jhanir in Maler kotla State. The ornaments taken from the two houses amounted to Rs. 1,000/-.

(d) On the night of the 2nd February, 1915, a gang of twenty revolutionaries armed with bombs, revolvers and axes attacked the house of a Sahukar at Chabba in Amritsar District. The owner of the house was murdered in the attack and ten villagers wounded. The booty in this case amounted to Rs. 18,000/-.<sup>55</sup>

(e) On the 3rd of February, 1915, a dacoity was committed by a gang of nine at Rabbon Uncha village in Ludhiana District in

<sup>51</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report Calcutta (1918), page 152.

<sup>52</sup> Prominent among them were Dalip Singh, Kartar Singh and Ram Rakha.

<sup>53</sup> Prominent among them were Kartar Singh Sarabha, Dalip Singh, Ludhiana student and Gurmuikh Singh Lalton.

<sup>54</sup> Home Department, Government of India (1917) Police Part B. Proceedings April No. 53, Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1915 page, 8 and Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Calcutta (1918), page 152.

<sup>55</sup> Home Department, Government of India (1917) Police Part B Proceedings April No. 53, Report on Police Administration for 1915, page 6.

the house of a woman. She was robbed of ornaments worth Rs . 4,000/- and Rs. 2,000/- in cash.<sup>56</sup> The Indian Sedition Committee puts the loot at Rs. 4,198/-.

Besides these, some minor dacoities were also committed. With regard to the dacoities, the Trial Court of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case states, "These were committed to purchase arms and to make bombs for launching an insurrection against the Government and we are convinced that most of the loot was actually used for this purpose."<sup>57</sup>

### Work among Troops

The seduction of Indian troops was perhaps the most essential part of the Ghadar movement. According to the Trial Court of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case, "The most essential and dangerous step which the conspirators adopted for the achievement of their object was, without doubt, seduction of troops or attempts to seduce troops."<sup>58</sup>

The 'Ghadar' kept the conversion of troops in the forefront of its programme.<sup>59</sup> There were very frequent references to the subject in its columns.

On their return to India the revolutionaries tried to win over the Indian troops at every port, where they were stationed. At Shanghai Lehna Singh, Sardara Singh and one Granthi were assigned this work. During the stay of the *Korea* and the *Mashima Maru* the Ghadarites fraternised with the troops at Hong Kong. The Punjabi soldiers promised all help. At Hong Kong a monthly paper 'Bharat Ka Nagara' (Drum of India) was received by the authorities addressed to two native officers of the 26th Punjabis. The following message was written on the paper :

"Read this newspaper carefully and see whence it has come.

<sup>56</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 101.

<sup>57</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, The Dacoities, page 34.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* Seduction of Troops, page 1.

<sup>59</sup> This is supported by the following extracts : "You go and fight for the sake of the whites. You always attack other countries. Why do you not take your own country into your charge. O Soldiers in the Army, have you nothing to do with Indians ? Have you vowed to live as slaves of the English ? Are your lives worth only nine rupees each ?" and Slattery J. *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919) page 93.

Cease betraying your country and prepare yourself to die for it. Exhort your brave sepoys to fight for the nation. Instead of Subedars and Jemadars, you will be made Captains and Colonels. Come, brave men, consider and think well, and throw off the chains of slavery."<sup>60</sup>

At Singapore also attempts at seducing troops were made, which resulted in the Singapore Ghadar. Similar efforts were made at Penang and Rangoon.

In India emissaries were sent to various cantonments for the purpose. During these days the 23rd Cavalry was stationed at Lahore. The sawars were contacted and two of the Ghadarites got themselves recruited in that Cavalry in order to preach sedition and be in regular contact with the sawars, who were easily won over and promised to join the rising on the fixed date. Ghadar literature was supplied to the cantonments. Kartar Singh Sarabha and Nidhan Singh contacted the troops at Ferozepur.

Hira Singh of Charar went to Jacobabad and various other cantonments, where he preached the Ghadar doctrine and endeavoured to seduce troops. Rash Behari Bose took on himself the seduction of troops in the United Provinces and elsewhere.

One of the agents of Rash Behari Bose was Sucha Singh, a Ludhiana school boy. He and Kartar Singh Sarabha went to Meerut, where Pingle joined them. Here they met a sepoy, Phula Singh, of the 128th Pioneers and won him over. Then they visited the 12th Cavalry regimental lines, met a few sawars and seduced them. Phula Singh contacted them again telling them that he had spoken to his *havildar* and wanted to know how many men were joining the movement. He was told that 11,000 were ready and he appeared to be satisfied.

From Meerut they went to Agra, but finding no Sikh regiment there they proceeded to Cawnpore and preached their seditious doctrines to two infantry regiments. From Cawnpore they went to Allahabad, where they met with no success in the *Cavalry lines*, but in the infantry lines secured the co-operation of a *havildar*. From there they went to Benaras where they were met by Vinayak Rao and an unnamed Bengali, and on their advice they visited Dinapur Cantt., where they won over a Rajput and sent him to preach to the Regiment at Agra. From Benaras Sucha Singh went

to Fyzabad, where a havildar agreed to join, and thence to Lucknow, where he met Kartar Singh and Pingle again. They returned to Lahore on the 11th February, 1915.

Dr. Mathura Singh and Amar Singh were sent to stir up the Afridi tribes on the frontier. Nidhan Singh was sent to Jhelum Rawalpindi and Hoti Mardan. The Indian Sedition Committee reports that "Indian soldiers were approached at Meerut, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Benaras, Fyzabad, Lucknow, in the United Province. The success attained was extremely small."<sup>61</sup>

Regarding the stirring among troops, it may be mentioned here that "the audacity with which Sucha Singh and others went about this work of seduction is astounding."<sup>62</sup>

Thus the activities of the Ghadarites in India embraced according to the Police Report for the year 1915, "the commission of dacoities and looting of Government treasuries with the object of amassing funds, the manufacture of arms and the seduction of troops and students, all measures subsidiary to the waging of war against Government."<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918)*, page 158.

<sup>62</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore (1919)*, page, 105.

<sup>63</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Police Part B. Proceedings April No. 53, 1917 Report on Police Administration in Punjab for 1915, page 2 (of remarks).

# 11

## *Plan of Revolution in India*

The headquarters of the party were shifted to Lahore on the 6th February, 1915, from Amritsar, where they had been located since Rash Behari Bose's visit to the Punjab on the 25th January, 1915. A number of buildings were acquired on rent for the purpose, the most important being in Mochi Gate Bazar and in Chauk Mani. As lodges could not be easily arranged for bachelors and non-family men in towns, Mrs. Satya Wati, wife of Ram Saran Dass of Kapurthala, who was a prominent revolutionary, was persuaded to stay there in the interests of the national cause. A portion of Mool Chand Serai was similarly rented for Bibi Gulab Kaur. She was one of the Ghadarites who returned to India from Manila on the outbreak of the war. She was in contact with the Ghadar Party centres at Lahore and guided the workers coming from outside and acted as a link between the centres and the outside workers.<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, before the coming of R.B. Bose, the Ghadarites in the Punjab had been without any central authority and a well-defined plan of action. Under Bose's guidance the work came to be carried on according to a settled plan. The Ghadarites made contacts with a number of cantonments in Northern India. "By the middle of February, a number were undoubtedly keen to join in the rising."<sup>2</sup> The Ghadarites were confident of the co-operation of a number of troops and a considerable part of the people. The contacts established between the Ghadarites of the Punjab and the Bengali revolutionaries also gave some assurance. This co-ordination was also known to the Government whose Report on the Internal Situation for December 1914 and January 1915 says : "The alliance between Bengal and Punjab anarchy is

<sup>1</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat of village Kotla Naudh Singh, District Hoshiarpur dated the 17th September, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> Isemonger, F. C & Slattery, J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 106.

complete, but the directive brain for the time being is that of the Punjab."<sup>3</sup> Consequently the following plan of action was finalised:

### Outline of Plan

"Suddenly one day, without giving any publicity to our intention all the British soldiers of the Cantonments of the Northern India should be attacked on one day at one time and at once. All the people who come under our control in this uprising, should be arrested. The attack should be launched at night and at that time the telegraph connections of the cities, etc., should be cut off and the British people should be taken into custody and then after taking over the treasuries, the prisoners from the jails should be released. Having done this the administration of the towns would be entrusted to suitable elected persons and all the gang of revolutionaries should assemble in Punjab."<sup>4</sup> The Ghadarites were confident that even if they had to continue their fight for one year, they would succeed in winning freedom with the help of the enemies of the British.

A similar though vague plan of action was adumbrated in a letter from one Thakur Singh of Canton addressed to Gyani Bhagwan Singh, intercepted at Hong Kong. In that letter Thakur Singh, who was returning to India in December, 1914, informed Gyani Bhagwan Singh that he was going to India and spoke out his mind thus :

"At the end of December each man should go to his village for a few days and rouse the young men. In early January the people should assemble and proceed to destroy the railway lines and cut the telegraph wires. I will clear the district of Ludhiana and then march ahead. After murdering the district officials I will appoint members of the revolutionary party in their place. The outbreak must take place simultaneously in every district in the Punjab. On the preceding night emissaries would be sent to each native regiment to tell them of the approaching revolution." Thakur Singh hoped that when he next wrote it would be to announce that India was independent.

He went on to propound a utopian scheme for the Government of Independent India. "All property would be held in common.

<sup>3</sup> Home Department Government of India, Political B(1915) Proceedings No. 278-282, Report on the Internal Situation for December 1914 and January, 1915, page, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Sanyal, S.N. : *Bandi Jiwan*, Part I, (Punjabi rendering by Gurdit Singh) Amritsar (year not given) page 113-114.

Every morning the villagers would assemble for an hour to sing national songs and receive instructions in the acts of war. One hour's work in the morning and one in the evening would suffice for the cultivation of the common village land. Money and the police would be both abolished. Why should there be any theft or robbery, borrowing or interest? In each province there would be one huge factory for the production of cloth, shoes, umbrellas and other necessities of civilisation. Each village would send its quota of men to work in the factory for a month at a time. Electric cars would run in every village."<sup>6</sup>

#### Date of Insurrection

Before fixing the date of insurrection and actual implementation of the plan, comprehensive preparations had been made. The troops at several places were sounded about their readiness for action. For this purpose, Harnam Singh of Kotla Naudh Singh went to Rawalpindi, Bannu, Naushahra and Peshawar, Piara Singh Langeri to Kohat, Gurmukh Singh Lalton and Udham Singh to Jhelum and Hoti-Mardan. The revolutionary groups at Benaras were also sounded. On receipt of favourable reports from several cantonments particularly from the 23rd Cavalry, Lahore, 26th Punjabis, Ferozpur, 128 Pioneers and 12th Cavalry, Meerut and 9th Bhopal Regiment, Benaras, a meeting of the Ghadar workers was held on the 12th February, 1915, at Lahore, when the 21st February, 1915, was fixed as the date for the general uprising.

The details worked out were that one group of revolutionaries would attack the Mianmeer arsenal and the sawars of the 23rd cavalry would join them when they reach their barracks. They would then proceed to Lahore. At the same time another group would attack the fort and the regimental armoury at Ferozpur with the help of the soldiers of the 26th Punjabis stationed there. Then these Cantonments were to be captured. At that very hour attacks were to be launched at Meerut by the elements of 128 Pioneers under the command of Sepoy Phula Singh and of the 12th Cavalry under Sawar Isher Singh, and Meerut was also to be captured. Thereafter, they had instructions to send 100 men to Lahore and

\* Home Department, Government of India, Political B. Proceedings, June 1915. Nos. 549-552, Report on the Internal Situation for the month of June, 1915, page, 12. (The Government report admits the sincerity of Thakur Singh's revolutionary sentiments for he had obtained six revolvers and 200 rounds of ammunition).

the rest were to march to Delhi and proclaim a republic. The British officers in the regiments were to be massacred. Signals were then to be sent to the remaining cantonments, so that insurrections in other cantonments and towns should follow immediately.

According to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, "a general rising had been planned for the night of the 21st February wherein various cantonments of northern India certain troops would mutiny, murder their British officers, and continuing with the Ghadar adherents from outside, who were to be ready on the spot, would seize the magazines, arms and ammunitions and bring about a general rising."<sup>6</sup> Sir Michael O'Dwyer even states that "the idea was not fantastic, for it had penetrated as far down as Bengal and was known to the disaffected elements in Dacca."<sup>7</sup>

The Indian Sedition Committee Report also throws light on this aspect of the movement. "The plotters had designed simultaneous outbreaks at Lahore, Ferozpur and Rawalpindi and it appeared that their operations were intended to cover a far wider area. Not only were these to extend to such places as Benaras, and Jabalpur but we are satisfied from evidence which we regard as conclusive that at least two or three revolutionaries in East Bengal were on the 8th of February aware of what was in contemplation and were arranging for a rising at Dacca."<sup>8</sup>

The first targets of the revolutionary attacks were to be the English officers of the army and civil departments; then they would attack prisons in the dead of night and release all prisoners, the treasuries would be looted, the army camps would be mobbed, and from there they would secure stores, arms and ammunitions, the telegraph lines would be cut off, and then after entrusting the arms, weapons, ammunitions and funds to local cells the leaders would rally in all strength in the Punjab which was ready to give a fight for full one year. It was decided that cutting of telegraph wires was to be understood as the signal for the uprising.

After the date of the uprising had been fixed, messengers were sent to the various cantonments. A declaration was prepared. Tricolour national flags were made. The three colours were red, representing Hindus, yellow representing Sikhs and green representing Muhammedans. These flags were given to the Ghadar workers

<sup>6</sup> O'Dwyer Sir Michael: *India as I knew It* (1885-1925), London (1925), page, 200.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 201.

<sup>8</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee* 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), page, 154.

who were to lead the groups in and outside the Punjab. For instance, Pandit Parmanand was sent off with one flag to Peshawar, Kartar Singh Sarabha with some to Ferozepur, Sucha Singh was given two for Ambala and Meerut and Mani Lal Trivedi,<sup>9</sup> was sent with one to Multan for Rajput troops. Others were sent to rural assembly places. The slogan 'Maro Ferangi Ko' (Kill the English) was also decided upon.

As usual arms, ammunition, particularly bombs, were collected. Vinayak Rao coming from Benaras on the 15th February with Mani Lal Trivedi, an initiator of the Benaras anarchist cell, brought with him a box wrapped up in cloth containing picric acid bombs.<sup>10</sup> Wire-cutters and files were brought to Lahore for cutting telegraph wires and three safety pliers for cutting live electric wires were also arranged. The wirecutters were distributed to most of the emissaries sent to various cantonments for distribution to troops there.

On the 16th of February, 1915, a definite plan was made for attacking Mianmeer on the 21st February. The party expected that only a small number was needed for this attack, as the sawars of 23rd Cavalry were ready themselves for the purpose. Accordingly Sant Wasakha Singh, Hazara Singh, Bishan Singh, Kehar Singh, Indar Singh and Jawand Singh, were detailed to bring their selected men from villages like Dadehar, Merhana, Sur Singh and Besian. On the 20th they were to attack Lopoke police station for looting arms and on the 21st to reach Lahore.

The Ghadarites of the Malwa tract met on the 14th February at Gujjarwal.<sup>11</sup> It was decided that they should bring their gangs fully armed to Ferozepur on the 21st February. On the 17th Sant Randhir Singh held another meeting of his group at Dhandari near Ludhiana. Kartar Singh Sarabha and Sajjan Singh Narangwal had gone to Ferozpur to pass on information to the 26th Punjabi Regiment. Thus hectic preparations were being made for the final rising on the 21st February, 1915.

On the other hand, the Government agencies were not in the dark about the matter. They had their spies planted in the organisation. The Chabba dacoity of the 2nd February, 1915, had given

<sup>9</sup> A young Gujrati Brahman.

<sup>10</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 106.

<sup>11</sup> Prominent among them were Ishar Singh (Dhudike), Udham Singh (Hans), Sant Randhir Singh (Narangwal), Harnam Singh (Gujjarwal) and Santa Singh (Nurpur Kanur).

important clues. K.B. Liaqat Hyat Khan, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Amritsar, came to know that Mula Singh was concerned in that dacoity and it was the work of the revolutionaries. Through Bela Singh Zaildar he engaged one Kirpal Singh Berar on the 9th February for getting and supplying information of the acts and plans of the Ghadarites. Kirpal Singh was himself a returned emigrant from Shanghai and was a cousin of Balwant Singh in the 23rd Cavalry. Balwant Singh brought him to Amritsar on the 12th February. Not finding Mula Singh there, they followed him to Lahore. At Lahore they met Amar Singh, who told them that Mula Singh had gone back to Amritsar. He accompanied Balwant Singh and Kirpal Singh to Amritsar where they learnt Mula Singh had been arrested. Kirpal Singh, however, managed to convince his companions of his bonafides. They took him to a meeting place at Rasulpuria Haveli, where Nidhan Singh, Kehar Singh and Harnam Singh of Kotla Naudh Singh were staying. Nidhan Singh had known Kirpal Singh in Shanghai and vouched for his reliability. Then at Nidhan Singh's proposal the gathering voted his admission to the inner circle and elected him to succeed Mula Singh. Thus an agent of the Government managed to enter the inner circle of the Party.

There Kirpal Singh learnt that the rising had been fixed for the 21st. He was successful in passing on this information personally to the police at Amritsar. Next day he was sent to Lahore and found a gathering there of nearly all the leading revolutionaries. As he was not in touch with the police there, he wired to the Deputy Superintendent of Police at Amritsar on the 15th February.<sup>12</sup> The wire was delayed and the police party could not reach in time to catch the revolutionaries while in conference. This helped to conceal Kirpal Singh's contact from the revolutionaries. Not suspecting any treacherous designs, the revolutionary headquarters directed him to go to Lahore Cantonment to get the men of the 23rd Cavalry prepared for the rising. But on the 15th February Nidhan Singh saw him at the Lahore railway station, when according to instructions from the revolutionary headquarters he should have been in the barracks of the 23rd Cavalry. He was in fact waiting for a police force from Amritsar to whom he was to betray his comrades. The next day he was noticed asking many questions seeking information. This made the Ghadarites suspicious of him.

<sup>12</sup> Apparently no code word was used for giving the wire. It is surprising how the wire was given without it being disclosed.

### Change of Date

However, at that stage the Ghadarites thought that it would be disastrous to remove him. So a strict watch was kept on him. When on the 16th of February the Ghadarite headquarters were convinced that Kirpal Singh was an informer, they decided to advance the date of rising by two days and to keep it secret from Kirpal Singh.<sup>13</sup> Messengers were quickly despatched to various cantonments and other places for passing on the changed date.

The information against the Ghadarites passed on to the Government agencies equally rapidly. On the 16th February Kirpal Singh informed Liaqat Hyat Khan (Deputy Superintendent Police, Amritsar, then at Lahore) that probably the Ghadarites were holding a meeting on the 18th February at their Mochi Gate headquarters. The police accordingly arranged to raid the house on that day. Before he came to be suspected of being an informer, Kirpal Singh had been detained for passing a message to the Ghadarites of village Dadeher, (Lahore). While going to that village on the 17th he informed the Lahore Police that he was proceeding to village Dadeher and would be back on the 18th. It was for this reason that the 18th was fixed as the date of the police raid on the central headquarters at Mochi Gate.

Kirpal Singh returned to Lahore on the 19th morning and the first thing he did on that day was to meet the police (K.B. Liaqat Hayat Khan, D.S.P) and arrange for the raid to be launched that day on his signal. Accordingly the police took positions near the Party headquarters. On Kirpal Singh's arrival in the house, a strict supervision on him was begun. The Ghadarites thought that as Kirpal Singh was not aware of the changed date, the Government would not know it too. But as luck would have it, Kirpal Singh came to know of it by chance. On the 19th February while Kirpal Singh was in the house at Mochi Gate, one of the emissaries, who was not aware of the bona fides of Kirpal Singh, came and reported in his presence that he had passed the message to the sawars of the 23rd Cavalry about the change of date. This information Kirpal Singh promptly passed on to the police.

At noon when the Ghadarites went out for lunch, Kirpal Singh slipped away. Just as he stepped out of the house, he met a C.I.D. man in plain clothes, and told him that the rising was to

<sup>13</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. II Judgement dated the 30th March, 1916. page, 96.

break out that night.<sup>14</sup> Consequently the information was passed on to all the important places and the government officials were soon alerted. But as the revolutionary leaders were out, the house was not raided immediately. For this Kirpal Singh's signal was to be awaited.

The Ghadarite guards keeping watch on Kirpal Singh, also came to know that Kirpal Singh had passed on the fateful information to the police. Some of them followed him out of the house and overtaking him brought him back at once. They had decided to murder him as soon as the leading members returned from lunch. Kirpal Singh also thought that his life was not safe now. At 4.30 P.M. Kirpal Singh went on the roof of the house posing that he was going to make water, and gave the signal to police hidden nearby.

#### Failure of Plan

The police rushed to the place and captured seven Ghadarites.<sup>15</sup> Three loaded bombs, four empty inkpots, raw materials for bombs, a dagger, a revolver, seditious literature and 'revolutionary' flags and material for more were discovered.<sup>16</sup> Soon after three more were arrested, as they entered the house. With the headquarters captured and the knowledge that the police were now in control, the other leaders dispersed and the plan collapsed.

On the 20th, six more revolutionaries were arrested,<sup>17</sup> when they entered the headquarters not knowing anything about the happening of the 19th.

The disaffected elements in the 23rd Cavalry were ready to act on the 19th. It was settled with the sawars that a number of revolutionaries would assemble near the railway lines, of whom a party of six or seven was to be led to the barracks to capture the swords, (during those days the sawars were issued only swords and

<sup>14</sup> Sanyal, S.N. *Bandi Jiwan*, Part I (Punjabi rendering by Gurdit Singh) Amritsar (year not given) page, 118-119.

<sup>15</sup> The captured Ghadarites were Amar Singh of Nawanshahar, Hirda Ram of Mandi State, Balwant Singh of Sathiala, Kharak Singh of Bopa Rai (Ludhiana) Kala Singh, Jawand Singh of Amritsar and Gurdit Singh of Sur Singh, Lahore.

<sup>16</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page, 108.

<sup>17</sup> The arrested revolutionaries were Indar Singh of Basian (Lahore), Kirpal Singh of Bopa Rai (Ludhiana), Parmanand (Jhansi), Sukrada (Kharka Hamirpur, U.P.) Gurmukh Singh (Latton, Ludhiana) and Jamna Dass (Bara Gaon, U.P.), cook of Rash Behari Bose.

rifles were given only for training purposes during war time), when the men would fall-in at roll call. A second party was to be led to the quarter-guard to break open the magazine and seize the rifles and ammunition. After this the sawars would join the revolutionaries to undertake a wholesale massacre of Europeans.

At the appointed time on the 19th, the Ghadarites under the command of Prem Singh and Jagat Singh assembled near the railway line. Information of the plot had, however, been received by the officers of the regiment. At seven O'clock in the evening the whole regiment was suddenly ordered to fall-in. Armed British personnel were posted on sentry duties. Seeing the whole regiment fall-in, the assembled Ghadarites realised that the plot had been discovered. Consequently they moved away. That night the regiment was kept on duty till mid-night.

At Ferozepur on the 18th February eight of the sepoy's of the 26th Punjabis, on whom the Ghadarites mainly counted, were discharged because of their seditious conduct. The actual scheme planned for this station was that the revolutionaries would assemble at the range. The dis-affected men of the 26th Punjabis would act as guides for the assembly. One party would attack the magazine depot and another party would attack other depots and regimental lines. The British troops would be massacred. Accordingly, on the 19th February at 9 O'clock at night the Ghadarites got down from the train at the railway station. Sant Randhir Singh brought his *jatha* of 60 men. This *jatha* and other Ghadarites, like Udhans Singh Hans, Isher Singh, Dhudike and Arjan Singh, Ghungrana, moved to the range under the command of Kartar Singh Sarabha. Some of the discharged sawars were also with them. According to one statement in the Lahore Supplementary Conspiracy case, besides the party arriving by train, "there were a hundred others already assembled at the Range."<sup>18</sup> Kartar Singh Sarabha then sent Kirpa Singh, one of the discharged sepoy's, to the barracks to fetch the others who also had promised to join and lead the assaulting parties. Kirpa Singh failed to return, and the men at the range, after waiting till dawn, dispersed.

Later it was found that Kirpa Singh had been taken into custody on his return to the barracks for having disobeyed an order given to him on discharge that he was not to return to the Cantonment. In the morning on being produced before the Commanding

\* Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore* (1919), page, 111.

Officer, he said that he had some back to settle his accounts and was let off.

Having met with no success at Ferozepur, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Arjan Singh and Harnam Singh of Sialkot left for Lahore to find out how the rising had fared there.

At Meerut and other stations the revolutionaries awaited the signal from the Punjab, which never came. Thus the planned rising failed to take place.

The Ghadarites now started leaving Lahore in order to escape arrests. On the 20th of February, there occurred an incident, which is commonly known as the Anarkali Bazar Case. On that date, early in the morning three Ghadarites<sup>19</sup> left the headquarters No. 2 of the Party (second centre of the revolutionaries at Gwal Mandi) and were passing through Anarkali Bazar, when they came upon, Sub-Inspector Mohammed Musa and Head-Constable Masum Ali Shah, who were on special patrol duty. Getting suspicious, the Sub-Inspector stopped and ordered them to lay down whatever they had. Upon this Arjan Singh remarked, "I will give you something," and drawing his revolver shot at both police officers, killing the Head-Constable and wounding the Sub-Inspector. Arjan Singh was seized on the spot by a dairy shop-keeper named Khuda Baksh and a wrestler named Mohammed Ali. The other two managed to escape.<sup>20</sup>

#### Arrests of the Ghadarites

With leakage of the proposed plan on the 19th February, the police raided various centres of the Ghadarites, and carried out arrests. Thirteen were arrested on the 19th February and six on the 20th. In the regiments at different places also men suspected of being in the conspiracy were taken into custody. The police tried to lock up Rash Behari Bose, the chief planner of the movement at Lahore, but he had escaped. On the 2nd March, 1915, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Jagat Singh of Sur Singh and Harnam Singh Tundilat were captured at Wilsonpur in the Shahpur District, where they had gone to influence the sawars at the horse-run of the 22nd Cavalry in which Jagat Singh had himself served. V.G. Pingle,

<sup>19</sup> They were Arjan Singh of Ghungrana, Harnam Singh of Sialkot and Banta Singh of Sangwal.

<sup>20</sup> Home Department, Government of India(1917) Police Part B. Proceeding April No. 53, Report on Police Administration in Punjab for the year 1915, page 6.

who was still planning to lead the 12th Cavalry into the insurrection and to march to Delhi, was arrested on the night of the 23rd-24th March, 1915, in the Cavalry Lines at Meerut. Ten bombs of the Bengal pattern were found on his person.<sup>21</sup> Piara Singh (Langeri, Hoshiarpur) was captured on the 12th April, 1915. The Government had taken 63 revolutionaries into custody, while many others went into hiding.

### Causes of Failure

The failure of the planned rising may be attributed to several causes, the most important being as is usual with conspiracies, treachery and betrayal. The chain of betrayals seems to have started with the Chabba Dacoity (Amritsar) on the 2nd February, 1915. In that dacoity a group of villagers had captured one member of the gang, Kala Singh, a blacksmith by caste. He disclosed that it was committed by the Ghadarites and that Mula Singh of village Miran Kot was the ring leader at Amritsar. On this discovery Kirpal Singh Berar mentioned above was engaged through Zaildar Bela Singh. How Kirpal Singh managed to enter the organisation and betrayed its most vital secrets to the police has been stated above.

The lenient attitude of the Ghadarites towards Kirpal Singh proved fatal to their plans. It seems Balwant Singh, Kirpal Singh's cousin, who recommended him to the inner circle of the organisation was swayed more by the fact of kinship than anything else. The failure of the Ghadarites to do away with him or punish him, when they were convinced of his profligacy as early as on the 15th February, 1915, is pretty nearly inexplicable.

The government agencies also proved quite alert to the situation. In this connection Sir Michael O'Dwyer states, "The coup at Lahore on the 19th February foiled the plans for a general rising that night. We at once wired in cipher to the various cantonments, Sialkot, Ferozepur, Rawalpindi, etc. and the military authorities took the necessary—in some cases perhaps excessive—precautions. At Lahore and Ferozepur Cantonments, gangs of the Ghadar Party had gathered to 'chip in' when the expected mutiny began. But they found all the troops fallen in and under arms, and they beat a hurried retreat."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Home Department, Government of India (1915) (Secret) Political B. Proceedings, April 1915, Nos. 412-415, Report on the Internal Situation for the month of March, 1915, page, 16.

<sup>22</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael : *India as I Knew It*, (1885-1925), London (1925), page 203.

### **Return of Rash Behari Bose to Benaras**

After the collapse of the plan, Kartar Singh Sarabha reached Lahore on the 20th February and went straight to Rash Behari Bose's residence, which was known only to the selected few. Harnam Singh Tundilat and Ram Saran Dass (Kapurthala) were there with Bose. It was decided that Bose should immediately leave Lahore. Accordingly, on the 20th night Bose left for Benaras and Kartar Singh Sarabha saw him off at the Lahore railway station. Bose did not stay long at Benaras and left for Calcutta, from where he went abroad. According to the Indian Sedition Committee "Rash Behari left the country after a final interview with a few of his Benaras disciples at Calcutta<sup>23</sup> (whom he told that he was going to 'some hills' and would not be back for two years). Baba Gopal Singh Sohi states that while he was moving in foreign countries organising Indians for rising against the British, he met Rash Behari Bose in Japan in early 1916.<sup>24</sup>

### **Going Back of Surviving Ghadarites to America for Re-appraisal of their Policies**

Ghadar Party workers, who escaped arrests, then managed to return to the United States for a reappraisal of their policies and programmes. When in April, 1917 the United States joined the War on the British side, the latter pressed the U.S. Government to take action against the Indian revolutionaries in the U.S. Accordingly, under pressure of the British Government, the leaders of the Ghadar Party were rounded up in August, 1917 and charged with the violation of the laws of neutrality of the United States. On this charge 31 Indians were tried at San Francisco (California) and were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from a few months to a few years.

### **Alignment with International Communism**

Santokh Singh, General Secretary after Lala Hardyal, and a prominent member of the inner committee of the Ghadar Party, was one of those tried and sentenced as above. He was kept in

<sup>23</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report*, Calcutta (1918), page, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Gopal Singh Sohi of Village and Post Office, Sohian, District Ludhiana, dated the 19th February, 1961.

Baba Gopal Singh Sohi was one of the writers for the Punjabi issue of the 'Ghadar'. Later he preached the Ghadar ideology among Indians at Hong Kong and Shanghai. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Party for some time.

the San Quentin Prison (California) where he came into contact with a Russian revolutionary who persuaded him to align the party with international communism. With the murder of Ram Chandra, the virtual dictator, the leadership fell into the hands of Santokh Singh and Bhagwan Singh. Santokh Singh, being more enthusiastic about the new alignment, convinced some of his colleagues of the propriety of making a sort of workable agreement with the Comintern. Consequently, alongwith Rattan Singh he was deputed to go to Moscow. From there they travelled through Kabul, where they met Teja Singh Swatantar. The latter also agreed to work for the new alignment. Santokh Singh returned to India,<sup>25</sup> while Rattan Singh returned to California via Moscow. The Ghadarites were impressed by the "cordial welcome given to their representatives by the white sahib"<sup>26</sup> in Russia. It was a new experience for members of a subject nation, and they were thus won over to communism, which event changed entirely the subsequent course and character of the movement.

In India he started a communist weekly *Kirti* from Amritsar in 1928.

Quoted from the monthly *Advance* published by the Punjab Public Relations Department, Independence Issue, August, 1955, Vol. II No. 8, page 42.

# 12

## *The Party in Action Abroad*

The activities of the Ghadar Party were not confined to India. Action took place at Singapore on the 15th February, 1915, whereas the date of the rising fixed for India was the 19th February, 1915. The dates, though very close, were not fixed by a single authority, i.e. central headquarters of the Party in India. The insurrection at Singapore occurred without any definite programmatic plan but there is no denying the fact that it was on the whole the outcome of the propaganda of the Ghadar Party and many Ghadarites were behind its organisation.

This is borne out by numerous documentary proofs. According to the 'Indian Sedition Committee Report' the 5th Infantry Regiment at Singapore "had undoubtedly been contaminated by Mohammedan and Hindu conspirators belonging to the American Ghadar Party."<sup>1</sup> The findings of the Senate Fact Finding Committee of the U.S.A. also bear testimony to the fact that "the Singapore Ghadar was organised by the Ghadar Party."<sup>2</sup>

Various Ghadarites were left at Singapore on their way back to India during October, November and December, 1914, after the outbreak of the war. Mention may be made here of Harnam Singh of village Rasulpur, Amritsar, and Hira Singh of Charar. They were dropped at Singapore to prepare the Indian troops for insurrection. Similarly, Mujtaba Hussain alias Mul Chand, who had been a Zaildar in the Court of Wards at Cawnpore, came to Singapore from Manila (Phillipines) with the other Ghadarites and helped to promote the mutiny.<sup>3</sup> Another youngman, Gian Chand of Mori Marl, Lahore, who had joined the Ghadar Party at Singapore before the mutiny and was afterwards to be tried and convicted in the

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report*, Calcutta (1918), page 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Senate Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities to Report California Legislature (1953)*, page 220.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report*, Calcutta (1918), page 170.

Burma Conspiracy Case I also claimed to have taken a share.<sup>4</sup>

At Bangkok a German wrote to a local newspaper, while clearing the position of the Germans in the Internment Camp, Singapore that "he had met in Bangkok, some six weeks before, an educated Indian, a leader of a revolutionary movement (Bhai Santokh Singh) and well supplied with gold, who told him he was going to Singapore to cause a rising there."<sup>5</sup> This is also supported by the police officials according to whom "without the incitements and misrepresentations of the Ghadar Party the mutiny (at Singapore) would have been most improbable."<sup>6</sup>

According to Lieut-General Sir George Macmunn, there used to be usually two battalions at Singapore, one British and the other Indian. In 1915, the British battalion had been sent to England and no other battalion was posted in its place. But the local volunteer corps was made permanent and 96 soldiers of the Malay State Volunteers Rifles joined it. The Indian Battalion was the 5th Infantry and consisted entirely of Mohammedans recruited mostly from India. In addition, there was a detachment of the 36th Sikh Regiment waiting there to join their battalion. Incidentally, they had no ammunition. When the mutiny took place in February there was only one small warship in the harbour.

The 5th Infantry was housed in Alexandra Barracks, 4 miles from Singapore town. The detachment of the 36th Battalion was stationed near by. Close to them there was an Internment Camp for the Germans, which contained about 300 German naval men. This camp was guarded first by the 5th Infantry and since the latter had to leave for Hong Kong, the guard duty was performed by the Singapore Volunteer Rifles.

It had been planned that the 5th Infantry would move to Hong Kong on the 15th of February, 1915. On the 14th February fell the New Year Celebrations of the Chinese, when a large number of crackers were exploded. Because of the noise produced by the crackers, nobody paid any heed to the sound of bullet fire.

According to the movement orders, the 5th Infantry was ready on the 15th. Prior to their move, they were made to fall in and inspected by Commander-General D.Redoh. Everything was found in order. But as arms and ammunition were being loaded in the

<sup>4</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery : J, : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 132.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

vehicles from the Alexandra Barracks, a shot was fired accidentally and the mutiny followed forthwith. The soldiers of the 5th Infantry took the arms and ammunition into their hands. Whosoever tried to check or prevent them, was shot dead. Two British officers, however, managed to escape and inform the nearby Malay State Volunteer Rifles Unit about the mutiny.

Captain Smith, Commander of the Malay Volunteer Rifles, took his men along and made for the barracks of the 5th Infantry. As they advanced towards the mutineers, they were fired at, but they managed to reach the bungalow of the Colonel without any casualty. Three officers of the 5th Infantry were also there. They deployed themselves around the bungalow and guarded it from all sides.

The mutineers of the 5th Infantry had no prior plan of action. But they soon devised one and organised themselves into three groups. One group was to go to the German Internment Camp to secure the release of the German internees; the second was to assault and capture the bungalow of the Colonel ; and the third to check and engage any support-force coming from Singapore. Some small groups went out to kill stray Europeans that might be met with. At first nobody believed the mutiny had broken out. Bullet fire was heard but ignored under the belief that crackers were being exploded by the Chinese.

Colonel Martin, Commander of the 5th Infantry, rang up Major General D. Redoht, who was at his bungalow, and informed him about the mutiny of his battalion. He also told him that he was in his house and could engage the mutineers till the morning (16th morning) with the support of the Malay State Volunteers. The General sent word to the Governor, Sir Arthur Young, and directed his wife to pass on the information on phone to the Commander of the German Internee Camp, and himself started towards Singapore. When the General's wife rang up the Camp she heard the sound of a bullet on the telephone. This bullet had killed Lt. Montgomery, who was listening to the telephone. Before information could reach the camp, the mutineers had attacked it. The Camp Commandant, three officers and seven N.C.Os and O. Rs. were shot dead. One German soldier and another of Johar State were also killed. Three more Englishmen and one German were wounded. The detachment of the 36th Sikh came out with their arms but they had no ammunition. The following day, when they were supplied with ammunition, they joined the soldiers collected by the General.

Having shot dead the sentries, the Ghadarites entered the

campaign in America prior to 1911 in league with German agents and Indian revolutionaries in Europe, spreading the German doctrine that the fatherland would strike England.<sup>9</sup>

The German group, which helped the Ghadar Party in its plan, included the personnel of the German Consulates, other Germans outside their country and American citizens of German origin who were working according to the instructions of the German Foreign Office. Bengali revolutionaries, Chandra Kant Chakraborty and Hemendra Kishore Rakshit worked for the revolution through the German Consul at Washington. The German Consul at Shanghai was given the general charge of operations in the Far East, but the active agencies were in Siam, Java and Persia.<sup>10</sup>

This German group, however, had no real sympathy with the Indian struggle for freedom. Their only interest was to work and strike against the British. They assisted the Indian revolutionaries in publishing anti-British literature, in raising funds, in collecting arms and ammunition and in getting passports for movement from one state to another.

The pro-Islamic was another group which the Ghadar Party had won over. It included the Turkish and other Islamic elements who regarded the Sultan of Turkey as their temporal leader. The link between the Ghadar Party and this Islamic group was created and worked in the Burma campaign of the revolutionaries to which detailed reference will be presently made.

#### Indian National Party

In Germany, another revolutionary party had been formed to which some prominent Ghadarites were also attached. A young Tamilian, named Chempakakaraman Pillai, president of a body known as the International Pro-India Committee at Zurich applied to the German Consul in September, 1914, for permission to publish anti-British literature in Germany. A month later he arrived in Berlin to be attached to the German Foreign Office and founded the Indian National Party attached to the German General Staff.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Macmunn, Sir George : *Turmoil and Tragedy in India, 1914 and After* London (1935) page 117.

<sup>10</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Political B., Proceedings, August (1915), No. 552-556, page 13.

<sup>11</sup> Macmunn, Sir George : *Turmoil and Tragedy in India, 1914 and After* London (1935) page 117 and *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report, Calcutta (1918)*, page 119.

Prominent among the Indians in this organisation were Hardyal, Taraknath Das, Maulvi Barkatullah, Chandra K. Chakraborty and Heramba Lal Gupta. The object of this Society was to establish republican rule in India with the help of Germany. They held regular meetings which were also attended by some of the high German officials.<sup>12</sup>

The work assigned to the Indian National Party was to produce and distribute anti-British literature, to preach sedition to Indian prisoners in Germany, and possibly also to act as spies among the Indian troops in France.<sup>13</sup> Prominent members of this party were allotted diverse duties and detailed to various parts of the world. Barkatullah was deputed to direct a campaign of winning over Indian prisoners of war captured by the Germans. C. Pillai was entrusted with the Berlin office code for some time. H.L. Gupta was for a time the Indian agent of Germany in America and arranged with Boehm (German)—of whom more hereafter—to go to Siam and train men there for an attack on Burma. Gupta was succeeded as the German agent in America by C.K. Chakraborty in view of the following letter of the Berlin Foreign Office :

"Berlin, February 4th, 1916.

The German Embassy, Washington.

In future all Indian affairs are to be exclusively handled by the Committee to be formed by Dr. Chakraborty. Birendra Sarkar and Heramba Lal Gupta, of which the latter person has in the meantime been expelled from Japan, thus cease to be the independent representatives of the Indian Independence Committee existing here.

Sd/- Zimmerman"<sup>14</sup>

The role played by the Indian National Party at Berlin mainly related to the Siam-Burma Scheme.

#### **Siam-Burma Scheme**

There was a large number of Punjabis working in Siam in various capacities. There were also some Indian Mohammedans engaged

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Official Records on political activities of Indians' General Records of the Department of Justice, 1917-18 File No. 9-10-3 Section 2, Part II. Statement of Jodh Singh, dated the 15th November, 1915, page, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Home Department, Government of India (Political) Proceedings for August, 1915, No. 552-556, page, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from the *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report Calcutta (1918)* page 120, and

Macmunn, Sir George : *Turmoil and Tragedy in India, 1914 and After*, London (1935) pages 117-118.

in business. Shortly after its first issue, the 'Ghadar' began to be sent to Siam in order to exhort the Indians to participate in the freedom struggle. In the distribution of the 'Ghadar' in Siam, Jiwan Singh, Inder Singh, Dharam Singh, Chet Ram and Karam Chand played an important part. The ground for the Ghadar Party was prepared by the paper. After sometime the Party's branch in Siam became very active. It is admitted in Government records that "the most active branches (of the Ghadar Party) are in Siam, Java and Persia."<sup>15</sup> The object of these activities of the Ghadarites in Siam, was to convert the Indians there to the cause of freedom and send them to India for the intended insurrection. Of course, it was a part of the wider plan of the Party.

But on account of the failure of the Ghadar plan in India and the development of closer contacts with the Germans, the activities of the Ghadarites in the Siam-Burma Scheme took a different turn. Accordingly, a "modified plan was chalked out, aiming at the training of 10,000 Indians in Siam with the help of German experts in military warfare."<sup>16</sup> Indians in the Burma Military Police also were to be won over. With the help of these two groups, Burma was to be captured. "If the events in Burma did not lead to a general insurrection (in India), the province was then to be made the base for operations against the whole country. Arms were to be supplied by German agents from the United States and Mexico partly for Siam and Burma and partly for India. The Andamans were then to be seized, the prisoners released and enrolled to help and the islands made a base for any action to follow."<sup>17</sup>

In this Burma-Siam Scheme, the Indians were to be trained in the Chandrai Jungle (Siam) by German experts. From there they were to march on Burma. The arms for this enterprise were to be supplied by the Germans through the cargo-ships, *Annie Larson* and *Maverick*, reference to which has been made earlier.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Home Department, Government of India, (Political) Proceedings August, 1915, No. 552-556, page 5.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Records on Political Activities of Indians during the War, Dept. of Justice, File No. 9-10-3 Section II, Part II. Statement of George Paul Boehm, dated the 17th November, 1915, page, 1 and Home Department, Government of India (Political) Proceedings, August 1915, No. 552-56 page 7.

<sup>17</sup> Isemonger F.C. and Slattery J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919) page 133.

<sup>18</sup> Chapter X : pages 188-189.

Funds were also to be provided by the Germans. Prominent among the sponsors of this scheme were Sohan Lal Pathak, Harnam Singh, Santokh Singh, H.L. Gupta, Bhai Balwant Singh (from Canada), Gyani Bhagwan Singh and Jodh Singh (later approver). During those days a railway line was being constructed in Siam under the guidance of German engineers. Babu Amar Singh was working there as a surveyor; he was staying at Pakho (a place near the construction site of the railway line) and was the local leader of the Ghadarites there. His house was the headquarters of the Ghadarites working for the Siam Scheme. The men working on the railway lines were mostly Punjabis.

With the efforts of H.L. Gupta, three Germans—Boehm, Wehde and Sterneck—were drafted through the German Consul at Washington for training the Indians in Siam. They left San Francisco (California) for Manila (Philippines by the *Manchuria* on the 15th May, 1915. Boehm reached Manila on the 12th June. He was directed to go to Bangkok to receive orders from the German Consul there. But when he was about to leave, the orders were changed and he was asked to stay and wait at Chittagong, because the cargo of arms had not yet arrived.

Jodh Singh, who was to be the leading Indian in the plot, left San Francisco along with D. Chenchiah (from Madras) on the 22nd May, 1915, for Manila by the *Tenyo Maru* reaching there on the 19th June, 1915. He left Manila on or about the 26th June by the *Tai Sang* for Bangkok (Siam) via Amoy and Swatow and reached there on the 17th July.<sup>19</sup> There he met Bhai Balwant Singh and Thakur Singh (Kala Sanhar, Kapurthala), Santokh Singh from America, Atma Ram (of Jahmar, Lahore) from Nanking and Shiv Dyal Kapur (of Ghanupur, Amritsar) from Shanghai. They had all come to take part in the enterprise.<sup>20</sup>

None of the Germans arrived at Bangkok. When orders for Boehm were changed and he was asked to go to Chittangong to collect some Germans there and take them to Manila or Shanghai, he became disappointed and decided not to go and to withdraw

<sup>19</sup> These dates are taken from U.S. Records, Hearing on Political Activities of Indians During the War, Department of Justice, 1917 File No. 9-10-3 Section 2-Part II, Statement of Jodh Singh, dated the 15th November, 1915.

<sup>20</sup> Santokh Singh and Shiv Dyal Kapur, who were the leaders in Siam, when Jodh Singh had arrived, doubted the good faith of the latter, despite his credentials : Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore* (1919), page 133.

from the Scheme.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the planned cargo of arms also did not arrive and the German Consulate was unable to give any instructions. Instead, it began to doubt both the capacity of the Indians and their estimates of the number of men (10,000) available.

In the absence of German instructions and the proposed supply of arms, the party of the Ghadarites could not effect anything. On the 1st of August, 1915, Jodh Singh, Shiv Dyal Kapur, Balwant Singh and Thakur Singh were arrested on the charge of infringement of the neutrality of Siam. After sometime they were deported to Singapore. Atma Ram escaped arrest and returned to China (where he was later hanged for murder) and Santokh Singh to the United States, where he was convicted in the conspiracy case in San Francisco in 1917.

On the arrest of these Ghadarites, particularly Jodh Singh who later turned approver, the entire scheme leaked out to the British Government. Consequently, necessary measures were adopted by it to deal with the situation.

A more practical move was made by Sohan Lal Pathak. He and five others entered Burma, armed to the teeth, to win over the military police and others. "They had 14 pistols, 20 packets of dynamite, as many detonators, some fuses, two hacksaws, wire-cutters and chemicals."<sup>22</sup> The dynamite was meant to blow up railway bridges and lines and the chemicals to make bombs and to be given to Indian servants to poison their British masters. Their pistol ammunition contained expanding bullets so as to cause the greatest injury. Sohan Lal arrived at Maymyo (Burma) on the 14th August, and fell in with some men of the Mountain Battery. He harangued them to turn them from their allegiance. The men pretended to be won over but when their Jemadar came along, Sohan Lal was captured and was handed over to the police. On his person were found three automatic pistols, three hundred rounds of ammunition, Ghadar literature and elaborate bomb formulae. Later, his companions were also apprehended. Their arrests, too, disclosed the entire plan of the Ghadarites in Siam-

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Records, Department of Justice, File No. 9-10-3 Section 2, Part II, Statement of Boehm, dated the 17th November, 1915, page 10 (page 3 of Statement).

<sup>22</sup> Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J: *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 134.

Burma. Sohan Lal was put on trial under the Defence of India Act at Mandalay (Burma) in December, 1915 and sentenced to death. Others were tried in the Burma Conspiracy Case at Mandalay in the spring of 1916.

The Siam-Burma Scheme failed because neither arms<sup>23</sup> nor German instructors were available. There was lack of co-ordination and the Ghadarites lacked efficient leadership. According to the Statement of Boehm (one of the instructors arranged for military training), "it was a failure as letters and orders did not reach at the right time or were lost." He further states, "none of the Indians I have met would be fit to be a corporal, let alone an officer, as they had childish ideas."<sup>24</sup> At best, the scheme was an ambitious one.

<sup>23</sup> The ships, the *Annie Larson* and the *Maverick* carrying the arms and ammunition for the purpose were caught on the way.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Records : Department of Justice 1917, File No 9-10-3, Section 2, Part II. Statement of Sir George Paul Boehm, dated the 17th November, 1915, page 5.

# 13

## *The Party and the Government*

The Government agencies were also active in coping with the Ghadarites and the situation created by their movement. An Ingress Ordinance was issued on the 5th September, 1914, to restrict the movement of persons entering India after that date. This has already been discussed in Chapter VIII. Due to the leakage and failure of the Ghadar plan in India on the 19th February, 1915, and the subsequent arrests of the revolutionaries, extra-ordinary procedures were adopted for their trial. As early as in December, 1914, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieut. Governor of the Punjab, represented to the Government of India that "it is most undesirable at the present time to allow trials of these revolutionaries or of other sedition-mongers to be protracted by the ingenuity of counsel and drawn out to inordinate lengths by the committal and appeal procedure which the criminal law provides."<sup>1</sup> He submitted the draft of an ordinance for speeding up the procedure in cases certified by the local government. It provided for the trial of the offenders directly after the police investigation had established a *prima facie* case. The trial was to be held before a tribunal of three judges, who were bound by the ordinary rules of procedure and evidence, but against their decision and sentence there could be no further judicial appeal. This draft was agreed upon by the Chief Court of the Punjab and the Ordinance was promulgated. The accused, however, had the right to petition both the local government and the Viceroy for clemency.

This proposal was accepted by the Central Government and given the form of the Defence of India Act, 1914. In addition to the provisions proposed by the Punjab Government, this act provided for rendering the security sections more effective, and for the

<sup>1</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael : *India As I Knew It*, London (1925), page 199.

punishment of village officers and others colluding with or assisting the revolutionaries and of persons carrying arms in suspicious circumstances.

Accordingly, under the Defence of India Act, 1914, a Special Tribunal was constituted in the Punjab to try the Ghadarites. It consisted of three Commissioners.<sup>2</sup> Legal proceedings against the Ghadarites culminated in the conspiracy cases which will now be dealt with.

### Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I

Nine batches of conspirators were tried by Special Tribunals constituted under the Defence of India Act, 1914. The first batch of 61 persons was tried in the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 and the trial began on the 26th April, 1915. A detailed list of the men along with their sentences is given in Appendix A. They were accused of waging war against the Crown, or conspiring to do so in and out of India, seducing troops, villagers and students to that end, committing dacoities, abetting murder, attempting murder, abetting mutiny of troops, manufacturing and collecting arms and bombs, attacking railways, bridges, ports, arsenals and projecting a general rising.<sup>3</sup> Some were charged with offences under the Explosives Act. In view of the nature of the conspiracy, extraordinary precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the jail during this and the subsequent trials. In addition to the ordinary warder guard, a strong military guard was posted at the jail. The public was denied access to the hearings.

Of the 61 accused, four—Nawab Khan, Mula Singh, Amar Singh (of Nawanshahar) and student Sucha Singh—turned approvers. The case in the main rested on the statement of these approvers. Nawab Khan's evidence gave a detailed account of the rise and growth of the Ghadar movement in America, the return of the emigrants and the earlier activities in the Ludhiana, Ferozepur and Jullundur districts. In this case there were 404 prosecution witnesses and 228 defence witnesses. The prosecution was represented by a lawyer, Evan Pitman, with assistants. The conspirators were defended by some junior lawyers appointed for the purpose by the Government. The judgement in the case was declared on the 13th

<sup>2</sup> They were Major A.A. Irwine (Chairman) Mr. T. Ellis, Sessions Judge and Rai Bahadur Pandit Sheo Narain, a leading lawyer of the Punjab Chief Court.

<sup>3</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, E. Final Conclusions, page 204.

September, 1915. Four were acquitted, 24 sentenced to death (the sentence of 17 of these being changed into life imprisonment by the Viceroy), 27 sentenced to transportation for life and forfeiture of property, and six were sentenced to lesser terms.<sup>4</sup>

### **Lahore Conspiracy Case II or Lahore Ist Supplementary Conspiracy Case**

The second case started on the 29th October, 1915, and was conducted by the same tribunal. To begin with, 102 accused were involved; some remained absconders and some were released before trial, and finally 74 were actually tried. In this case the numbers of prosecution and defence witnesses were 365 and 1042 respectively.<sup>5</sup> Judgement was delivered on the 30th March, 1916. Six were sentenced to death (five of whom were actually executed), forty-five to transportation for life and eight given sentences ranging from 6 months to 3 years. The rest were acquitted.<sup>6</sup>

### **Lahore Conspiracy Case III or Lahore Second Supplementary Conspiracy Case**

The third case was heard at Lahore by another tribunal consisting of three Commissioners.<sup>7</sup> There were 17 accused in this case and the trial started on the 8th November, 1916. The prosecution and defence witnesses numbered 86 and 44 respectively. Judgement was pronounced on the 4th January, 1917. Six were sentenced to death (the sentence of one was later changed to transportation for life and forfeiture of property) and one was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. The remaining five were acquitted<sup>8</sup> for want of evidence. Details of these are given in Appendix C.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For details see Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> *The Indian Sedition Committee (1918)* Report Calcutta (1918), page 157.

<sup>6</sup> For details of sentences, See Appendix B.

<sup>7</sup> They were Mr. T.P. Ellis (Chairman), Major Frizelle and Rai Bahadur Gopal Das Bhandari.

<sup>8</sup> Home Department, Government of India, Records 1918. Police B Proceedings January, No. 41, Report on the Police Administration in Punjab for 1916, page 24. For details, see Appendix C.

<sup>9</sup> Two revolutionaries were sentenced to death in Lahore Conspiracy cases, IV and V, one in each. In the 4th case, Dr. Mathura Singh was tried and sentenced to death (tried from the 19th February to 2nd March, 1917.) He did not petition for mercy. In the 5th case Jawand Singh was tried from the 21st to the 26th May, 1917. He was convicted and sentenced to death.

### **Benaras Conspiracy Case**

At Benaras there was a large number of Bengalis. Some of them had contacts with the Bengal revolutionaries and had formed the 'Young Men's Association' and 'Students' Union League', which had become instruments of sedition.<sup>10</sup> They made contacts with the Punjab revolutionaries through Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, a Maratha, who had returned from America with the Punjabi Ghadarites. With the visit of S.N. Sanyal and Rash Behari Bose to the Punjab, a link was established between them and the Ghadar movement. Accordingly, the Bengali revolutionaries at Benaras prepared themselves to join the general rising with the signal from the Punjab. Damodar Sarup was to lead the revolution at Allahabad. One Vinayak Rao Kapila, another Maratha, was to convey bombs to the Punjab; Bibhuti and Priya Nath were to win over troops at Benaras; and a Bengali named Nalini Mohan Mukherjee was to do the same thing at Jabalpur. S.N. Sanyal was to be the leader of the revolution at Benaras. The date of the rising fixed by the revolutionaries in the Punjab i.e., the 21st February, 1915, was conveyed to them. But the change of date to the 19th February, 1915 could not be conveyed to the revolutionaries at Benaras. Accordingly, with the miscarriage of the Ghadar plan in the Punjab, the scheme of the revolutionaries at Benaras also failed. Bibhuti turned informer, as a result of which the revolutionaries at Benaras were arrested.

The arrested revolutionaries included S.N. Sanyal, Girja Babu, Mani Lal, Nagendra Nath Dutta and other members of their group. Fourteen were tried under the Defence of India Act, 1914, on charges of attempting to tamper with the loyalty of the troops and distributing seditious leaflets. Bibhuti and Mani Lal became approvers. In this case S.N. Sanyal was transported for life, ten were sentenced to long-term imprisonment, and three were acquitted.

### **Mandalay (Burma) Conspiracy Case No. I**

The conspirators connected with the Siam-Burma Scheme were tried in the two Mandalay Conspiracy Cases. The first case was tried by a tribunal of three Special Commissioners.<sup>11</sup> In this case seventeen were tried and judgement was delivered on the 27th July,

<sup>10</sup> Prominent among them were Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Deb Narayan Mukerji, Bibhuti, Priya Nath, Rash Behari Bose and Nagendra Nath Datta.

<sup>11</sup> These Commissioners were S.M. Robinson (Chairman), Maung Kin and S.E. McColl.

1916. Seven were sentenced to death (the sentence of one of them was later changed to life imprisonment), five to transportation for life, one to seven years' rigorous imprisonment and four were acquitted.<sup>12</sup>

#### Mandalay (Burma) Conspiracy Case No. II

In the second Mandalay Case the revolutionaries from Siam were tried at Mandalay in 1917 in connection with the earlier conspiracy. Four stood trial in this case, three were sentenced to death and one to transportation for life.<sup>13</sup> Afterwards the death-sentences were commuted to transportation for life and confiscation of property.

#### San Francisco Case

Since all the conspiracy cases revealed that the U.S.A. was the centre and headquarters of the Ghadar Movement, the British Government brought pressure on the United States Government to take action against the Ghadarites there. On entering the war on April 7th, 1917, the U.S. Government responded to this pressure and arrested the Indian revolutionaries in the U.S. along with the Germans and others connected with the Movement. About a hundred conspirators were named in the incident but many being absconders or beyond the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts and some others being made approvers, 35 persons were put in the dock of whom seventeen were Indians and eighteen Germans and Americans. They were tried in the Southern Division of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California (First Division), being charged for committing offences against the United States, providing and preparing the means for military enterprise to be carried out from within the territory of the U.S. against India (i.e. Emperor of India) and thus violating the neutrality of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

The trial started on the 20th November, 1917, and lasted till the 26th April, 1918. On the last day of the trial Ram Chandra of Peshawar, who had been charged by the Party Executive for mis-

<sup>12</sup> Home Department, Government of India, 1916, Judicial A. 'Proceedings November, 1916, No. 429-461, page 1.

Details of the individuals punished are in Appendix D.

<sup>13</sup> For Details, See Appendix E.

<sup>14</sup> Microfilm copies of U.S. Records, Department of Justice, Roll No. 3 File No. 9-10-3 Section 4, page 2.

appropriation of Party funds and misuse of his powers,<sup>16</sup> was shot dead in the Court by one Ram Singh, who in turn, was shot down by one of the marshalls of the Court. Judgement was pronounced on the 1st May, 1918. The fifteen Indians (two having been shot dead) were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 30 days to 2 years.<sup>17</sup> In passing the sentence the judge expressed regret on the inadequacy of the maximum penalty provided by law.<sup>17</sup>

### **Chicago Case**

Another case was instituted at Chicago. It pertained to the carrying of arms and ammunition in the warships the *Annie Larson* and the *Maverick* to India for the armed revolution. Four persons were tried, Jacobson, Boehm, Wehde (Germans and German Americans) and H.L. Gupta. The first three were sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 13,000 dollars each and Heramba Lal Gupta to 18 months' imprisonment and a fine of 700 dollars.

### **Mandi Cases**

The revolutionaries belonging to Mandi State, who had to join in the rising with the Ghadarites in the Punjab on the fixed date, stood trial held at Mandi by Mr. T.P. Ellis, who was appointed Sessions Judge there for the purpose. The Mandi revolutionaries were tried in two cases. In the first case five were tried and judgement passed on the 22nd January, 1917. Mian Jawahar Singh, who was the chief accused, (and on search of whose house, a variety of arms<sup>18</sup> were recovered) was sentenced to transportation for life and confiscation of property and the other four were awarded lesser sentences.

In the second Mandi Conspiracy Case, one person named

<sup>16</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Sunder Singh Ghali, of Village and Post Office Ghal Kalan, District Ferozepur (Punjab) dated February 13, 1961.

Baba Sundar Singh was Assistant Treasurer of the Ghadar Party and also a Press Manager at the Party Headquarters at San Francisco.

<sup>17</sup> Prominent among them were Dr. Tarak Nath Dass, Gyani Bhagwan Singh, Gopal Singh Sohi, Sundar Singh Ghali, Bhai Santokh Singh, Gobind Behari Lal and Godha Ram. For details see Appendix P

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from Isemonger, F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 138.

<sup>18</sup> The arms recovered comprised 10 rifles, 6 of which were loaded, 40 lbs. of gun-powder, five swords and several sword-hafts.

Sidhu Kanait was tried. The charges in both these cases were of waging war under Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code. Sidhu Kanait was convicted and sentenced to transportation for life with confiscation of property.<sup>19</sup>

### **Some Typical Cases**

Apart from the aforesaid conspiracy cases, the Ghadarites were also tried and convicted in several other cases in the ordinary courts.

#### **Ferozeshah Incident**

A significant incident occurred on the 27th November, 1914, when a party of 15 men was proceeding to Moga with the object of looting the Moga Treasury, when they were challenged by the police at Ferozeshah. Detailed reference to this has already been made in Chapter IX. In the encounter a police Sub-Inspector, Basharat Ali, and a *Zaildar* were shot dead. Two of the revolutionaries were killed. Seven were caught on the spot and six escaped. The arrested seven were tried by the Sessions Court at Ferozepur and sentenced to death and hanged. Among them was Pandit Kanshi Ram, treasurer of the Ghadar party. One of the absconders, Surjan Singh was later convicted and sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge, Ferozepur.<sup>20</sup> The others were tried in subsequent conspiracy cases, mentioned earlier.

#### **Walla Railway Bridge Incident**

Another incident occurred on the 12th June, 1915 at Mana Walla railway bridge in Amritsar District. Six revolutionaries attacked the guard, killed the sentry and *havildar* and took 6 service rifles and 200 rounds. Five of those involved and arrested were sentenced to death.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Anarkali (Lahore) Case**

In the Anarkali case to which reference has been made, one Arjan Singh was tried, convicted and sentenced to death.

#### **Padri Murder Case**

In the Padri Case (in which Kapur Singh was murdered for giving evidence in the Lahore Conspiracy case), twelve were

<sup>19</sup> For details, see Appendix G.

<sup>20</sup> For details, see Appendix H

<sup>21</sup> For details, see Appendix I.

tried. Two were sentenced to death, four to transportation for life, one to lesser punishment and four were acquitted.<sup>22</sup>

Some of the Ghadarites were tried and convicted in several other cases, namely Jagat Pur murder case, the Nangal Kalan murder case, the Sri Hargobindpur (District Gurdaspur) case, the Abdulapur (Jullundur) case and the Karnana (Jullundur) case.<sup>23</sup>

### Courts Martial

With regard to courts martial, full information is not available due to restrictions on consultation of Government records. Eighteen persons of the 23rd Cavalry were court-martialled at Dagshai and sentenced to death. But the sentence of six was converted into transportation for life.<sup>24</sup>

One soldier, Phula Singh, of the 128 Pioneers was shot dead.<sup>25</sup> Two from the 12th Cavalry (Meerut) were hanged.<sup>26</sup> According to S.N. Sanyal, about eleven soldiers of the 12th Cavalry, Meerut were hanged.<sup>27</sup> According to the Government Report on the Internal Situation for April, 1915, four soldiers of the 12th Cavalry were sentenced to be hanged by court-martial.<sup>28</sup>

In connection with the Singapore Ghadar, 166 men of the 5th Infantry were court-martialled. Forty-one were sentenced to death and had to face the cannon. One hundred and twenty-five were given lesser punishments. In the 130th Baluch Regiment, 63 were court-martialled, of whom four were sentenced to death and fifty-nine to transportation for life.

<sup>22</sup> For details see Appendix J

<sup>23</sup> For details see Appendix K

<sup>24</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael : *India As I knew It*, London (1925).

<sup>25</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement dated 13th September, 1915 Part III-C-III(4) Seduction of troops, page 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, page 9.

<sup>27</sup> Sanyal, S.N. : *Bandi Jiwan*, Part II, Amritsar (year not given) page 36.

<sup>28</sup> Home Department, Govt. of India (Pol.) 1915, Proceedings, April 1915 No. 416-419. Report on Internal Situation, page 28.

# 14

## *Failure of the Ghadar Movement*

There were several factors responsible for the failure of the Ghadar Movement, the foremost being the organisational weakness of the Ghadar Party. After its formation on the 21st April, 1913, the first practical step taken by the Party to carry out its plan was the issuing of the paper 'Ghadar' on the 1st November, 1913. It was only at the second meeting held on the 31st December, 1913, at Sacramento (California) that a Central Executive Committee consisting of 10 members was constituted and a commission of three formed to control and conduct political and secret work. The war broke out in July, 1914, when the Party had hardly completed the preliminaries of its organisation. It had had a life of about one year only and its secret commission even lesser when it had to issue the call for action. Its members had no experience or background of organising and running a revolutionary movement.

Its branches in other foreign countries also were in the stage of infancy and there was no regular co-ordination between them and the central party organisation. Perhaps the greatest organisational weakness was the lack of contacts with the revolutionaries in India. Prior to the return of its members to India, the Party had made no attempt to organise branches of its own in this country, which was, of course, to be the field of its operations.

It did not make contacts with the already existent revolutionary elements in India, nor did it enlist public sympathy in the country for its line of action. This weakness is admitted by D. Chenchiah, when he says "though it (the Party) had become popular among the Indians in foreign countries it was practically non-existent in India, even in the Punjab, which ought to have been the heart and soul of the movement."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statement given by D. Chenchiah, 6, Arulamul Street, T. Nagar, Madras—17, dated the 24th September, 1956, page 11. (Through the courtesy of Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur).

It was a part of the plan of the Ghadar Party that active connections should be established with the revolutionary movements of other countries and their help should be sought. But this could not be done before the Ghadarites started for the home country. They were aware of this organisational weakness. At the commission meeting held on August 15, 1914, the question discussed was : "should the enemy be attacked, when he is entangled in war or should the opportunity be lost by sitting silent ? It was resolved that the Party should not lose this opportunity, as it was better to fail in the attempt than to do nothing."<sup>2</sup>

The Party had a plan to give military training to Indians in the United States, for an armed insurrection in India, but practical steps had hardly been taken in that direction, when the war broke out. The early outbreak of the war was a great disturbing factor. The Ghadarites had not anticipated that the war would break out before four to seven years from the inception of the Party. This is amply borne out by the statements of some of the Ghadarites. According to Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat, "the Ghadar Party leaders expected the War to break out not before 1920".<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Gyani Bhagwan Singh told the Ghadarites in the Philippines (where he went for recruitment of volunteers), that "the revolution would have been started in 1917, but owing to the outbreak of war, it would have to be launched soon."<sup>4</sup> To quote another instance, on the map of India hanging in the Yugantar Ashram, the boundaries of Kashmir were marked in red ink and on it was written "Republic of Kashmir in 1925".<sup>5</sup> This shows that the outbreak of the war in 1914 was against the expectations of the Ghadarites and its early start falsified their anticipations and created bottlenecks in organisational matters.

### Lack of Good Leadership

Lack of good and efficient leadership was another factor

- \* Bhagwan Singh, Gyani *Brief Sketch of Life Lived* Village and Post Office Wrang, District Amritsar, page, 7.
- \* Statement given to the writer by Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat of Village and Post Office Kotla Naudh Singh, District Hoshiarpur, dated 12th January, 1961.
- \* San Francisco Trial (1917) Testimony of Witnesses and Home Department, Government of India (Political) Proceedings April, 1913. No. 416-19 Report on Internal Political Situation, page 21.
- \* Statement by D. Chenchiah, 6 Arulmal Street, T. Nagar, Madras 17, dated 24th September 1956, page 10 (Through courtesy of the Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, Jullundur).

contributing to the failure of the movement. The Party had few leaders capable of running a revolutionary movement. Lala Hardyal might have afforded some hope of success of the plan, but he was arrested on the 16th March, 1914, by the United States authorities for his anarchist views. He was ordered to be deported as an undesirable alien, but having been released on bail, he absconded to Switzerland on the outbreak of war. From there he did not return to India to provide a lead to his countrymen, but spent most of the war-period in Switzerland. During this period his interest in the Ghadar movement seems to have considerably slackened. This is evident from the Government Report on the Internal Political Situation for the month of March, 1915, which reads, "Hardyal who is still in Switzerland, is engaged in writing a book on Philosophy which he hopes to publish after the war. He is also studying Spanish."<sup>6</sup> His turning to the writing of books, and learning of new languages at a time when the Ghadarites had staked their lives for the national cause shows that he did not provide leadership and guidance to his comrades, when the actual hour for it had come. It bears testimony to the fact that he was largely an armchair revolutionary.

Lala Lajpat Rai, known for his extremist views in the Punjab, reached America in early 1915. (During those days he was in Europe under deportation orders). The Ghadar Party leaders there having known Lajpat Rai as an extremist nationalist, approached him for guidance and invited him to the Yugantar Ashram. He declined to go there in the daytime on the plea that he was constantly followed by spies.<sup>7</sup>

It shows that the persons, who could be expected to provide leadership to the Party, did not come forward. Lajpat Rai who "even brought action against a Calcutta newspaper for calling him rebel,"<sup>8</sup> could hardly be expected to lead an insurrection. Even the relatives of Lala Lajpat Rai doubted his sincerity towards the national cause. One of his relations, Sagar Chand, in his letter

\* Home Department (Political) Government of India, Proceedings, April, 1915, Nos. 412-15, Report on Internal Political Situation for the month of March, 1915, page 13.

<sup>7</sup> Home Department (Political), Govt. of India Proceedings, July 1915, Nos. 516-519, Report on Political Situation for the month of July, 1915, page 11.

<sup>8</sup> Home Department, Government of India (Political) Proceedings, June, 1915, Nos. 569-552, Report on the Political Situation for the month of June, 1915, page 7.

from England to Ram Chandra (President of the Ghadar Party in 1915) wrote, "All the members of my family are singing songs of loyalty and proving themselves deserving of titles...I hope that Lajpat Rai will soon become a Rai Bahadur."

It is difficult to understand the basis of this view of Sagar Chand, as records are silent about it. However, in the absence of any authentic information about this view of Sagar Chand it cannot be said how far it would be correct to ascribe it to the desire on the part of Sagar Chand to create suspicion in the mind of the Ghadar Party members about Lajpat Rai and thus wean him from getting him involved in the Ghadar Movement, or it may have been motivated by sheer malevolence with the object of smearing the name of a relation, who was a leader. However, it must be pointed out that the services of Lala Lajpat Rai to the national cause and participation in the freedom struggle belie the sentiments expressed by Sagar Chand.

Another instance of the poor leadership of the Party is supplied by the haphazard way in which the Ghadarites returned to India. When the War broke out, the Party leaders decided that all pro-Party Indians in the foreign lands should return to India at once. In response to this call, all the Ghadarites left for India. Prior to their departure, no definite programme was made for the work to be done in India, no places for the assembly of Ghadarites were decided upon and no methods were devised to escape arrest on arrival in India, which was so very certain. According to the Proceedings of the Department of Commerce and Industry for December, 1914, the Ghadarites settled that "all of them should go back to India at once. When all the Indians abroad would reach here (India) they would fix some date and mutiny would break out all at once throughout India."<sup>9</sup>

Besides, such leadership as was available within the Party could not be availed of for the Movement. The sponsors were arrested immediately on landing on the Indian soil.<sup>10</sup> These internees included prominent leaders like Sohan Singh Bhakna, President and Kesar Singh and Jawala Singh, both Vice-Presidents of the Party. This naturally proved a great set-back to the Movement.

As the Ghadarite leaders began to move to India, the leader-

<sup>9</sup> Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Emigration A. Proceedings December, 1914, Number 4 page 10.

<sup>10</sup> Under the Ingress into India Ordinance, 331 persons were interned in jails between October 1914 to 1917 vide the *Indian Sedition Committee Report*, 1928, page 160.

ship of the central party organisation in the U.S. fell into the hands of Pandit Ram Chandra, Harish Chandra Sharma, Sunder Singh Ghali, Gyani Bhagwan Singh, Maulvi Barkatullah and Munshi Ram. Gyani Bhagwan Singh was then detailed to cover countries like Japan, China, Korea and the Phillipines to send volunteers to India and Maulvi Barkatullah was sent on a similar mission to Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey.

After the departure of the original office-bearers of the Party to India, Munshi Ram was elected President, Sunder Singh Ghali Treasurer and Bishan Singh, Hindi Supervisor. Pandit Ram Chandra was given charge of the publication of the 'Ghadar'. These leaders were to provide further guidance, money, arms and ammunition to the Ghadarites who had left for India and to keep the organisation alive. But they selfishly deviated from the real path. Ram Chandra tried to assume all powers and to become a dictator.<sup>11</sup> He tried to get rid of some of the action workers of the Party in order to have his own way. For instance, Gopal Singh, a member of the Executive Committee, was sent to Siam and Bhai Ram Singh to India.

Ram Chandra then started misusing his authority and misappropriating Party funds. According to Gyani Bhagwan Singh, Ram Chandra destroyed the constitution of the Ghadar Party framed by Lala Hardyal and adopted a new one and misappropriated the Party funds. "More than \$15,000 in cash were deposited in banks in the name of the Pandit's wife. Properties were purchased in the name of the Pandit's personal friends, who were not even members of the Party. The two plots on Wood Street where the present Ashram stands, had been put in the name of Mr. Reed an American gentleman."<sup>12</sup> On these charges he was made to resign by the executive committee. There upon he started the *Hindustan Ghadar Paper*, to counter the propaganda of the original paper the 'Ghadar'. According to the statement of Baba Sunder Singh Ghali, Treasurer of the Party after Pandit Kanshi Ram, Harish Chandra took \$8000 out of the Party funds earmarked for the Party

<sup>11</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Gopal Singh Sohi, of Village and Post Office Sohian, District Ludhiana (Punjab), dated the 19th February, 1961.

<sup>12</sup> Bhagwan Singh : *Brief Sketch of Life Lived*, page, 10, Village and Post Office Wrang, District Amritsar, dated nil.

Harish Chandra was one of the three signatories, who deposited the Party funds in the bank. The other two were Baba Sunder Singh Ghali and Pandit Ram Chandra. Any one of them could operate the fund.

building and absconded.<sup>13</sup> Gyani Bhagwan Singh himself was also accused of misusing Party funds for maintaining himself in unrevolutionary comfort. Baba Sunder Singh states that the Party "head-quarters were receiving complaints about his (Bhagwan Singh's) character and the people in Panama refused to give him any money and sent their contributions direct to the Ashram."<sup>14</sup>

Whether or not the Pandit or the Gyani were defalcators, it is clear that Party funds were being misused and there were internal conflicts among the leaders left behind. According to Baba Sunder Singh, workers and leaders there were also divided into regions. The Doaba and Malwa regions' people disassociated themselves from those of the Majha area whose leader was Gyani Bhagwan Singh.

### Incapacity to Maintain Secrecy

The incapacity of the Ghadarites to maintain secrecy was another factor. For running a revolutionary movement of the type that the Ghadarites had planned, strict secrecy was indispensable, but they were not capable of maintaining it. Of course, they had to give the widest publicity to their aim of driving out the British from India through an armed insurrection. But the actual instruments and modes of work required the utmost secrecy and for this the Ghadarites lacked the requisite imagination and skill. The very first issue of the 'Ghadar', dated the 1st November, 1913 came to the notice of the Government of India when a copy was intercepted by the customs authorities.<sup>15</sup> It shows that the Government of India got this information as early in January, 1914, much earlier than the outbreak of the War.

Another illustration of this incapacity for keeping secrecy was provided in 1914 when these Ghadarites sent 'An Open Letter addressed to the British public and to His Majesty the King Emperor'. This letter was sponsored chiefly by Tarak Nath Dass. In this letter they had asked the help of the British Government for Indians in America. "If the loyal Indian soldiers refused to handle the muskets what would be their position ? Would not the British

<sup>13</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Sunder Singh Ghali, of Village and Post Office Ghal Kalan District, Ferozepur, dated the 13th February, 1961.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, page 2.

<sup>15</sup> Home Department, Government of India Proceedings January, 1914 , No. 42-43 are attached with a translated copy of this issue.

be in trouble for this?"<sup>16</sup> they asked. This open letter<sup>17</sup> was perhaps meant to incite the Indian soldiers, but may have had the effect of warning the British Government in an indirect way about the plans of the Party. It was received at Buckingham Palace on the 31st August, 1914, that is, before the arrival of the Ghadarites in India. Similarly, when the Ghadarites moved to India at the outbreak of the War for the implementation of their programme, they declared openly and publicly at every port where their ships touched their object of returning to India. All these facts show that the Ghadar Party leaders were rather naive in their ideas about conspiracies and revolution.

#### **Lack of Mass Following and Absence of National & Political Consciousness**

The masses play an important role in movements of the Ghadar type. Such movements can succeed only if they are mass movements. The Ghadarites, however, lacked a mass following. They worked in the villages to enlist public support but they could not get the desired response. A Government report notes this fact. "The most satisfactory feature of the situation is that the rural Sikh population does not appear to have been seriously affected either by these incidents, or by the propaganda, of which they are the outcome. The Commissioner of Jullundur, referring to this question, writes, "I do not think that there is any chance of disaffected Canadian emigrants receiving any measure of popular support ; at least, I shall be surprised, if they do so."<sup>18</sup> The country as a whole was not prepared for this type of revolution. There were reasons for this lack of public support. First of all, there was almost complete absence of national and political consciousness among the people of India which is the real strength of a revolution. That type of national awakening, which followed after the war, was non-existent at that time.

<sup>16</sup> Home Department (Political) Government of India, Proceedings, October 1914, No. 60, pages 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> The signatories to this Open Letter were : Balwant Singh Priest, Vancouver (B.C.) H. Rahim, Editor, *The Hindusthan*, Vancouver (B.C.) Bhag Singh, President, Khalsa Dewan, Vancouver, Sureendra Nath Karr, University of Washington, Harnam Singh Victoria (B.C.) Nabhi Ram Joshi, Seattle (U.S.) Sohan Lal, Vancouver (B.C.).

<sup>18</sup> Home Department Political Deposit, Government of India, Proceedings, January, 1915, No. 43 (Fortnightly Report on Internal Political Situation for the first fortnight of December, 1914), page 12.

The hold of the Government machinery, big *Zamindars* and *Jagirdars* on the people was also a hindrance to co-operation between the revolutionaries and the people. In fact, these elements worked against Ghadarite propaganda among the rural population. The institution of *Zaildars* and *Lambardars* was particularly active in instigating the people against the Ghadarites. Slaves often turn to spying and this is one such instance. The masters amply rewarded them for their 'Loyalty'. The Government won the loyalty of these elements by the payment of rewards,<sup>19</sup> grants of land and remission of land revenues.<sup>20</sup>

Punishments<sup>21</sup> were awarded to those *Zaildars*, *Lambardars* and *Chowkidars* who did not act according to the wishes of the Government, on the charge of not co-operating with and not giving assistance to the administration.

Indeed, the problem was not one of lack of public support. On the contrary, it was a case of considerable elements among the public working actually against the Ghadarites. In some instances people of the villages chased the Ghadarites to apprehend and hand them over to the police. These have already been discussed in Chapter X. In connection with the behaviour of a body of

<sup>19</sup> This is illustrated by the following facts : During the year 1914 Rs. 25,850 were distributed in rewards (in appreciation for services rendered to the administration) amongst 241 *Zaildars*, 628 *Lambardars*, 252 *Chowkidars* and 1,612 other members of the public. These payments were in addition to remission of land revenue. (Home Department, Govt. of India Police Proceedings December, 1915 Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1914, page, 22).

<sup>20</sup> During 1915 Rs. 23, 616 were distributed amongst 155 *Zaildars*, 442 *Lambardars*, 259 *Chowkidar* and 1815 other members of the public. Land revenue was remitted in the case of villages whose leaders had helped appreciably in recruitment and other war efforts. In addition, 122 persons were given grants of land. (Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1915, page 19).

During 1916 a sum of Rs. 23, 397 was paid in rewards to 259 *Zaildars*, 547 *Lambardars* 324 *Chowkidars*, and 1985 other members of the public. Thirty land grants were given to private persons and considerable remissions of land revenue were also made. (Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1916, page 17).

Government Reports clearly state that these grants had been made to individuals for specially valuable service to the administration in the sphere of law and order and they had undoubtedly done much to encourage the public to accept the risk.

<sup>21</sup> For example, during 1915, 15 *Zaildars*, 431 *Lambardars* and 420 *Chowkidars* were punished for failing to assist the police. During 1916 the corresponding figures were 25 *Zaildars*, 320 *Lambardars* and 321 *Chowkidars*.

villagers (in the Chabba dacoity incident) the comments of the Special Commission, which tried the Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I, are worth quoting : "The courage and bravery displayed by these men form one of the few bright episodes in the whole of the trial. Men of little or no position, with no thought for themselves, bravely attacked unarmed a gang of desperados armed with bombs and pistols, captured one, and nearly captured two others, drove off the marauders in flight, and only desisted when a number of them were injured and mutilated for life by the dacoites."<sup>22</sup>

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieut. Governor of the Punjab at that time, while commenting on the role of the public, states that "fortunately through this anxious period the great mass of the rural population, including the Sikhs remained staunch and loyal, and continued to give, often at great risk, the most active assistance to the authorities in rounding up and bringing to justice the revolutionary gangs."<sup>24</sup>

### The Role of Religious Organisations

The religious organisation in the Punjab during this period also played a role by no means helpful to the national cause. Such institutions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike were being used by the British to their advantages. In fact, these elements were vying with each other to win the favours of the rulers. It was a matter of competition for them and they were very much led by their masters to continue the competition and forget their duty towards the nation. The Arya Samaj had expressed no concern over the political agitation through a resolution passed as early as in 1907.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, an organisation of the Sikhs in the Punjab, issued a manifesto to the Sikhs, in which it disowned the Sikh emigrants and told their co-religionists that these revolutionaries were mischief-mongers and should not be followed<sup>26</sup>....It is also said that a *Hukam Nama*<sup>28</sup> was issued from the *Akal Takht*

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from the Police Report of 1915, page 4, of remarks by Lt. Governor (Home Department), 1917 (Police) Government of India, Proceedings April, No. 53).

<sup>23</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael *India As I Knew It*, London (1925) page 198.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* page 183.

<sup>25</sup> Home Department (Political B) Government of India. Proceedings April, 1915. No. 416-19 (Report on Internal Political Situation for the month of April, 1915), page 27.

<sup>26</sup> It is a technical term for the directive issued from the highest Sikh authority known as the *Akal Takai Tukht*. The body issuing the directive consists of five persons-'Panj Piara' having the highest position in the

to the Sikh masses that the Sikh members of the Ghadar Party were not real Sikhs.

### Formation of Sikh Committees

The leading Sikhs of the time also played a role against the revolutionaries. In March, 1915, Sir Michael O'Dwyer held a conference of leading Sikhs, the Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners of the province at Lahore. They were called upon to assist the Government. Some of them were so eager to serve the Government that they suggested internment of all the three thousand two hundred emigrants in jails.<sup>27</sup> Under the influence of this conference local Sikh Committees consisting of leading Sikhs<sup>28</sup> were formed in the districts to give information to the Government, work against the Ghadarites among the rural population and assist the Government in getting them arrested.

The nature of the role played by them can be illustrated by the case of Kapur Singh of Padri Kalan, Amritsar, on the basis of the Administration's Report for August, 1915. The Report states that the murder of Kapur Singh was "an act of revenge for assistance given in opposing the Ghadar movement. The murder is undoubtedly of a political nature and was committed in reprisal for the loyal assistance given to the authorities by Kapur Singh."<sup>29</sup>

On the work of these committees and 'natural' leaders of the community (i.e. Zaildars and Lambardars) the Commissioner of the Jullundur Division, Mr. Renouf, remarked : "The main task of the authorities consisted in bringing the returned emigrants and would be revolutionaries under control and in breaking up the bands actually engaged in dacoity and conspiracy. To this end, it was decided to enlist the assistance of Sikh Committees, these including the recognised leaders of the community. The measure of success achieved was remarkable. Village officers and the people

Sikh religious hierarchy at the Golden Temple at Amritsar—the Home of Sikhism. The *Hukam Nama* is a conventional law for the Sikhs, which is unchallengeable in a Court of Law.

<sup>27</sup> O'Dwyer : Sir Michael : *India As Knew It*, page, 204, (London (1925).

<sup>28</sup> The prominent Sikhs who worked on these Committees in the various districts were Chanda Singh of Nangal Kalan (Hoshiarpur) Sardar Bahadur Achhar Singh (Retd. Military Officer) of Jagatpur (Amritsar), Kapur Singh Sahukar of Padri Kalan (Amritsar), Bhai Sahib Arjan Singh of Bagrian (Ludhiana) now in District Sangrur and Isher Singh of Sensara (Amritsar.).

<sup>29</sup> Home Department (Political—B), Government of India, Proceedings August, 1915, No. 552-556, page 11.

who had hesitated for a time, followed the strong lead given by them. Returned emigrants soon found themselves surrounded by a public opinion which disavowed all sympathy with them. In a few months the police succeeded in arresting most of the active leaders of the movement. Great credit is due to the members of the Sikh Committees.”<sup>30</sup>

### Native Darbars

The ‘Darbars’ of the native States also opposed the Ghadar movement. This is evident from the remarks of Sir Michael O’Dwyer, when he says, “My cordial thanks are due to the ‘Darbars’ for their co-operation and assistance in the repression of seditious attempts.”<sup>31</sup> Kapurthala State and its police were particularly active against the revolutionaries. The Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for 1915 alludes ‘to the valuable co-operation of the police of the Kapurthala State in winding up revolutionaries and assisting us in the preservation of law and order in the Central Punjab.’<sup>32</sup>

### Attitude of the Indian Leaders of that Time

The attitude of the Indian leaders of those days proved another factor against the movement. B.G. Tilak was considered a leader of the militant movement at that time. At the beginning of the 20th century he incited the people to seditious activities through his Marathi journal ‘Kesari’. He preached the cult of the bomb. But by the time the Ghadar Party provided an opportunity to give a practical shape to his views, Tilak had changed his mind and started condemning violent methods. This is confirmed by the Indian Sedition Committee when, it reports, after the expiry of his term of imprisonment in August, 1914, Tilak “disclaimed hostility to His Majesty’s Government and condemned the acts of violence which had been committed in different parts of India.”<sup>33</sup> Early

<sup>30</sup> Quoted from the Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1915, page 11(Home Department (1917) (Police) Government of India Proceedings, April, No. 53).

<sup>31</sup> Home Department (Political) Government of India 1917 Proceedings for April, No. 53, page 5 (remarks of the Lt. Governor, Punjab).

<sup>32</sup> Report on the Police Administration in the Punjab for year 1915, page 22 (Home Department 1917 (Police) Government of India, Proceedings, April No. 53).

<sup>33</sup> Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report Calcutta (1918), page 14.

in 1915 an officer of the Home Department (Political) had an interview with B.G. Tilak and reported that "personally Mr. Tilak disapproved anarchism and had never advocated a policy of violence."<sup>24</sup>

Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, were actively helping the British Government by making propaganda for recruitment to the army. According to the statement of Gyani Bhagwan Singh (Dr.), President of the Ghadar Party for sometime, "lack of co-operation by the Indian National Congress, the chief political organisation of the Indian people, was another cause (of the failure of the Movement). The troops were prepared to revolt but they lacked leadership and guidance which was not provided by the Congress. Congressmen like Mahatma Gandhi were assisting the British during the war in the matter of the recruitment of troops."<sup>25</sup> The same attitude is to be found in the case of Mr. Gokhale in his reply to Lord Hardinge's question. "How would you like it, if I were to tell you that all the British officials and British troops would leave India within a month?" Gokhale replied, "I would be very pleased to hear that news, but before you had all reached Aden, we would be telegraphing to you to come back again."<sup>26</sup> Such instances were widely published by the British to retain their hold on the masses and to counteract the propaganda of the revolutionaries.

#### Lack of co-operation by Local Police

The Ghadarites' work among the troops at a number of cantonments met with some success. The troops were prepared to revolt, but they needed some co-operation from other agencies of Government, like the police. The revolutionaries neither attempted seriously to win over the local police nor did they get any response from them. The police force was not disaffected by the Ghadarites' propaganda. In fact, the Indian personnel of the police worked very actively in dealing with the Ghadarites' activities. The Special Commissioners of Lahore Conspiracy cases stated with pride in the First Case that not a single constable co-operated with the Ghad-

<sup>24</sup> Home Department Government of India, (Political B) Proceedings, April, 1915, Nos. 416-19 Report on the Internal Political Situation for the month of April, 1951, page, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Interview by the writer, with Gyani Bhagwan Singh of Village and Post Office Wrang, District Amritsar, dated March 18, 1961.

<sup>26</sup> Hardinge, Lord : *My Indian Years*. London (1948), page 116.

arites.<sup>37</sup> The then Lieut. Governor of the Panjab remarked in the Report on Police Administration in the Punjab for the year 1915 :

"The eventful year 1915 will always be memorable in the annals of the criminal administration of the Province; and no less worthy of the recollection will be the skill, courage and loyalty with which the officers and men of the Police Force carried out their arduous duties in circumstances of grave anxiety and often, in situations involving personal danger and self-sacrifices."<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the Police Report for 1915 reads that "the Indian ranks of the Police, as on previous occasions of trials, proved absolutely loyal and reliable, and displayed great personal bravery in these encounters with the revolutionaries."<sup>39</sup>

#### **Efficiency of British Security System and Raising of Emergency Police Force**

Efficiency of the British security system was, indeed, too big a hurdle in the way of the Ghadar Movement. The British Government detailed its secret agents in the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong and at other places, to give information regarding the activities of the Indian emigrants. A Home Office secret agent was deputed in America as early as in 1912, as is evident from the following telegram from the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy (Home Department) dated the 19th November, 1912 at 9.50 p.m. received in India on the 20th November, 1912 at 9.30 A.M.

#### **Telegram—P**

"Pay to Home Office Secret Agent, America. Please refer to Cleveland's letter to Risely No. 4072 of the 9th August, 1911. Please let me have your views as to the continuance beyond March 31st, 1913 of the allowance."<sup>40</sup>

Then the Secretary of State for India sent the following telegram to the Viceroy (Home Department) as a reminder :

<sup>37</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1 Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915. Final remarks of the Commissioners, page 2.

<sup>38</sup> Home Department (1917) Police B, Government of India, Proceedings April, Remarks of the Lt. Governor, page 5.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Police Report for 1915, page, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Home (1913) Department (Political) Government of India, Part B Proceedings, February No. 53-55, page 6 (of file).

### Telegram

Dated the 17th January 1913 at 10.20 p.m. Recd. The 18th January, 1913 at 8 a.m.

"Please refer to my telegram of November 19 last regarding payment to the Home Office. The matter is now urgent. When may I expect to receive a reply ?"<sup>41</sup>

In reply, the Home Department recommended and approved that the Secret Agency should be given extension on the ground that there was a recrudescence of revolutionary activity in India.

The first ship, after the *Komagata Maru* carrying the Ghadarites, reached Calcutta on the 12th October, 1914. But the Government got scent of the intention of the coming Ghadarites as early as in August, 1914, through its security agents. It is clear from the following telegram dated the 13th August, 1914 of the Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for Colonies :

"Received information that Yugantar Ashram arranging return to India of as many Hindu (Indians) as possible by next boat from San Francisco. Present crisis considered favourable opportunity to cause trouble in India."<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, in India also British secret agents worked promptly and efficiently. They got their men planted in the Ghadar Party. The most glaring example is that of Kirpal Singh, who gave advance information of the date of insurrection fixed for the 21st February, 1915 later on advanced to the 19th February. Kirpal Singh was engaged by K.B. Liaqat Hyat Khan, D.S.P. Amritsar on the 9th February, 1915, for getting and supplying information of the plans of the Ghadarites. This agent got into the organisation on the 12th February, 1915, that is only nine days before the date fixed for the insurrection. Kirpal Singh's joining the party at such a late stage, his prompt knowledge of the fixed date and its supply to the Government well in advance (as early as 15th February, 1915) shows the efficiency of the British security system as well as the inaptitude of the Ghadarites in matters of revolutionary secrecy.

In addition, steps were taken to strengthen the police force during that period. The Department of Criminal Intelligence was re-organised to cope with the changed situation. Additional Police,<sup>43</sup> as Emergency Police, was raised to deal with the abnormal conditions.

<sup>41</sup> Home Department (1915) (Political), Government of India, Part B Proceedings, February, No. 53-55. page 7.

<sup>42</sup> Home Department, Government of India (Political A) Proceedings September, 1914, Number 211-224, page, 12.

<sup>43</sup> During 1914, 2 Sub-Inspectors, 27 Head-Constables and 176 Constables were

### Indian Habit and Punjabi Character

The Indian habit of regarding the ideal as an accomplished fact was yet another reason of the failure of the Ghadar Party. The Punjabis have a peculiar habit of doing things hastily without fully considering the pros and cons calmly. Their moves from America with the openly declared aim of revolution, the taking of Kirpal Singh into the inner circle of the party without the requisite tests, the incapacity to maintain secrecy and other similar failings are all in keeping with the Punjabi character.

Another instance of this lack of caution in the Punjabi character is provided by the agitation of the agriculturalists in 1907 in the Punjab. In this connection Lajpat Rai wrote, "My only fear is that the bursting out may not be premature."<sup>44</sup> S.N. Sanyal also endorses this view when he says that at times the Ghadarites were checked from inopportune activities with great difficulty.<sup>45</sup> While summing up the Ghadar Movement, the Indian Sedition Committee writes, "With the high spirited and adventurous Sikhs the interval between thought and action is short."<sup>46</sup> There might be some good things about this trait of the Punjabis, but it is certainly harmful from the revolutionary point of view.

All these factors combined to lead the Ghadar movement to a failure. Some of these causes have been confirmed by the Police officials who were concerned with the prosecution of the Ghadarites. "Lack of organisation, bad leadership, incapacity to maintain secrecy, and the Indian habit of regarding the ideal as the fact accomplished, no doubt played, their part in defeating the revolutionaries, but on more than one occasion their designs were dangerously near fulfilment and disaster was narrowly averted."<sup>47</sup>

enrolled as Additional Police. During 1915 the additions were 3 Sub-Inspectors, 40 Head-Constables and 307 Constables. During 1915 there was "a net increase in expenditure of over Rs. 4 lakhs owing to the completion of the re-organisation of the Criminal Intelligence Department—and other measures taken to meet the situation". During 1916, 17 Sub-Inspectors, 92 Head-constables and 827 Constables were recruited as Additional Police.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted from the *Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report* Calcutta (1918), page 143.

<sup>45</sup> Sanyal, S.N. *Bandi Jiwan* (Punjabi rendering) Part II, Amritsar year not given, pages, 37-47.

<sup>46</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report*, Calcutta (1918), page, 161.

<sup>47</sup> Isemonger F.C. and Slattery J. *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 44.

# 15

## *Epilogue*

Movements should not be weighed merely by the attainment or otherwise of political ends. It is really the spirit behind the movement that is important for its assessment. It is from this viewpoint that the Ghadar movement, which formed an integral part of the Indian national movement, must be considered.

### **Spirit of the Movement**

The spirit with which the Movement was started, is praiseworthy. In Chapter III it has been discussed that economic conditions were responsible for the migration to Canada and the United States of a very large majority of those, who later joined the ranks of the Ghadar Party. These migrants came mostly from the peasantry of the Punjab. But when they joined the Ghadar Party, they were so much enthused with the spirit of patriotism and the prospect of helping their country free itself from the British yoke that they declined attractive and remunerative opportunities of work. In fact, they placed their hard-earned money at the disposal of the Party to be utilised for the cause and they themselves returned to India to organise and participate in the struggle for freedom.

The Party had started the paper 'Ghadar' which was distributed free. The expenditure on the publications of the Party, on the maintenance of its premises and any other expenditure was met by voluntary subscriptions<sup>1</sup> from the members of the Party and its sympathisers. It was at a later stage that German financial aid was arranged.

For instance, at the first meeting at Bridal Veil (Oregon) 700 or 800 dollars were collected on the spot. Similar collections were made at St. John, Woodland, Linton, Wina, Astoria, Sacramento etc. (vide Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I, Judgment dated 13th September, 1915 Part III A(1) The Beginning of Conspiracy & War pages 2 & 3).

Another way in which the members and the sympathisers of the Movement strengthened it was through the invitation and support of its more affluent members to Indian students for study in America. The Vice-President of the Party, Jawala Singh and Chaman Singh, the President of the Ghadar Party, Philiopines furnish such instances. Similarly on the arrival of the *Komagata Maru* at Vancouver on the 23rd May, 1914, "a balance of 22,000 dollars still due for the hire of the ship was paid by Vancouver Indians and the charter was transferred to two prominent malcontents"<sup>2</sup> (prominent revolutionaries.) They were, in fact, the members of the Ghadar Party who collected this large amount for the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*. It shows that the Ghadar Party members sacrificed all their earnings and properties<sup>3</sup> for the revolution.

Persons working on the staff of the 'Ghadar' and in the Yungantar Ashram initially met their own expenses. After some time only food and clothing were provided by the Ashram. The Founder-President of the Ghadar Party, Sohan Singh Bhakna, says that once an Irish patriot came to see the Yungantar Ashram. Having seen so many people working there he asked about the expenses of the Ashram. Sohan Singh replied, "only two dollars a day, because we get free vegetables from the farms of Jawala Singh, Sant Wasakha Singh and Bhai Santokh Singh. Only bread is purchased. No worker is paid." The Irish patriot was taken aback and remarked that "you have done in such a small period, what we could not do in so many years."

Some other instances are : On the 15th February, 1914, there was a largely attended meeting at Stockton (California). In this meeting voluntary subscriptions were called for. "Henceforth all promised to devote their earnings to the cause of the mutiny (vide Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Part III A(1). The beginning of Conspiracy and War page, 6).

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Sedition Committee , Report Calcutta (1918) page, 147.*

<sup>3</sup> Another instance of this is provided by the following : In the end of August (1914) an English gentleman wrote from Victoria (B.C.) to the Secretary of State for War that a friend of the writer who was an estate broker had received instructions from a Sikh to sell two lots of property at half their value. The Sikh said that he wanted the money to send Indians home. Likewise, the other Ghadarites who had properties in the U.S. & Canada sold them at nearly half their value while returning to India quoted from Isemonger. F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore (1919), page, 52.*

<sup>4</sup> Statement given to the writer by Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna of Village and Post Office Bhakna, District Amritsar, dated the 5th January, 1961.

Even on their return to India, there was no change in this outlook of the revolutionaries. For example, Nidhan Singh offered "to collect debts due to him and supply funds for the purchase of arms"<sup>6</sup> needed by the Party. On account of financial difficulties the Ghadarites had to resort to dacoities in India. But none of them used the loot for his personal gain. Commenting on the loot from the Chabba dacoity, the Special Tribunal of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case remarked, "We have seen that the whole of the loot was practically devoted to the ends of the revolutionists."<sup>6</sup> S.N. Sanyal writes, "On the start of the question of money they (the Ghadarites) placed their gold/pounds before me. Every group acted like this. The way in which they subscribed their hard-earned money for the Ghadar cause was not found in Bengal."<sup>7</sup>

The selfless spirit of the Ghadarites is also demonstrated by their mutual sense of loyalty and comradeship. For instance, Dafadar Lachman Singh and Abdulla from the 23rd Cavalry were sentenced to death together. An effort was made to extract some secrets from Abdulla. He was challengingly asked if he would like to be hanged along with a 'Kafir' and offered a reprieve. But Abdulla replied "If I am hanged along with Lachhman Singh, I shall certainly go to heaven."<sup>8</sup> A similar attempt was made with Sohan Lal Pathak by the Governor of Burma, but he, too, declined the offer. In the Burma Case I Judgement, Challia Ram was sentenced to death but was recommended for mercy. He refused to petition for mercy saying that he could not leave the company of a "holy man like Harnam Singh Kahari Sari". He was hanged but he did not desert his comrade. According to the report of the U.S. Senate Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities, the members of the Ghadar Party "became highly indoctrinated with a sense of fanatic loyalty to each other and to the Ghadar Party."<sup>9</sup>

It is generally believed that only the uneducated people took part in the Ghadar movement. This view is not correct. The Party had many educated members, while even those who did not

<sup>6</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Individual case of Nidhan Singh accused No. 54, page 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III c (III-8) The Dacoities, page 24.

<sup>8</sup> Sanyal, S.N. *Bandi Jiwan* Part I (Punjabi rendering) Amritsar (year not given) page 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, page 112.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities to California Legislature (1953) page 214.

have the benefit of a formal education displayed high degree of intelligence and sense of responsibility in their work. For example, in the Mandalay Case I Judgement, it is mentioned that Harnam Singh Kahari Sari was very intelligent and spoke English fluently. Chet Ram was educated. Kirpa Ram was a school teacher and a man of good position. Challia Ram was educated and was a good scholar of English. Kapur Singh and Gian Chand were educated. Naranjan Singh was an overseer and Amar Singh was a Surveyor.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly Bhai Parmanand was an M.A., Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, President of the Party, was well informed and V.G. Pingle was well-educated and had a very good knowledge of English. He even did most of the cross-examination of the witnesses himself. Regarding him the Special Tribunal, which tried the first Lahore Conspiracy Case remarks, "It is certainly regrettable in the extreme that a young man of the accused's talents, who might have made a success of his life and have been of service to his country, should have chosen to associate himself with a band of revolutionaries."<sup>11</sup> This means that the movement attracted both the educated and uneducated, though the latter element was naturally more numerous.

Whether the Ghadarites were educated or not they were high-spirited and worked in the movement with the noble aim of freeing their country. They were free from narrow parochial considerations, (as has been noticed in Chapters IV and V). Influenced by the noble spirit of the movement, even some Americans came to India with the Indian revolutionaries to take part in the planned revolution.<sup>12</sup>

The spirit, which inspired the revolutionaries, can be understood from the vows of the Ghadarites. Jagat Ram (accused no. 31) in the First Lahore Conspiracy Case states "vows were taken in the interests of equality and liberty."<sup>13</sup> Amar Singh (accused) states that at Portland (Oregon) before return to India 'oaths were taken to go to India to demand their rights, and never go near their homes, till their objects were achieved.'<sup>14</sup> It is true that the

<sup>10</sup> Mandalay Case No. I (Burma) Judgement, dated the 27th July, 1916, pages 263-269.

<sup>11</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement dated the 13th September, Individual case of V.G. Pingle Accused No. 59, page 4.

<sup>12</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I. Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Individual case of Kartar Singh Sarabha Accused No. 39, (An American Anarchist named 'Jack' came to India with Kartar Singh).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III A(1). The Beginning of Conspiracy and war, page. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III A(3) The Objects of going to India, page 3.

Ghadarites were unaware of any rudiments of political philosophy, but they were certainly inspired by the ideals of the liberty and equality. The Punjab Government reports also bear testimony to this fact. On the 28th February, 1915 the Punjab Government reported that the conspirators arrested at Lahore were mainly the "Peasants who have been indoctrinated with crude ideas of equality and democracy in America and led to believe by Hardyal and his co-workers that India can be made into a Utopia in which all will be equal and plague and famine cease to exist by the simple expedient of driving out the British."<sup>15</sup>

The statements of the Ghadarites in the courts, their confessions and remarks on hearing the death-sentence, prayers and singing of religious and patriotic songs at the gallows also speak of a rare nobility of spirit and of the strong sense of patriotism of the Ghadarites. Kartar Singh Sarabha declared while giving his statement in the court that this chief object was to free the country and whatever he did, he did for this. He had no personal interest. On hearing the death sentence, he remarked, "Thank you". Sucha Singh (student) an approver, stated that Kartar Singh's morning prayer was "Maro Faranghi Ko."<sup>16</sup> Before ascending the gallows Pingle asked for permission to say his prayers. While offering his prayers to the Almighty he said,

"O Lord on high, Thou knowest our hearts.  
The sacred cause, for which we lay down our lives,  
We entrust to Thy care  
This is our last prayer."<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Arjan Singh, accused in the Anarkali murder case, before the execution of his death sentence, recited a poem from 'Ghadar di Gunj' (Echo of Mutiny) "The time has come, why don't you wake up, O Hindu and Muslim brother, from your deep sleep."

The men who joined the Ghadar Party, knew the sacrifices which they had to make for their cause. They were fully aware of the price they would have to pay for fighting for India's freedom. They had not the slightest doubt about it, as was advertised in the 'Ghadar' of the 18th August, 1914.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from the *Indian Sedition Committee, (1918) Report* Calcutta (1918), page, 155.

<sup>16</sup> It means "Kill the English." (Lahore Conspiracy Case No, I) Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915. Individual case of Kartar Singh, accused no. 39, page 4.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of my Life*, (English rendering). Lahore (1934), page, 98.

"Wanted—Enthusiastic and heroic soldiers for the Ghadar in Hindustan.

Pay (or Remuneration)	Death
Reward	Martyrdom
Pension	Freedom
Field of work or Battle Field	India <sup>18</sup>

Even so they did not deviate from their intention of working in the movement.

Before their return to India the Ghadarites resolved to sacrifice themselves in the effort to secure their rights.<sup>19</sup> When one of them, Nawab Khan, complained in connection with his returning to India that he had no money or anything else, he was told, "What need have you of money ? You are going to lay down your life."<sup>20</sup> From America one Ghadarite wrote to his wife, "Times are hard, very hard, there is no certainty of life."—"In a short time there will be a great mutiny—we shall take the sword and gun in our hands and pressing forward, we shall kill and die.—Take courage—. Pain comes first but is followed by comfort."<sup>21</sup>

Another fact can be mentioned as illustrating the sincerity of these revolutionaries. While on their way to India, they agreed that the penalty for failure of performance of duty by any member of the Ghadar Party will be death.

The gallantry and dauntlessness with which these revolutionaries worked in India have been described by the Punjab Police officials in terms such as : "The audacity with which Sucha Singh and others went about this work of seduction (of troops) is astounding."<sup>22</sup> M.S. Leigh, O.B.E., I.C.S. writes that these Ghadarites worked "in most of the cantonments of Northern India in the most bare-faced manner."<sup>23</sup>

While summing up the conclusions about the revolutionary movements in India, the Indian Sedition Committee remarked that the returned emigrants in the Punjab were bent upon revolution and

<sup>18</sup> *The Ghadr* (Punjabi) published from San Francisco (California) dated the 18th August, 1914.

<sup>19</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1. Judgement dated 13th September, 1915 Part III A(2) Preparing for the Migration page 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Part III A(3) The object of going to India, page 4.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore* (1919), pages 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, page 105.

<sup>23</sup> Leigh, M.S. : *The Punjab and the War*, Lahore (1922), page 19.

bloodshed. In Burma, too, the Ghadar Movement was active.<sup>24</sup>

Except in the Mandalay (Burma) Cases, the Judges in other cases have tried to refrain from giving opinions on individual revolutionaries. But some reference to individual character in one form or another could not be avoided nor could fearlessness, courage and spirit of sacrifice of these patriots remain unnoticed. Regarding Kartar Singh Sarabha, the Trial Court of the First Lahore Conspiracy Case remarks, "He is a young man (he was 19 then) no doubt but he is certainly one of the worst of these conspirators, and is a thoroughly callous scoundrel, proud of his exploits to whom no mercy whatsoever can or should be shown."<sup>25</sup> (Kartar Singh Sarabha Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kesar Singh and Harnam Singh Sialkoti, on being asked by the Superintendent of jails, even refused to petition for mercy).

About Nidhan Singh Chugha, the same court remarks, "In our opinion it has been very fully established that this accused is an extremely dangerous criminal, and one of the worst and most important of the conspirators."<sup>26</sup>

Prithvi Singh Azad (former Director, National Discipline Scheme, Punjab) was arrested at Ambala on December the 8th, 1914, after a violent struggle with the police officials."<sup>27</sup> Similarly Piara Singh Langeri, too, fought with the police party and assaulted the Sub-Inspector who went to arrest him.<sup>28</sup> Kartar Singh Sarabha, Harnam Singh Tundilat and Jagat Singh, on being arrested (they were arrested), "burst into a revolutionary harangue to those present."<sup>29</sup>

Bhai Parmanand, contemporary historian writing about the morale of the Ghadarites sentenced to death, says : "We were literally in the condition described in the popular saying 'The death of many is a merry making.' People may not readily realise, nor even believe my statement that we were in fact in such a state of intoxication as might with truth be called rejoicing. Not a minute passed but someone or other was singing some devotional songs or patriotic poems which he had composed before, in some cases after, coming to

<sup>24</sup> *The Indian Sedition Committee (1918) Report* Calcutta (1918), page 180.

<sup>25</sup> *Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement* dated the 13th September, 1915. Individual Case of Kartar Singh Sarabha Accused No. 39, page 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I Judgement* dated the 13th September, 1915, Individual case of Nidhan Singh Chuga, Accused No. 54, page 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Individual Case of Prithvi Singh Accused No. 58, page 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Individual Case of Piara Singh. Accused No. 60, page 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Individual Case of Harnam Singh Tundital, Accused No. 21 page 2.

jail. Conversation with one another would be kept up till a very late hour at night, with laughter and mirth, until at last we would go to sleep, weary and exhausted. Our guards would wonder at this sort of behaviour and often ask if we were going in a marriage procession or preparing for death."<sup>30</sup>

About Kartar Singh Sarabha, Bhai Parmanand writes that "he was in a very joyous mood and infected others with the same spirit." "Let us be hanged quickly," he would say "so that we may, the sooner be reborn to take up our work, where we dropped it."<sup>31</sup>

When a person joined the party or the Yugantar Ashram Council, he had to take six vows of which the following three express the spirit of the movement ;

- (i) That he would sacrifice his personal property for the sake of freedom ;
- (ii) that he would dedicate his whole life for the cause ;
- (iii) that he would not hate any person on the basis of caste, colour or religion.<sup>32</sup>

Even after the failure of the movement the revolutionaries who escaped immediate arrest, did not lost heart and continued their efforts in one form or another for sometime. The Lt. Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, endorses this when he says that the failure of the bold design did not dishearten the leaders. They found the atmosphere of the Punjab too hot to be comfortable and took refuge in the United Provinces, whence they directed a compaign of assassination and outrage for several months more. Above all, they continued their efforts to seduce Indian troops.<sup>33</sup> To give another example, after the failure of the plan at Lahore, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Jagat Singh, Sur Singh and Harnam Singh Tundilat succeeded in leaving India and reaching Kabul. There, one of them read a poem from 'Ghadar Di Gunj' (Echo of Mutiny)" "How can lions run away, when difficulties fall in their way." On this they dropped the idea of going further and decided that they should arrange to get rifles and get the arrested comrades released. With this plan they returned to India and went to the 22nd Cavalry

<sup>30</sup> Bhai Parmanand : *The Story of My Life* (English rendering Lahore (1934) pages 91-92.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, page 93.

<sup>32</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. I. (Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915 Proceedings, statement of Jagat Ram Accused No. 31, pages 457 & 629.

<sup>33</sup> O'Dwyer, Sir Michael : *India As I Knew it.* London (1925), page 203.

which was camping at Chak No. 5 Sargodha to convert the Jawans to their cause. There a Risaldar got them arrested on the 2nd March 1915. Similarly Prem Singh of Sur Singh (Lahore) (accused in Padri case) continued his work. About him Isemonger and Slattery observed that he (Prem Singh) had the resolution to continue in his ways when practically all the chiefs of his fellows had been arrested.<sup>84</sup>

Even the enthusiasm of the arrested revolutionaries was indeed uncontrollable. A number of them tried to run away from the jails, to keep up the fight, Gurmukh Singh Lalton was one of them who actually succeeded in escaping from prison in 1923 to be re-arrested in 1936 during which period he had spent many years in America and the U.S.S.R.

Another example is the Rawalpindi Jail Case. Before being sent to the Andamans, Jawala Singh of Thathian, Jamna Dass, Indar Singh Granthi, Piara Singh of Langeri and Rode Singh of Rode were kept in the Rawalpindi Jail. Soon with the co-operation of some of the warders they held a meeting of all the prisoners of the jail and delivered seditious speeches. It was decided that bomb making material should be procured with the help of the warders who were won over the Superintendent and other officials of the jail should be killed by bombs and the arms in the armoury be seized. Then breaking their way out they should again rouse troops and the people. Money was to be obtained through the warders. But information reached the jail authorities and on December 6, 1915 some potash and a phial of nitric acid was recovered from the cell of Jawala Singh. Three days later, some sulphur, a phial of nitric acid, nine other phials, and a box of iron nails were found in the carpet shed. Three warders were punished for this.<sup>85</sup>

### **The Ghadar Movement and the National Movement**

The Ghadar movement and the Indian National Movement were complimentary. The Ghadar Party was inspired by the Indian National movement as the latter was strengthened by the former. The immigrants in the U.S. and Canada, most of whom were Punjabis, did not like the methods adopted by the Congress leaders for the achievement of their objects. Consequently, they selected

<sup>84</sup> Isemonger : F.C. & Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Lahore* (1919) page, 121.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, page 129.

different methods for the attainment of national independence. Thus the Ghadar movement was one of the various facets of the Indian Nationalist Movement and contributed its share to the pool of the broader movement. The Ghadar Party did not achieve its aim nor did its efforts yield any results immediately, because the people of India were generally co-operating with the British Government in prosecuting the war. But immediately after the war the effects became evident, and the Akali movement, in particular, and Congress movement in general benefited greatly by the example and participation of the remnants of the Ghadar Party and the spirit born of its patriotic activities. The Ghadarites as a body raised the slogan of complete national independence and a republican government in India for the first time and made sacrifices for the materialisation of the slogan. It was done at a time when no other party did or could dare to do so. Thus it can be said that it paved the way for the Indian National Congress to demand complete independence at a later stage.

Even during the war, the Ghadar movement can be seen to have accelerated the Indian National Movement. The Home Rule movement started by Mrs. Annie Besant and B.G. Tilak in 1916 could be said to be the direct successor of the Ghadar Movement, though it aimed at self-government within the British Empire. It was launched as an alternative to the Ghadar Movement, whose insurrectionary methods were thought to be both dangerous and unprofitable. This is evident from what Mrs. Annie Besant said about her plans : "To disentangle the national extremists from their compromising alliance with the revolutionaries, to reconcile them to a position within the Empire and to bring them in line with the Moderates within the United Congress."

The impact of the Ghadar movement on the political life of India can be seen also in the shaking which it gave to the foreign rule and in the national awakening which followed after the trials and executions of the Ghadarites. It contributed to convincing the British that it was difficult for them to silence Indians over the matter of their right to national freedom. According to the statement of Gyani Bhagwan Singh, "the Ghadar Party created a fear in the minds of the Britishers in India. The singing of songs by the revolutionaries right at the moment of being led to the gallows terrified the British and made them realise that if they did not listen to

<sup>\*\*</sup> Interview by the writer with Gyani (the late) Bhagwan Singh of Village and Office Wrang, District Amritsar dated the 18th March, 1961.

the Mahatmas of the Congress, there was another party prepared to take guns in their hands for winning freedom.”<sup>36</sup>

In 1915 Lord Sinha, President of the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress, advised the British Government to make a declaration of their goal in India with a view to pacifying Indian youth,<sup>37</sup> who were “intoxicated with the ideas of freedom, nationalism and self-government.” Hence it must be conceded that it was under the revolutionary pressure of elements like the Ghadar Party, as well as the pressure of the middle class, business and professional elements that the August 20 Declaration of 1917 was made, which reads :

“The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire....”

This declaration is the forerunner of the Reforms Act, 1919, rather it resulted in the Reforms Act, 1919, which introduced partial responsible governments in the provinces technically known as “Dyarchy.”

There is another angle from which the contribution of the Ghadar Party to the national movement can be assessed. The activities of the Ghadar Party from 1914 to 1915 culminated in their convictions under various conspiracy cases, namely, Lahore Conspiracy Cases, Mandi (State) Conspiracy Cases, Mandalay (Burma) Conspiracy Cases, Benaras Conspiracy Case and numerous courts-martial. These cases, of course, combined with other conspiracy cases at Delhi and in Bengal, led to rethinking on the part of the Government about the causes leading to such extremism among Indians. To make investigations into these conspiracy cases it appointed a Committee on the 10th December, 1917 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Rowlatt, known as the Rowlatt Committee with the following terms of reference :

1. “To investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India.”

2. “To examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen

<sup>36</sup> His obvious reference was to the revolutionaries.

<sup>38</sup> Resolution No. 2884, Government of India, Home Department, Delhi, the 10th December, 1917.

in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise as to the legislation if any, necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with them.”<sup>38</sup>

The Report of the Rowlatt Committee resulted in the enactment of the Rowlatt Act, 1919, which caused an unprecedented commotion in the Punjab. It was in the course of the agitation against this Act that a meeting was held in the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, which ended in the massacre of over a thousand persons by troops under General Dyer, commonly known as the ‘Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy.’ This tragedy deeply shook the whole nation and the field was ready for Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to take over.

The contribution which the Ghadar Party made to the struggle for freedom is recognised by many leaders of the Congress which formed the vanguard of the nationalist movement. For example, the late S. Pratap Singh Kairon,<sup>39</sup> former Chief Minister, Punjab, who joined the national movement at a later stage and was familiar with the leadership and work of the Ghadar Party in the U.S.A. says : “The Ghadar patriots were pioneers in waging a relentless struggle against British Imperialism because their’s was practically the first attempt to raise the banner of revolt after the terrible repression of the post-1857 days. They also visualized a broad-based movement for national liberation on secular and democratic lines—they thus blazed the trail for the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements which came later. Therein lies the historic significance of the Ghadar Party.”<sup>40</sup>

#### **Inspiration to the Indian National Army and Forming of Azad Hind Government.**

The organisers of the Indian National Army in 1942 were also inspired partly by the Ghadarites. The late Subhash Chandra Bose, one of the organisers of the I.N.A., came into lime-light on the political scene of the country in about 1923 when he organised

<sup>38</sup> The late S. Pratap Singh Kairon came in contact with the members of the Ghadar Party, while he was a student at the Michigan University, U.S.A. It was as a result of his contact with the Ghadar party that politics became a part of his life thereafter. Later he took part in the Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements. (The ‘Sunday Tribune’ Ambala dated the 7th February, 1965 and the ‘Sunday Standard,’ New Delhi of the same date.)

<sup>40</sup> Statement given to the writer by the Late S. Pratap Singh Kairon, former Chief Minister, Punjab, of Village and Post Office, Kairon, District Amritsar dated the 19th June, 1961.

a demonstration at Calcutta on the visit of the then Prince of Wales to India. He did not quite like the Gandhian ideology and methods. In 1930 Subhash Chandra Bose attacked the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and non co-operation movement in the Congress annual session. He nurtured the ideals of Shivaji, as is evident from the following talk between Vijay Ratna Mujumdar and Subhash Chandra Bose in the year 1937 :

He said, "A day will dawn when the Indians will have to follow the Maharashtrian way for the regaining of freedom. They will have to copy the example of the Great Shivaji."<sup>41</sup>

Indian revolutionary leaders, like Dr. Hedgewar (Nagpur founder of the R.S.S.) and Savarkar kept before them the efforts of the pioneer patriots of the Ghadar party during the First World War. They were nursing a desire to adopt their ideology and methods and implement the same more successfully. The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 afforded an opportunity to the Indian revolutionary leadership, which accelerated their efforts to win freedom. In 1940 Subhash Chandra Bose assessed the political situation in the country for an uprising. He met the leaders of the Congress party and other parties and also called on Dr. Hedgewar and Savarkar. Dr. Hedgewar was on his death-bed, when Subhash Chandra Bose went to him at Nagpur. It was in fact just a day before Hedgewar died. Subhash Chandra Bose then met Savarkar in June 1940 and told him his intention of starting an all-India movement beginning with the agitation for removing the British memorials from India. Savarkar told him that it was of no use removing the British statues and rot in prison, when thousands of them including the Governor General were even ruling over the land. During this conversation,<sup>42</sup> Savarkar told Subhash Chandra Bose about the organisation of the Ghadar movement from outside India and their work within the country during the First World War and advised him to leave India for organising a movement from outside for armed revolution with the help of the foreign powers hostile to the British. Said Savarkar : "And then I narrated to him the First World War-time story of alliances with Germany and other nations and the creating of the, revolutionary army out of the Indian soldiers fallen into German hands as prisoners of war. I showed him the latest declaration of Rash

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from Balshastri, Hardas, Sahityacharya : *Armed Struggle for Freedom*. (English rendering from Marathi), Poona (1958), page 414.

<sup>42</sup> This conversation took place on the 22nd June, 1940.

Behari Bose and said : "This is a sure indication that Japan will jump into the war before this year end. If this really happens, imagine what a golden chance would be offered to you to invade India for her liberation and attack the British defences with your own trained soldiers at present scattered in the Eastern Sectors of war, supported by the mighty strength of German and Japanese machines at your back. Like Rash Behari and other armed revolutionaries who tricked the British rulers (during War I) and escaped to Germany and Japan, you should also dupe the British and get out successfully, mobilise the Indian war prisoners and give a correct lead to them. Make a proclamation of Indian Independence ; as soon as Japan joins the War, manage to invade India either through the Bay of Bengal or from the Indo-Burmese border. There is no hope of liberating India without some such armed enterprise."<sup>48</sup>

This conversation clearly indicates that Savarkar suggested to Subhash Chandra Bose to follow the same line of action as that of the Ghadar Party. It is not too much to suggest that the formation and organisation of the I.N.A. by Subhash Chandra Bose was the direct result of this suggestion. The I.N.A. which was organised abroad, like the Ghadar party, occupied itself with seeking assistance from the enemies of the British, exhorting and converting Indian troops and finally embarking on armed enterprise for the liberation of India in 1942. A number of members of the Ghadar Party joined the I.N.A. and actively participated in the movement for the freedom of India. For example, before the Japanese entered the War, Baba Hari Singh Usman, an old worker of the Ghadar party, who had settled in Java after the failure of the Ghadar plan, managed to reach Japan with the help of the Japanese Consul at Java. He did so with a view to avail of the impending opportunity to fight for Indian independence. He started the spade work for the I.N.A. movement from 1938 to 1941(8 December) by publishing and circulating leaflets against the British through the Japanese Navy and continued to do so till 1941.

Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies on the 7th December, 1941. On the 15th February, 1942 Singapore fell. With the fall of Singapore, 32,000 Indian soldiers became prisoners of war. On the 17th February, 1942 Major Fujiwara, Commander of the Japanese victorious forces, invited

<sup>48</sup> Quoted by Balshastri Hardas: *Armed Struggle for Freedom*. (English rendering from Marathi), Poona (1958), page 423-24.

the prominent Indian citizens at Singapore. He told them that England's power was dwindling and that it was an opportunity for India to strike for independence. Japan was prepared to give all assistance to Indians to attain independence for India. He further told them to form an independent league,<sup>44</sup> but no final decision could be made. Similarly, Mr. Tohio, Japanese War Minister, also exhorted the Indians to fight for their freedom.

It was decided to hold a conference and invite 18 Indians, half of whom should represent Rash Behari Bose's party and half the Indians in Shanghai and Hong Kong. In this conference which was held in Tokyo from the 28th to the 30th March, 1942, the Japanese wanted Rash Behari to be the leader of the movement, to which Baba Hari Singh Usman, one of the delegates and an old Ghadarite, objected. No final decision could, therefore, be reached. Then a second conference was held on the 14th, (14th to 23rd) June, 1942 at Bangkok. This conference was attended by 150 Indians, 75 Civilians and 75 army personnel. At this meeting it was resolved to form the India Independence League and the Azad Hind Fauj. It was decided to invite Subhash Chandra Bose from Germany to lead the movement and the Azad Hind Fauj. In the meantime, Rash Behari Bose was authorised to work as leader and Capt. Mohan Singh, (General, I.N.A.) was appointed as General Officer Commanding of the Indian National Army and continued in that capacity up to the 22nd December, 1942, when the first I.N.A. was dissolved. On the 2nd July, 1943 Subhash Chandra Bose reached Singapore civil airport and took charge of the movement and the recognition of the I.N.A. which came to be known as the second I.N.A.

Subhash Chandra Bose proclaimed and formed a Provisional Government of Free India on the 21st October, 1943. It was recognised by the Government of Japan on the 23rd October, 1943, and by the German Government on the 29th October, 1943. The Free Governments of Burma, the Phillipines, Korea, Italy, China, Manchuke and the Irish Republic followed suit. On the 30th December, 1943 the I.N.A. hoisted the flag of the free Government of India on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. On the 4th February, 1944 the I.N.A. reached the Indo-Burmese Border and

<sup>44</sup> Dhillon, Gurbakhsh Singh (Colonel, I.N.A.), *The Changi Garrison*, Simla (1946) unpublished, page 2 (Through the Courtesy of Colonel G.S Dhillon, (Dhillon Farm, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh) and The Press Journal Supplement (Bombay) dated the 23rd September, 1945.

attacked the British forces. On the 18th March, 1944 the I.N.A. detachments, with the collaboration of the Japanese detachments, broke the British defences and entered the Manipur State. They captured Ramu, Kohima, Palel and Tiddim and besieged Imphal, capital of the Manipur State, and after capturing it hoisted the National Flag. In the meantime the international situation also took a different turn. Germany opened the second front in the East by attacking Russia, but was defeated. With the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 27th May, 1945 and the devastation caused by it, Japan surrendered unconditionally. The surrender of Japan sounded the death-knell of the I.N.A.

Thus it is clear that it was the Ghadar Party that set an example for the future revolutionaries. It was their lead which was followed by the organisers of the I.N.A. movement. This is borne out by Col. Gurbakhsh Singh Dhillon of the I.N.A. who holds that the idea of raising the Indian National Army for the liberation of India was not a new one and had been taken from the Indian revolutionaries (Ghadarites) who fought for Indian independence with the help of powers hostile to the British during World War I.<sup>45</sup> In fact, some of the prominent leaders of the Ghadar movement held responsible positions in the I.N.A. movement. Among them mention may be made of Rash Behari Bose, chief sponsor of the I.N.A. and leader of the Ghadar movement in the Punjab, who escaped to Japan in 1945 and Baba Hari Singh Usman (Badowal, Ludhiana) who was responsible for smuggling arms and ammunitions being brought to India in the '*Maverick*' and the '*Annie Larson*' and had settled in Java after his trial and twenty years later fled to Japan before the outbreak of the Second World War to avail a second chance for winning freedom. Babu Amar Singh, who was one of the leaders of the Burma-Siam Scheme of the Ghadar Party, also played an important role in organising detachments of the I.N.A.

With the victory of the British, the army personnel of the I.N.A. freedom fighters were termed rebels. They were captured, brought to India and tried for treason. This treatment was resented by the public and the army personnel. The army men began to hate the British rulers for their contemptuous treatment of the

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<sup>45</sup> Interview by the writer with Col. G.S. Dhillon, I.N.A., Dhillon Farm Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, dated the 5th October, 1964 and Dhillon, G.S. (Col. I.N.A.), *The Indian National Army in East Asia*, Simla (1957), unpublished, page 5.

members of the I.N.A. It found expression in a strike in the Air Force on the 20th January, 1946 at Karachi, on the 9th, 11th and 15th February at Bombay, Lahore and Delhi respectively. 5,200 airmen participated in this strike. In the wake of the Air Force, the Navy also followed suit. On the 19th February, 1946, 5,000 Naval personnel attacked the English officers and soldiers in the city of Bombay. They wore badges of the Azad Hind Fauj on their breasts. On the 21st February, the mutiny in the Navy assumed the form of impending revolution. In short, the Indian soldiers demonstrated their unmistakable protest against the British in India. The British were convinced that it was not possible to check the rebellion in the Indian Defence Forces. This fact coupled with the political situation in the country and many international factors consequent on the edding of the Second World War were responsible for the transfer of power by them to India. But the rebellion in the Indian army was one of the most important factors to influence the decision of the British to quit India. This view is supported by the statement of the British Prime Minister. In the debate in the House of Commons prior to the passing of the Independence of India Act, 1947 in reply to the question of Mr. Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Atlee sought to clarify doubts in the following words :

“British is transferring power due to the fact that—

1. The Indian mercenary army is no longer loyal to Britain; and
2. Britain cannot afford to have a large British Army to hold down India.”<sup>46</sup>

Turning again to the role of the Ghadar Party, it contributed its share to the pool of the national movement like other parties and groups. It challenged the claim of the Britishers outside the country of ruling India in the interest of the Indians and with their consent and thus disabused the minds of the peoples in foreign countries. The Ghadr literature gave a stimulus to the patriotic aspirations of Indians in India and abroad that it was not impossible to wage war against British rule. This part of the Ghadar Party has been admitted even by former President of the Indian Republic, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He says that “the movement was successful in spreading knowledge of India’s struggle for freedom in outside countries.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Quoted from Balshastri Hardas’s *Armed Struggle for Freedom*, Poona (1958) page 442.

<sup>47</sup> Statement given to the writer by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of

In India the sacrifices of the Ghadarites gave inspiration to the later patriots and they received encouragement even in their imprisonment from the earlier sufferings of these revolutionaries. This is illustrated by the statement of the late S. Pratap Singh, former Chief Minister, Punjab. "To most of us, who have had the privilege of going to prison for the national cause, the memories of the Ghadar heroes are particularly dear and sacred. They had by their sufferings in the prisons and brave resistance to atrocities committed on political prisoners made it possible for us to pass through trials and tribulations of life in jail."<sup>48</sup>

Even the Government was conscious of the impact and work of the Party. For example, the Punjab Police officials, F.C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, who dealt with the conspiracies of the Ghadarites in the Punjab say that "on more than one occasion their designs were dangerously near fulfilment and disaster was narrowly averted."<sup>49</sup> Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lt. Governor of Punjab in connection with the Ghadar plan of February 21, 1915 remarked that "the idea was not fantastic, for it had penetrated as far down as Bengal and was known to the disaffected elements in Dacca."<sup>50</sup> The Indian Sedition Committee of 1918 observes, while summarising its findings about the revolutionary movements in India, "All these plots (Ghadar and others) have been directed towards one and the same objective, the overthrow by force of British rule in India."<sup>51</sup>

### Summing Up

To sum up, the Ghadar Party was formed in April, 1914, by Lala Hardyal, Sohan Singh Bhakna, Pandit Kanshi Ram, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Santokh Singh and others in the United States, with the object of expelling the British from India by means of an armed revolution and the setting up of a republican government based on the principles of liberty and equality. To enlist the Indians in foreign countries for the cause of the armed revolution, the Party started the paper *Ghadar* on the 1st November, 1913. It opened

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The Indian Union (then Vice-President), Government of India, New Delhi, dated the 19th April, 1961.

<sup>48</sup> Statement given to the writer by the late S. Pratap Singh Kairon, former Chief Minister, Punjab, of Village and Post Office Kairon, District Amritsar, dated the 19th June, 1961.

<sup>49</sup> Isemonger, F.C. and Slattery, J : *An Account of the Ghadar Party Conspiracy*, Lahore (1919), page 44.

<sup>50</sup> O'Dwyer Sir Michael : *India As I Knew It*, London (1925), page 202.

<sup>51</sup> Indian Sedition Committee 1918 Report, Calcutta (1918), page 180.

its branches at Hong Kong, Manila, Bangkok, Shanghai and Panama. It designed a tricolour national flag which was unfurled at Stockton (California) on the 15th February, 1914 and under it the Ghadarites pledged themselves to "fight and die in the mutiny (revolution) under the 'National Standard.'"<sup>52</sup>

When the First World War broke out, the Party was not yet fully prepared, but it organised the return of Indians abroad to India for implementing their plan and thousands of them returned to India under this plan. Many of them were arrested on arrival in India while others with the help of local recruits won over some of the troops, villagers and students, collected arms, manufactured bombs, attacked arsenals for capturing arms and finally planned a general rising. But their plans failed because of leakage. They were tried in various cases, punished and thus made sacrifices for the country's freedom. In all, 145 persons were either hanged as a result of their trial or killed in encounters with the police, 306 were sentenced to transportation for life and 77 were awarded lesser punishments. But their sacrifices did not go in vain. The freedom struggle of the Indian people, in many of its facets, derived inspiration from the Ghadar movement, and after independence the Congress party, as well as the opposition parties in the Punjab have acknowledged the effective role of the Ghadar movement in the broader perspective of the Indian national movement and have paid tributes to the Ghadarites. The Government of the Punjab has granted Rs. 1 lakh aid for the Desh Bhagat Memorial at Jullundur which has been built to commemorate the memory of the Ghadar heroes. The Sikh organisation, the Siromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee has contributed Rs. 11,000 for the Desh Bhagat Memorial. These may not be large sums, but they are an earnest token of the recognition of the part played by the Ghadar Party in the struggle for freedom in the days when it was dangerous to challenge the might of the British Empire by resorting to armed rebellion and conspiracies involving violence to overthrow the British power in India.

<sup>52</sup> Lahore Conspiracy Case No. 1, Judgement dated the 13th September, 1915, Part III C(14) The Revolutionary Flag, page 1.

According to the latest information, Late Bhag Singh of Jai Singh Wala and Aman Singh of Sadhawan from Panama have donated Rs. 1,05,000 and 60,000 respectively to the Desh Bhagat Memorial, Jullundur. The contribution of the S.G.P.C. now stands at Rs. 50,000 Interview by the writer with Baba Gurmukh Singh, dated the 10th May, 1967 at Jullundur.



## APPENDIX A CASE I

### LAHORE CONSPIRACY

*The following Ghadariites were sentenced to death and actually hanged :*

I

S. No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Bakhshish Singh	Santa Singh	Gilwali	Amritsar
2.	Harnam Singh	Arura Singh	Bhati Guraya	Sialkot
3.	Jagat Singh	Arur Singh	Sursingh	Lahore
4.	Kartar Singh	Mangal Singh	Sarabha	Ludhiana
5.	Vishnu Ganesh	Ganesh Pingley	Talengana Dhamdhera	Poona
6.	Surain Singh	Bur Singh	Gilwali	Amritsar
7.	Surain Singh	Israr Singh	Gilwali	Amritsar

## II

*The following Ghadarites were sentenced to death with forfeiture of property, but were changed into transportation for life by the Viceroy :*

S.N.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Balwant Singh	Mir Singh	Sathiala	Amritsar
2.	Harnam Singh	Gurdit Singh	Kotia Naudh Singh	Hoshiarpur
3.	Hirde Ram	Gajian Singh	Mandi	Mandi State
4.	Jagat Ram	Dithu Mal	Hariana	Hoshiarpur
5.	Kala Singh	Gulab Singh	Amritsar	Amritsar
6.	Kesar Singh	Bhup Singh	Thattgarh	Amritsar
7.	Khushal Singh	Suchet Singh	Padri	Amritsar
8.	Nand Singh	Ram Singh	Kailey	Ludhiana
9.	Nidhan Singh	Sunder Singh	Chugha	Ferozpur
10.	Bhai Parma Nand	Tara Chand	Karyala	Jhelum
11.	Parma Nand	Gian Pashad	Sukrada Kharka	Hanirpur (U.P.)
12.	Prithvi Singh	Shadi Ram	Sabhu	Patiala State
13.	Ram Saran Das	Sant Ram	Kapurthala	Kapurthala State
14.	Rulia Singh	Jagat Singh	Sarabha	Ludhiana
15.	Sawan Singh	Khushal Singh	Chabba	Amritsar
16.	Sohan Singh	Karam Singh	Bakhna	Amritsar
17.	Wasawa Singh	Mihan Singh	Gilwali	Amritsar

## III

*The following were sentenced to transportation for life and forfeiture of property:*

S. No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Bhan Singh	Sawan Singh	Sunet	Ludhiana
2.	Bishan Singh	Jawala Singh	Dadher	Amritsar
3.	Bishan Singh	Kesar Singh	Dadher	Amritsar
4.	Chuhar Singh	Buta Singh	Lilan	Ludhiana
5.	Gurmukh Singh	Hoshnak Singh	Latton	Ludhiana
6.	Gurdit Singh	Gurmukh Singh	Sur Singh	Lahore
7.	Hazara Singh	Bela Singh	Dadher	Amritsar
8.	Indar Singh	Ala Singh	Mala	Ludhiana
9.	Indar Singh	Ganda Singh	Basin	Lahore
10.	Indar Singh	Mula Singh	Sursingh	Lahore
11.	Jawand Singh	Uitam Singh	Sursingh	Lahore
12.	Jawala Singh	Kanhaya Singh	Trattian	Amritsar
13.	Kala Singh	Ghasita Singh	Sursingh	Lahore
14.	Kehar Singh	Nihal Singh	Marhana	Amritsar
15.	Kharak Singh	Ganda Singh	Bhupa Rai	Ludhiana
16.	Kirpal Singh	Narain Singh	Bhupa Rai	Ludhiana
17.	Lal Singh	Mehan Singh	Bhure	Amritsar
18.	Madan Singh	Mal Singh	Gaga	Lahore
19.	Mangal Singh	Surmukh Singh	Laipura	Amritsar
20.	Piara Singh	Lakha Singh	Langeri	Hoshiarpur
21.	Puran Singh	Hoshiar Singh	Isewal	Ludhiana
22.	Ruda Singh	Basakha Singh	Ruda	Ferozepur
23.	Shiv Singh	Munshi	Kotla	Hoshiarpur

- |     |                    |             |             |           |
|-----|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 24. | Sher Singh         | Kesar Singh | Ween Poin   | Amritsar  |
| 25. | Udham Singh        | Mewa Singh  | Kasel       | Amritsar  |
| 26. | Basaka Singh, Sant | Dyal Singh  | Dadher      | Amritsar  |
| 27. | Rur Singh          | Attar Singh | Chuhar Chak | Ferozepur |

#### IV

*The following were awarded lesser punishments :*

S. N.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District	Punishment
1.	Baj Singh	Chatar Singh	Raya	Amritsar	2 yrs. R.I. & forfeiture of property.
2.	Dalip Singh	Kesar Singh	Ghanori	Patiala	3 yrs. R. I.
3.	Dewa Singh	Sahib Singh	Nandpur	Ludhiana	4 yrs. R. I.
4.	Hari Singh	Gurmukh Singh	Nathana	Ferozepur	10 yrs. R. I.
5.	Jamna Das	Hari Ram	Bara Goan	Barabanki (U.P.)	3 yrs. R. I.
6.	Kishan Das	Khazan Singh	Babarpur	Ludhiana	period passed upto decision of the case.

## APPENDIX B

## LAHORE CONSPIRACY CANSPIRACY CASE II

*The following were sentenced to death and forfeiture of property and actually executed :*

S.N.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Bir Singh	Buta Singh	Bahuwal	Hoshiarpur
2.	Isher Singh	Sajau Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur
3.	Ranga Singh alias Ruda Singh	Gurdit Singh Sumund Singh	Khurdpur Talwandi Dosanj	Jullundur Ferozepur
4.	Rur Singh	Jita Singh	Hans	Ludhiana
5.	Udham Singh			

*The under mentioned were also sentenced to death with forfeiture of property along with the five, given on page No 207 but the sentence was changed into transportation for life :*

S.N.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Hira Singh	Mana Singh	Charak	Lahore
2.	Arian Singh	Lal Singh	Jagraon	Ludhiana
3.	Attar Singh	Hira Nand	Diktampur	Jhelum
4.	Bhog Singh	Natha Singh	Jhar Sahib	Amritsar
5.	Bishan Singh	Basakha Singh	Werpal	Amritsar
6.	Buta Singh	Ishar Singh	Sur Singh	Lahore
7.	Dalip Singh	Hamir Singh	Phulewal	Ludhiana
8.	Ganda Singh	Bahadur Singh	Khapar Khore	Amritsar
9.	Ganda Singh	Jawala Singh	Sur Singh	Lahore
10.	Gujjar Singh	Sham Singh	Bakhna	Amritsar
11.	Harbhajan Singh	Fateh Singh	Chaminda	Ludhiana
12.	Hari Singh	Amar Singh	Kakar	Amritsar
13.	Harnam Singh	Narain Singh	Gujarwal	Ludhiana
14.	Harnam Singh	Bhup Singh	Rasulpur	Amritsar
15.	Indar Singh	Sunder Singh	Kala Sangam	Kapurthala State
16.	Jagat Singh	Proman Singh	Sheikdaulat	Ludhiana
17.	Jindar Singh	Dewa Singh	Gujarwal	Ludhiana
18.	Karam Singh	Mangal Singh	Chaudhri Wala	Amritsar
		Sundar Singh	Kotla Ajner	Ludhiana

S.N.	Name	Father's Name	District	Punishment
19.	Kartar Singh	Bishan Singh	Patiala	Patiala State
20.	Kesar Singh	Mangal Singh	Sursingh	Lahore
21.	Kirpa Singh	Jawahar Singh	Tongmaji	Hoshiarpur
22.	Labh Singh	Ram Singh	Chakwalian	Lahore
23.	Labh Singh	Bur Singh	Waltoba	Lahore
24.	Lal Singh	Udhey Singh	Narangwal	Ludhiana
25.	Maharaj Singh	Nihal Singh	Kasel	Amritsar
26.	Mohindar Singh	Narain Singh	Majri	Ludhiana
27.	Mangal Singh	Mul Singh	Waltoba	Lahore
28.	Mastan Singh	Mahtab Singh	Narangwal	Ludhiana
29.	Nahar Singh	Thakar Singh	Gujarwal	Ludhiana
30.	Natha Singh	Mangal Singh	Dhum	Lahore
31.	Pakbar Singh	Bhan Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur
32.	Pala Singh	Bagga Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur
33.	Ram Singh	Sahib Singh	Phulewal	Ludhiana
34.	Randhir Singh (Sant)	Natha Singh	Narangwal	Ludhiana
35.	Sajjan Singh	Mohan Singh	Narangwal	Patiala State
36.	Santa Singh	Giuhar Singh	Nandpur Kalur	Amritsar
37.	Sucha Singh	Gurdit Singh	Chuhla Kalan	Lahore
38.	Sultan Shah	Maghi Shah	Bhighwind	Amritsar
39.	Sunder Singh	Rattan Singh	Dulon Mangal	Lahore
40.	Sucha Singh	Khushal Singh	Waltoba	Ludhiana
41.	Surjan Singh	Mahan Singh	Gujarwal	Lahore
42.	Teja Singh	Dyal Singh	Bhighwind	Amritsar
43.	Thakur Singh	Suba Singh	Thehtian	Gurdaspur
44.	Udham Singh	Jiwan singh	Ladhpura	Amritsar
45.	Basakha Singh	Isher Singh	Dadher	

*The following were given punishments mentioned their names :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District	Punishments
1.	Jammu	Basahu	Waltoba	Lahore	6 months R.I.
2.	Jassa Singh	Natha Singh	Jahar Sahib	Amritsar	6 months R.I.
3.	Kahan Singh	Sarup Singh	Hanspur	Ludhiana	4 yrs. R.I.
4.	Mohinder Singh	Nand Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur	3 yrs. R.I.
5.	Pala Singh	Kala Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur	3 yrs. R.I.
6.	Payre Singh	Lehra Singh	Kotjhanda Singh	Sialkot	2 yrs. R.I.
7.	Sham Singh	Bhula Singh	Dhudeke	Ferozepur	3 yrs. R.I.
8.	Sher Singh	Lehra Singh	Thekrivala	Gurdaspur	1 yrs. R.I.

## APPENDIX C

**LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE III (LAHORE II SUPPLEMENTARY  
CONSPIRACY CASE)**

*The following revolutionaries were sentenced to death with forfeiture of property and actually executed.*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Babu Ram	Gandhi	Fatehgarh	Hoshiarpur
2.	Balwant Singh (Canadian)	Budh Singh	Khurdpur	Jullundur
3.	Nama Saini	Gopal Saini	Fatehgarh	Hoshiarpur
4.	Hafiz Abdulla (Manilla Wala)	Nizam Din	Jagraon	Ludhiana
5.	Rur Singh	Arjan Singh	Sangwal	Jullundur
				Ferozepur
<i>The undergiven person was also sentenced to death with forfeiture of property along with the above mentioned five, but was converted into transportation for life later on :</i>				
1.	Kartar Singh	Sunder Singh	Chand Nu	

*The following were sentenced to transportation for life :*

1. Wattan Singh Mehar Singh Kahri Hoshiarpur
2. Fazil Din Nura Fatehgarh Hoshiarpur
3. Hari Singh Bhikha Singh Chotian Dhoba Ferrozepur
4. Kehar Singh Bakhel Singh Sahnewal Ludhiana
5. Munsha Singh Nihal Singh Jandiala Jullundur

*The following was given lesser punishment :*

1. Amar Singh Buta Singh Kotla Hoshiarpur  
2 yrs. R.I.

#### LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE IV OR LAHORE III (SUPPLEMENTARY CONSPIRACY CASE)

*The under-mentioned was sentenced to death and sentence was actually executed :*

1. Dr. Mathra Singh Hari Singh Dudal Jhelum

#### LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE V OR LAHORE IV (SUPPLEMENTARY CONSPIRACY CASE)

*The following was sentenced to death and hanged :-*

1. Jawand Singh Naram Singh Nangal Kalan Hoshiarpur

## APPENDIX D

### MANDALAY (BURMA) CONSPIRACY CASE I

(A) The following were sentenced to death and hanged:

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Harnam Singh	Labh Singh	Kahri Sari	Hoshiarpur
2.	Challia Ram	Shankar Das	Sahnwal	Ludhiana
3.	Bassawa Singh	Jhanda Singh	Wara	Hoshiarpur
4.	Narain Singh	Abalu Singh	Balo	Patiala State
5.	Narain Singh	Jawala Singh	Sangapura	Ludhiana
6.	Pala Singh	Jaimal Singh	Sherpur	Ludhiana

(B) The following was sentenced to death along with the above named six, but was changed into transportation for life (by local Government on petition):

1.	Kirpa Ram	Biraj Lal	Mangat	Gujrat
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(C) The following were sentenced to transportation for life with forfeiture of property.

1.	Chet Ram	Bishan Dass	Warowal	Sialkot
2.	Jiwan Singh	Ishar Singh	Philoke	Gujranwala
3.	Kapur Singh	Met Singh	Mohie	Ludhiana
4.	Hardit Singh	Bhagwan Singh	Leman	Ludhiana
5.	Buddha Singh	Sham Singh	Philoke	Gujranwala

The revolutionary given below was sentenced to lesser punishment :

1.	Gian Chand	Sohan Lal	Mori Marl	Lahore
				7 yrs. R.I.

## APPENDIX E

### MANDALAY (BURMA) CASE II

*The following were sentenced to death, but it was changed into transportation for life afterwards;*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Mujtabha Hussain	Seid Hussain	Jun	U.P.
2.	Amar Singh	Waryam Singh	Sherpur	Ludhiana
3.	Ali Ahmad	Kurban Ali	Shahzadpur	Faizabad (U.P.)
<i>The following was sentenced to transportation for life:</i>				
1.	Ram Rakha	Jawahar Ram	Sasoli	Hoshiarpur

## APPENDIX F

## SANFRANCISCO TRIAL (CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.)

*The following Indian revolutionaries were convicted and sentenced per details given below :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District	Punishment
1.	Gopal Singh Bhagwan Singh	Narain Singh Sarmukh Singh	Sohian Wrang Majpara	Ludhiana Amritsar Chaubis Pargana (Bengal) Delhi	1 Yr. 1 days 18 months.
2.	Tarak Nath Dass	Kali Mohan Dass			22 months.
3.					10 months.
4.	Gobind Behari Lal Bishan Behari	Bishan Lal Mathur Hindi	N.T.*	Dharde Karadlu Purana Kotwali City.	9 months.
5.	Santokh Singh	Jawala Singh			21 months.
6.	Godha Ram	Shama Ram			11 months.
7.	Naranjan Dass	Managh Rai			6 months.
8.					
9.	Mahadoes Abaji	N.T.	—	—	3 months.
10.	Nandake	N.T.			60 days.
11.	Muhshi Ram	N.T.			4 months.
12.	Nidhan Singh	N.T.			4 months.
13.	Imam Din	N.T.			4 months.
14.	Dhirendra Nath Sarkar	N.T.			30 days and 5000 dollars fine.
15.	Chandra Kanta Chakravarty Sundar Singh	Ghal Mangal Ghal Kalan Singh			3 months.

\* Not traceable in Government records.

## APPENDIX G

### MANDI (STATE) CASES

#### *CASE I :*

*The following was sentenced to transportation for life with forfeiture of property :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Mian Jawahr Singh	Bhekam	Saini Mori	Mandi State
<i>The following were given lesser punishments</i>				
1.	Jawahar	Jindu	Barsu	Mandi State 5 yrs. R. I. and for forfeiture of property.
2.	Badri	Mian Jawahar Singh	Saini Mori	Mandi State 18 months R.I. and forfeiture of property.
3.	Landhu	Tikhu	Naghari	Mandi State 14 yrs. R.I. and forfeiture of property.
4.	Sidhu	Fakir	Barsu	Mandi State 3 yrs. R.I. and forfeiture of property.

#### *CASE II*

*The undergiven was sentenced to transportation for life with forfeiture of property :*

1.	Sidhu Kanait	Pir Sahay	Barsu	Mandi State
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## APPENDIX H

### FEROZESHAH INCIDENT CASE

*The following seven revolutionaries were convicted, sentenced to death and hanged actually in this case :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Pandit Kanshi Ram	Ganga Ram (Not traceable)	Maruli Kalan	Ambala
2.	Rahmat Ali	Bewa Singh	Waziske	Patiala State
3.	Bakhshish Singh	Wazir Singh	Khanpur	Ludhiana
4.	Jiwan Singh	Daya Singh	Dulasingh Wala	Patiala State
5.	Lala Singh	Karam Singh	Sahabana	Ludhiana
6.	Dhyan Singh	Not traceable	Amarpura	Amritsar
7.	Jagat Singh		Binjal	Ludhiana

*The following two revolutionaries were convicted later on and sentenced to death by the Sessions' Judge, Ferozepur (actually executed) :*

1.	Gandha Singh alias Bhagat Singh	Jawala Singh	Chakar Bhan	Ferozepur
2.	Surjan Singh	Buta	Fatehgarh	Hoshiarpur.

*NOTE : Two Chanda Singh of Wrang (Amritsar) and Dival Singh son of Kahan Singh of Banue (Ludhiana) were killed on the spot by the police firing. The Waryam Singh 'Amlî' son of Dyal Singh of Village Thiraj, Patiala State was killed in Chhaba dacoity as a result of bomb bursting.*

## APPENDIX I

### WALLA RAILWAY BRIDGE CASE

*The following five were convicted, sentenced to death and hanged :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Kala Singh	Chanan Singh	Jagatpur	Amritsar
2.	Chanan Singh	Bal Singh	Bur Chand	Lahore
3.	Harnam Singh	(Not traceable)	Tate Khera	Amritsar
4.	Atma Singh	(Not traceable)	Late Khera	Amritsar
5.	Banta Singh	(Buta Singh)	Sangwal	Jullundur

  

ANARKALI CASE				
		<i>Sentenced to death and hanged :</i>		
1.	Arjan Singh		Khukarrana	Ferozepur

**APPENDIX J**  
**PADRI MURDER CASE**

*The following were sentenced to death and hanged :*

S.No.	Name	Father's Name	Village	District
1.	Prem Singh Inder Singh	Jiwan Singh Gurmukh Singh	Sursingh Padri Kalan	Lahore Amritsar

*The following were sentenced to transportation for life :*

1.	Vir Singh	Kharak Singh	Sohal	Amritsar
2.	Sejan Singh	Jhanda Singh	Surwind	Lahore
3.	Baghel Singh	Bal Singh	Burchand	Lahore
4.	Lal Singh	Suchet Singh	Padri Kalan	Amritsar.

*The following one was given lesser punishment :*

1.	Khazan Singh	Bur Singh	Burchand	Lahore
			4 years' imprisonment	

## **APPENDIX 'K'**

### **MISCELLANEOUS CASES JAGAT PUR MURDER CASE**

*Kala Singh son of Chanan Singh Jagatpur (Amritsar) was sentenced to death. He was hanged in Walla Railway Bridge Case.*

### **NANGAL KALAN MURDER CASE**

*Buta Singh son of Sher Singh, Akalgarh Khurd, Ludhiana was sentenced to death and actually hanged.*

### **HAR GOBINDPUR (GURDASPUR) CASE**

*17 (Seventeen) were convicted in these cases and sentenced to imprisonments ranging from 3 years to 21 years.*

### **ALBABALPUR (JULLUNDUR) CASE**

*(6) Six were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 7 to 21 years.*

### **KARNANA (JULLUNDUR) CASE**

*(2) Two were convicted and sentenced to 14 years' imprisonments.*

## **APPENDIX L**

### **COURT MARTIALS COURT MARTIAL IN 23rd CAVALRY**

*The following were Court-martialled at Dighai and were sentenced to death (sentence being actually executed) :*

S.No.	Name	Village	District
1.	Bhag Singh	Rurewala	Amritsar
2.	Mota Singh	Rurewala	Amritsar
3.	Tara Singh	Rurewala	Amritsar
4.	Dafadar Wadhwawa Singh	Rurewala	Amritsar
5.	Indar Singh	Jeohwala	Amritsar
6.	Indar Singh	Sabajpur	Amritsar
7.	Dafadar Lachman Singh	Chuslawar	Amritsar
8.	Buta Singh	Kasel	Amritsar
9.	Gujar Singh	Lahuka	Amritsar
10.	Jadha Singh	Lahuka	Amritsar
11.	Budh Singh	Dhutean	Amritsar
12.	Abdulla	—	Lahore

*The following soldiers were sentenced to death but afterwards changed into transportation for life :*

- |    |                    |             |          |
|----|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. | Bishan Singh       | Dhutean     | Amritsar |
| 2. | Bishan Singh No. 2 | Dhutean     | Amritsar |
| 3. | Natha Singh        | Dhutean     | Amritsar |
| 4. | Kehar Singh        | Dhutean     | Amritsar |
| 5. | Channan Singh      | Dhad Kasal  | Amritsar |
| 6. | Nand Singh         | Rai Ke Burj | Amritsar |

According to O'Dwyer in 23rd Cavalry Court-martial, eighteen were sentenced to death but twelve were actually executed. *India as I Knew it.* page, 203.

## APPENDIX M

### LIST OF PROMINENT LIVING GHADARITES

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Name and Address</i>	<i>Languages known</i>
1.	Baba Sohan, Bhakna, Village and Post Office, Bhakna (District Amritsar).	<i>English, Urdu.</i>
2.	Baba Pirthvi Singh Azad, 26-M.L.A. Flat, Chandigarh.	<i>English, Urdu.</i>
3.	Baba Amar Singh, Village and Post Office, Sherpur Kalan (District Ludhiana).	<i>English, Urdu.</i>
4.	Dr. P.S Khan Khoji, Fruit Specialist, Behind Agricultural College, Nagar.	<i>English, Marathi.</i>
5.	Shri Piara Singh, Village Langeri, Post Office Mahalpur (District Hoshiarpur).	<i>Punjabi, Urdu.</i>
6.	Baba Hari Singh Usman, Village and Post Office Baddowal (District Ludhiana).	<i>Punjabi, Urdu.</i>
7.	Baba Chet Ram Barol, Krishna Iron Works, Gobindgarh (Patiala).	<i>Urdu.</i>
8.	Baba Gurmukh Singh, Village and Post Office, Lalton (District Ludhiana)	<i>English, Urdu and Punjabi.</i>
9.	Baba Kartar Singh, Village and Post Office Latala, (District Ludhiana).	<i>Punjabi, Urdu.</i>
10.	Shri D. Chenchiah, 6-A Street, T.Nagar, Madras-17.	<i>English, Tamil.</i>
11.	B.Niranjan Singh, Village and Post Office Pandori Ladha Singh (District Hoshiarpur).	<i>Punjabi.</i>
12.	S.Bhag Singh Canadian, c/o Desh Bhagat Memorial Committee, G.T. Road, Jullundur City.	<i>Punjabi, Urdu.</i>

13. Baba Ishar Singh, Village and Post Office Sanwan (District Gurdaspur). *Punjabi.*
14. Baba Sunder Singh Virk, Village and Post Office, Ghal Kalan (District Ferozepur). *English, Punjabi.*
15. Pt. Bal Mukand, Village and Post Office Sakroli, via Mahalpur, (Hoshiarpur) *English, Urdu.*
16. Baba Hardit Singh, Village Lama Jatpura, via Jagraon (District Ludhiana). *English, Urdu.*
17. Baba Harnam Singh, Pahauta Gurdwara Shish Ganj (Delhi). *Punjabi.*
18. Baba Harnam Singh Kasel, c/o Prof. K.S. Kasel, Government College, Gurdaspur. *English, Punjabi.*
19. Pt. Ram Saran Dass Talwar, Mohalla Talwarian, Kapurthala. *Urdu, Hindi.*
20. Baba Harnam Singh Tundilat, Village and Post Office Kotla Naudh Singh, via Hariana, (Hoshiarpur). *Urdu, Punjabi.*
21. Baba Harnam Singh, Village and Post office Kahla Singha (District Kapurthala). *Punjabi.*
22. B.Gopal Singh Sohi, Village and Post Office, Sohion Ludhiana). *Urdu, Punjabi.*

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