

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT  
OF A REVOLUTIONARY SEGMENT ( TERRORIST )  
IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT.

( 1920 - 1947 )

K R I S H N A J H A

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF THE MASTER  
OF PHILOSOPHY.

CENTRE FOR THE POLITICAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI

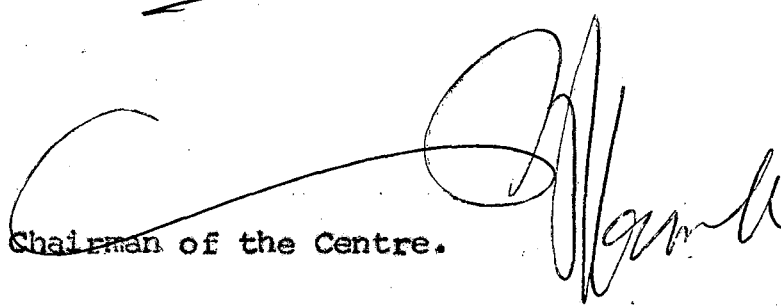
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DECLARATION

Certified that the material presented in this  
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### B I B L I O G R A P H Y.

## I n t r o d u c t i o n

This dissertation deals mainly with the origin and the ideological and political development of the National Revolutionary Movement (terrorist) in India. An attempt has been made here to study the various efforts, influences and situations, both indigenous and international, which together brought about the birth of this movement and helped it to be established on the Indian political scene.

Apart from generally narrating and analysing the growth of this movement in this country, it has also been argued here that its influence on the nationalist programme was marginal in nature. This study also seeks to assess the relative importance of both the terrorist movement and its conversion to different trends in the overall nationalist struggle.

Before world war I there were some outbreaks of terrorism in Bengal, Maharashtra and some other parts of the country. Together with this some attempts were made outside the country also. The period from 1905 to 1914 marks an important stage in the growth and development of the National liberation movement and its revolutionary segment (terrorist) too. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the mass upsurge that followed it, activated the people and thus radicalised upto certain extent the national politics also. During this period the movement to throw off the colonial yoke became so intense that it spread in the whole country and affected most of the communities and the social industrial classes. On the Indian political scene, a new era was ushering in. The ground work to launch anti-colonial struggle in bigger dimensions

and larger scale was getting completed.

The year of 1905 has its own importance for the history of the Indian National Liberation Movement. Since 1905, India began to come in touch with the important events and movements in other countries also, which influenced the course of her development for the struggle of national emancipation. By this time a "decadence of faith" in the British colonial system was already taking shape. The concept of firm belief in the "conscience of England" was overshadowed by the dismal poverty of the people. The process of progress was halting and too slow and the expectations of the people remained unrealised. The realisation of the exploitative character of the British rule may be divided in mainly three component parts to place it in a better historical perspective. First of all comes the section which consisted of people who never believed in the benevolent intentions of the ruler. Outside the Congress, ~~a radicalised~~-<sup>sec-</sup>tion was operating through journalism and 'actions' of secret groups or individuals. This trend of "Extremism" was creeping in the nationalist movement not only through the Congress but without the Congress too. The third section consisted the liberal attitude. They had firm faith in the uplifting mission of the British but they were not unaware of their selfish economic policies. This contradiction was not insoluble for them because they tried to cajole and pressurise the British rulers and not to overthrow them. The antagonism between the ruler and to be ruled

and the struggle for political power and independence was developing in different trends among which national-revolutionaries represented the most radical one. Their political activities were consciously designed to impart political education to the people and prepare them for the nationalist thinking and activity. But their main weakness was that they could never bridge the gap between themselves and the mass of people nor could they influence them to gain as active participants in their movement. Moreover the movement itself lacked in depth and wide appeal and was therefore ineffective. The main reason of it was that for most of them understanding was not derived from theoretical reasoning or a prior assumption, but from acute emotionalism and a dream of independence. The policy of political assassination and the consequent martyrdom of revolutionaries was appreciated by the people and they succeeded even to rouse sympathy for the cause of independence. Still this sympathy and the appreciation could not be transformed to active participation in the cause of the revolution. Their ideals of liberty freedom, equality and social justice were advocated without any programme of social reconstruction. Without any concrete plan of socio-economic amelioration, they could not provide the motive force to the toiling masses. The conspiratorial nature of the organisation prevented them from securing cooperation from the people for the programme of the armed revolution. Despite of all these drawbacks the national revolutionaries were the uncompromising champions of the freedom of India. For the first time these revolutionaries raised the demand of complete independence from the British at a time when the other nationalist

forces could not go beyond the demand of autonomy within the Empire.

In the Indian context, it was this trend only which implied the idea of setting up a new society, which will be free from not only the foreign domination but also of one section of the society over the other. The revolutionaries abroad contributed to the struggle for national liberation in another way. The events on the International level, the democratic and socialist movement of different countries influenced the progressive nationalist-minded intellectuals who lived in England, Germany, France, Soviet Union and America. The pioneer in this field was Shyamji Krishna Varma who established India House. Later India House became the nucleus where the progressive nationalist Indians could be organised. Vijayak Savarkar was the Chief organiser and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, V.V.S. Aiyar, Tirumala Chari, Madanlal Dhingra were the regular visitors of this place. Later they had to shift the centre to Paris where Mm Cama, S.R. Rana, Har Dayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, were the main members. "Bande-Mataram" was the organ of the Paris-group of revolutionaries.

In America also, the Hindustan Association was revived by Hardayal with an organ of the Association, "Ghadar" with the coming of the war the Ghadar Party was also assuming a form of Movement not only in America, but in other countries too. They had coordination with the Indian revolutionaries also.

The political ideology before the amnesty of 1919 was a peculiar mixture of Indian nationalism, painted largely in terms of Hindu religious tradition and history, but its demands were moulded in terms of British liberal democratic conceptions. Still it was the first attempt to get a mass democratic base.

After 1919 the movement was revived by the younger generation

which emerged from the militant leftwing of the National Movement. From the very beginning they were inspired in the main by the ideas of National unity, Democracy, Secularism and Social programmes. It grew under the impact of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the rise of ideas of workers and peasants movement and its first practical steps. Though they were promptly sought to be crushed by the British Government by Peshawar Conspiracy Case in 1922-23 and Kanpur Conspiracy Case, 1924.

The National revolutionaries had a dim idea from the outset that the struggle for independence was to be a revolution not only to overthrow the foreign imperialist rule but to achieve an independent national state, in which the socio-economic demands of the broad masses were to be realised.

The methodology of these groups and parties was not the organisation of workers and peasants but the organisation of the acts of terrorist retribution against the tyrants, and oppressors of the foreign rule, of bureaucracy and administration. But this individual act of retribution was not the end all and be all of their movement. They visualised the first stage, the aim of which was to inspire confidence in their mass base and in masses in general that the oppressors are not invincible. The next stage was to create armed bands of revolutionaries for partisan attacks on arsenal and to capture more arms from the armed forces of the ruling enemy and thus demoralise its forces which were mostly drawn from Indians themselves. The example is Chittagong Armoury Raid. The third stage was to work in the army and win over the armed regiments so that they refuse to shoot the masses



movement, this actually took place in Peshawar when Garhwali soldiers refused to ~~take part in the Satyagrah~~ ~~led by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan~~ the Satyagrahis led by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and later openly joined the revolutionary forces.

But the main weakness of the programme of the National revolutionaries was that they never realised that without an organised militant leftwing of the nationalist movement, without a revolutionary workers' and peasants' mass movement with scientifically worked out socio-economic programme, such a perspective has no chance of success.

In order to trace and study the ideological and political ~~development~~ development of this movement as it grows through zigzags, following the ups and downs of the broad national freedom movement itself, an attempt has been made here to see which contemporary political and ideological events influenced the movement.

The movement in itself represents a significant trend in the unfolding of the national liberation movement in India and an attempt has been made to study in depth of it, trying to fill the gaps in the existing information.

The period taken for the dissertation represents a rapidly developing stage and every phase in it contains a distinct set of ideas. An attempt has been made to use the contemporary categories of political analysis in order to perceive this important formative phase in the political development of India in terms of current typologies.

The nature of the dissertation is that of an historical investigation. Hence it had to involve a descriptive approach, although keeping in view the political categories of analysis.

For this dissertation the studies which had been undertaken were mainly from the archival materials and the secondary source material, together with some unpublished or less known material. Political tracts, pamphlets, handbills, manifestoes and reports of revolutionary groups as well as the governmental agencies, like the Political Department of the erstwhile British Government of India were also examined. Newspaper reports, in English, Bengali and Hindi had been examined in order to corroborate with the data collected from the other sources.

As secondary source material the books which have been consulted mainly were the autobiographies of the revolutionaries and the historical analysis of the movement made by some historians and the revolutionaries themselves.

For example the thesis of M. David Laushey, "Bengal Terrorism and Marxist-left: Aspects of Regional Nationalism in India 1905-1942" has dealt with the revolutionary movement particularly and for that reason, it is a valuable attempt. But as the title itself proves, the area of study is confined mainly to Bengal.

The book of Arunchandra Guha, "First Spark of revolution the Early Phase of India's Struggle for Independence, 1900-1920" deals only with the first phase of the movement. The doctoral thesis of P.B. Sinha "Indian National Liberation Movement and Russia (1905-1917)" has dealt separately with the influence of different aspects of contemporary Russian history on India and in the process some aspects of the national revolutionary movement also has been illuminated. The book of R. Coupland, the Indian Problem, in its interpretation of Indian history gives a broad outline of the Indian liberation movement. Rajni Palme Dutt in his "India-Today" has thrown sufficient light on the subject concerned from Marxist view point. Though there is no clear mention of

this extremist trend outside the Congress, yet a complete picture of the Indian National Movement emerges in this history of modern India.

The book of Philip Sparett, "Communism and India" also helps to have a complete picture of the different trends in the Nationalist Movement.

"The Economic Nationalism in India" written by Bipanchandra is an extremely valuable attempt on the economic situation, coordinated with the political forces of the pre-independence days.

The participants in this revolutionary struggle have also undertaken to study the growth and development of this movement. In this context "the unpublished political history of India", (Aprakashita Rajnaitik Itihas) by Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt is a valuable monograph on the subject. With an objective insight of a historian Dr. Dutt has tried to focus this particular trend in the nationalist movement. The other one is by Hemchandra Kanungo "Banglaye Biplab Prachasta", published in 1928. Both the books are excellent attempt but the formulations have the limitations of that period, since they were published in twenties. Again the authors have dealt with the early period only, which is not very helpful for the study undertaken here.

The books of <sup>U</sup>Farmenda Das Gupta, "On the Path of Revolution" (Biplabapathe), Nalini Kishore R ~~Shank~~ Guha, "the Revolutionism in Bengal; (Banglaye Biplabbed) give a complete but vague picture of the national revolutionary trend, and that too confined in Bengal only.

The books of Atindranath Bose, "B class", Amlendu Dasgupta, <sup>k</sup>"Basha Camp" and Satish Pakrashi "the days in fire" (Anidiner

katha) are reminiscences. The book of Sri Satyendranarayan Mazumdar, "My quest for revolution" (Amar Biplab Jigyasa) is also an autobiographical note on the revolutionary trend. Many books were written about the Chittagong Armoury Raid, by the participants like Anand Prasad Gupta, Anant Singh etc.

About the revolutionaries abroad, Shri Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya had written an extremely valuable work, "The Attempts for the Liberation of India", which dealt with all the attempts made outside the country.

The books of Jadu Gopal Mukherjee, "Memories of My Revolutionary Days" and Sadrintranath Sanyal, "Bandi Jivan" are most important works made about the revolutionaries of the later period.

The autobiography of Sri Ram Prasad 'Bismil' written three days before the final execution is also an admirable attempt to channelise the ideology of the movement. The history of the movement written by Manmathnath Gupta "Sharaktiya Krantikari Andolan ka Itihas" is also a good attempt, but not free from the subjective influence of that period.

Apart from all these books, the collection of the articles of Lenin about the National liberation movement in the East helps to get a scientific outlook of the movement. Even in that period the revolutionaries tried to contact him and Jadugopal Mukherjee, Bhupendra Kumar and some others sent to him their thesis on the Indian situation. As Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee observes <sup>in</sup> a personal letter written in 1974, "we requested Lenin to help us in 1921 ... I regretted it deeply that no attempt was made from our side to contact Lenin directly. It was a

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period when Britishers were too weak to control us, and we, for ourselves, had preparations for the uprising, with the help of Soviet Union and a pressure from other countries we could have transformed the history of the freedom struggle."<sup>1</sup>

The documents which were brought out by the Britishers, the erstwhile Government of India have their own significance. The subjective presentation, narrow outlook and purpose of distortion is obvious in these attempts. The "Terrorism in India" by Sri Charles Tegart, brought out in 1932 is an example of it. Another report, first published in 1937 by the Home Department, Government of India, "Terrorism in India", 1917-1936" contains some facts, but in an extremely distorted way.

The sedition committee report, brought out in 1918 and another report, compiled by the Intelligence Department of the Government of India in 1933, in the name of "Communism and India" were also source of great help in their own way.

Besides the above, many articles published in different journals and other books also have provided material which has been utilised.

A study of the political thought and ideology of the National Revolutionary groups and Party, and its evolution during the period of 1917-1936, leading to their eventual merging up in one or the other left wing parties of the National Freedom Movement has been undertaken in the present dissertation. But it is a

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1. A letter written to Shri Chinmohan Sehanorish, 1 May, 1974  
Ajoy Bhawan Archives.

prelude for the doctoral thesis undertaken for the <sup>same</sup> ~~same~~ topic. Therefore this study has been made as a preliminary enquiry, instead of a detailed and <sup>em</sup> ~~empirical~~ one.

This study has been made possible with the help of a number of institutions and persons. I express my deep sense of indebtedness to my guide prof. K. Sheshadri for the inspiration and guidance which I received from him in full measures in undertaking and completing this research. I am grateful to our Chairman Prof. C.P. Bhabri and the faculty of the Centre for their encouragement and stimulation in the preparation of this work. I would like to mention particularly the contribution made by Dr. Gangadhar Adhikari both in my understanding of the subject and writing of the dissertation.

I am grateful to the Librarian and staff of the Sapru House, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and Ajoy Bhawan Library for their ungrudging <sup>u</sup> assistance in my work. I am, however, alone responsible for any deficiencies in it.

Krishna Jha.

## CHAPTER ONE

First Phase: Emergence of the trend of  
Militant Nationalism at the end of  
nineteenth century and at the  
beginning of the twentieth century.

The ideology of the National Revolutionaries outside the Congress can be studied through various political, economic, social and cultural factors that contributed to the making of the history of National Liberation struggle. The influence of internal and external events also was considerable as the ideology was conditioned by the environment within which it had to operate. The ~~back~~ trends in the National Liberation struggle were inseparable because the process of giving impetus was reciprocal. The background ~~ix~~ was that of the growing discontent against the foreign rule, the rising awareness of the intelligentsia, the cultivation of a sense of pride in the Indian traditions and the demand for self-government, ~~for~~

1. This term was attributed to the terrorists by the Sedition Committee Report, 1918 and was liked by them.



~~government~~. The emergence of the Nationalist forces in the last decade of the nineteenth century was the result of all these new factors, which resulted in an era of vocal nationalism. The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 gave a ~~forum~~ for the demands and grievances of the Indian people seeing with dissatisfaction in the teeth of bureaucratic measures like vernacular press Act etc. Before this the first attempt of revolt in 1857, which was named as "the first war of Independence" by a national revolutionary, Dr Bhupendranath Dutt, was crushed. Still the colonial and reactionary policies of the British rulers and their economic exploitation of the country forced the early nationalist leaders to irresistible statement of facts. The "Drain theory" of Dadabhai Naurozi, the speech delivered by M.G. Ranade in 1862 present a vivid picture of Indian economy. Though the idea of bringing about a socio-economic transformation was never considered by them with preference. Yet in ultimate analysis, their contribution was also responsible for giving a radical touch to the Indian nationalist thinking. Nevertheless the British rulers were also not unaware of these changing trends. The comments on the establishment of the Congress and its resolutions adopted in 1885, which were published in "The Times" prove the same, "... the first question which the series of the resolution ~~adopted in 1885~~, will suggest whether India is ripe for the transformation which they involve. If this can be answered in affirmative, the days of English rule are numbered... But it is nothing less than this that the resolution of the Congress point."(1)

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(1) From Editorial of the Times, "On the Indian Congress", from Appendix C of the official Congress Report for 1885. Quoted in Source Material for a history of the Freedom Movement in India; collected from Bombay Government Records, Vol. II, 1885-1920. published in 1958. pp. 19.

In fact, the establishment of the Congress and its early developments were the results of a resolve, made by the "...educated and semi educated classes, throughout the Empire, to take a decisive step towards the attainment of that political enfranchisement to which they have come, of late years, to attach so much importance"(14) But at this stage of influence of the apologists of the British rule was strong enough to make them proud of the colonial yoke. They had a deep sense of adoration for the western culture and civilisation. These moderates who were actually loyalists, advocated the importance of British rule and wanted all reforms under them only. William Hunter had characterised them correctly in 1890, "... Those political movements are the legitimate and inevitable result of western education in India. They are the men who form the natural interpreters of our rule to the masses of the people."<sup>(15)</sup> In fact the moderates were so dazed by the western civilization and rule that tended even to denigrate the national heritage, national identity. According to them the reforms in the economic and administrative policies of the government were all that India needed and to achieve this they employed the means of preservation and persuasion. They never voiced the demand of democratic rule of the people and for that the national independence. The maximum demand was for representative institutions. Their faith and hope is vividly expressed in these lines of Anand Mohan Bose, the Congress President

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(14) ~~From~~ ~~Extract~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Text~~, "Ibid. page 24.

(15) William Hunter in 1890, quoted in source material for a history of the Freedom Movement in India, op. cit page 138-139.

in 1898 ..." the educated class are the friends and not foes of England- her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her."\*

But in fact, the moderates were not the reactionary anti-nationalist servants of the alien rule. They were the only progressive and therefore objectively revolutionary force in the country- carrying forth the work of social reform, of education of industrial and technical economic development. They had a realization that India was exploited for the benefit of British capitalism and as a natural consequence the economic and industrial development of this country was materialised in the interest of British Imperialism. They had not ignored even this fact that India was merely a source of raw material for British manufacturing industries and a market for their products. But they knew that British Imperialism can not be challenged, therefore their struggle was pointed against the backwardness of the people, the lack of technical and industrial development and the strong forces of obscurantism and ignorance. The result of this passive indifference was that ~~years~~ in the long period between 1885 to 1895, only one resolution was said to have represented the poor peasantry, that was 'permanent settlement.' The character of even this demand was doubtful as concerned with the masses.

The expectations of this older school of the Indian Nationalists were doomed to disappointment as they made British Imperialism their ally. Their cautious and halting approach and timid policies evoked a strong criticism among the upcoming lower middle class, which consisted of teachers ~~advocated~~ etc. Their condition was

\* Quoted by Rajni Palm Dutt, India Today, 1970 page 322.

gradually worsening due to increasing unemployment and the deteriorating economic situation in the country. It was in this period, Shri Aurebindo Ghosh wrote a series of articles condemning the Congress, its programme and policies, entitled "New lamps for the old" published in the paper 'Indu Prakash', referring to it, an annoyed historian writes "... the leading native journals are loyal critics of the government and true strength to the British rule. But some of the more ignorant sections of the native press have shown that they are unable to enjoy that liberty without abusing it." And together with it the Congress President gives an impressive warning to the local <sup>agita</sup>ators and news papers, "... they have not fully realized the distinction between license and liberty; and have not fully grasped the lesson that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges." In this situation it was apparent that even in the loyalist character of the Congress, a new school would emerge with a more positive programme and policies. It was in this period again, when a radical group was growing up even without the Congress. This new born trend of Extremism within and without the Congress represented bolder policies with preservance in the Indian Political movement, "... the starting point of the opposition leadership (that is the Extremists ) as against the old guards (that is moderates) was undoubtedly the desire to make a break with compromising policies of conciliation

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1. Quoted in source Material, op. cit. page. 140

2. Ibid, page 143

with the British Imperialism, and to take on a path of decisive and uncompromising struggle against the British Imperialism."\* It was in this context that the extremist section emerged, in which the word extremism was a misnomer in itself.

#### The Emergence of Extremists Within and without the Congress.

The new school of Extremism in Indian Political movement emerged in the last decade of the nineteenth century but it could not play a major and decisive role until the wake of the twentieth century. The desire to make a break with the compromising policy was a subjective desire without any mass movement to make it a decisive struggle. The response to their appeal was coming from the educated lower middle class and the lower section of the educated youth. The problem of unemployment was making them increasingly desperate and a deep sense of frustration was coming with the opening of the twentieth century. They realised it very well that there was no hope left for them in the Imperialist conditions. Therefore unconsciously they became the tools in the breaking of an old order and in the social transition, with considerable dynamic forces of unrest and potential revolutionary energy. Since the development of the national movement was not mature enough to make them realise their role in relationship with the mass movement, some of them turned towards revolutionary terrorism and some co-operated with the radical wing of the Congress.

In the absence of any social and political theory, they got their inspiration from the glorious traditions of the country itself. Their national pride was generated from the awareness of the past greatness. Another important factor was the revival of Hinduism which came with the idea of awakening the sense of self

\* Rajni Palm Dutt India Today, 1970, pp. 302.

respect and self esteem. They wanted to revive the ancient ideal which were destroyed by the British Imperialism. As the famous historian Rajni Palm Dutt has correctly observed".....

they sought to build the national movement the most advanced movement in India, on the basis of the most antiquated and religious superstitions". This contradictory combination of radical nationalism and the most reactionary forces of 'Hinduism' was a reaction against the "denationalized" "western rising" tendencies of the moderates. Thus in resisting capitulation to British culture and unable to dream of a culture of emancipated people, they insisted on orthodox religion as the heart of the nationalist movement. It was a feeble shield of pre-capitalist Hindu traditions, which did not have base in the real life conditions. Inside the Congress the extremists with moderates shared a common economic and political aim, but, while the policy of the "Moderates" was that of reliance on the goodwill and persuasion for that, the extremists adopted the selfhelp policy and loved to be called "Nationalists". The slogans of this emerging national movement were Swadeshi, Boycott (Bahiskar), Swarajya and National Education. The meaning of these demands was variously interpreted from full autonomy within the Empire to complete National independence. But these demands were taken up only in 1907 Congress session. Before that the partition of Bengal was already proclaimed by Lord Curzon on August 7, 1905. The impact of Russo-Japanese war and First Russian Revolution of 1905 was also significant. It was in this period, when the Extremists inside the Congress, under the leadership of the

of the 'Trio' of Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak

| \*Rajni Palm Dutt: India today, 1970

and Bipin Chandrapal wanted to take action against the repressive measures taken by the Government in the seditious meeting Act, New Drastic Press Acts etc. They believed in open mass agitation for the National Demands. Tilak was called by the leader of the oilmen and coopersmiths by the moderates.

At this turning point of the century another aspect of the movement was coming up ~~which~~ which represented the radical wing outside the Congress. Its emphasis was on purely "unadulterated Swaraj". As the myth of "Providential British Connection" was slowly getting thinner and the concept of complete independence was fascinating the militant wing of the Nationalist movement, some common points emerged between the radical wings within and without the Congress. Jannadas Akhtar who was a significant figure in this phase wrote in his preface to "Political Trouble in India, 1907 - 1917."

\* The Indian National Congress adopted a militant role and young revolutionaries organised violent agitation throughout the country. Lala Lajpat Rai along with Amba Prasad, Ajit Singh and Banke Dayal, had organised a peasant movement and was deported to Burma. Lok Manya Tilak was prosecuted and put behind the bars. Savarkar was arrested. Aurobindo Ghosh escaped to Pondicherry and a number of young revolutionaries connected with different conspiracy cases were hanged for waging a war against the British government.\*\*

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\* James Campbell Ker, Political Trouble in India, Delhi 1973. Preface.

The imperialist government at that time identified the leaders of the "Extremist" movement, that is Bal Gandhadhar-Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Shyamji Keishan Varma with the anarchists; that was the name the imperialists attributed to the revolutionaries and which was a deliberate misnomer. In the contemporary preface to "Political Trouble in India," a British official writes in 1917.

" Two other men can be discarded as the generators of the anarchical spirit, alongside of Tilak, between 1900 and 1905. These are Shyamji Krishan Varma in London and Bipin Chandra Pal in Calcutta."

The imperialist Government considered the well known patriotic journals of the Nationalists as vehicles of anarchist propaganda and were prosecuted and sought to be suppressed. This was true of "Yugantar" brought out by Bhupendranath Dutt, "Bande-Mataram" of Aurobindo Ghosh and "Kesari" of Bal Gandhadhar Tilak. Tilak was prosecuted and sentenced for six years transportation in 1908 and Bipin Chandra Pal was prosecuted and sentenced about the same time for putting up a moral defence of revolutionary action.

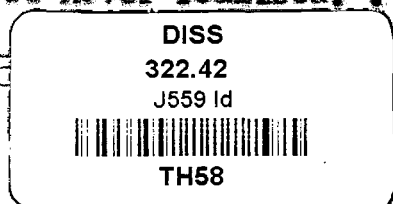
In this phase, the militant nationalists, that is the radical wing of the Congress and the revolutionaries, who were attributed the name of "National revolutionaries" by the sedition committee report in 1918, shared a common aim which was obviously complete



independence. They were in agreement regarding the means to it also, which was to be the militant mass action. But still ".... they did not have any formulation for the socio-economic programme of action,"\* though as against the moderates, the purpose of struggle was very clear. "Swarajya" was demanded not in reference to any reform through the British Parliament and the means was self reliant mass agitation. This demarcation came out sharply in Surat Session of the Indian National Congress in 1907. Same was the spirit of the Swadeshi and Boycott movement in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab in the middle and end of the first decade. It reflected clearly in the editorial of "Bande Mataram" under the title of "New Conditions". It appeared on the day of the first successful revolutionary bomb outrage, in 1908. After a reference to the split in the Indian National Congress at Surat in December, 1907, the above editorial concludes, "..... The disappearance of the old congress announces the end of the preparatory stage of the movement, the beginning of a clash of forces, whose first full shock will produce chaos. The vain hope of an orderly and peaceful evolution of self-government, - which the emergence of the new movement

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\* Bhupendra Nath Dutt: Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinta Sangram, Aprakashita Rajnaitik Itihas, Vol. I, Calcutta, New edition 1953. page 14, "..... we are trying for political independence without caring least for socio-economic or religious freedom...." I bid, page 16-17..... "It was a war of Indian middle class with British middle class. Both were indifferent to the idea of freedom of all. It was called a war of independence, but whom should we give independence, how should we give and for what should we fight, this we never realised."



TH-58



Postured, are gone for ever. Revolution, base and grim, is preparing her battle field moving down the centres of order, which were evolving a new cosmos and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall, and a mighty new creation. We could have wished it otherwise but God's wish will be done.\*

About the split of the Congress at Surat, the editorial of the same edition said, "the destruction of Congress, began at Surat and accomplished at Allahabad, is the prelude for the outburst of the storm that has long been brewing. Great issues were involved in that heroic struggle at Surat..." Again...of the two parties the moderate convention will fade into nothingness for its inherent want of vitality while the Congress of Nationalists whatever its destiny, will not be the old Congress, but a new incalculable force, the product of revolution or perhaps its plaything."

#### Radicalisation of Traditional Values:

In this period the political and ideological literature of both the militant nationalists and the revolutionaries were covered in Hindu religious garb. Though the content used to be national and upto a certain extent democratic also, the Hindu religious garb acted as a hindrance for drawing in the Muslim middle class masses in a large way into the Swadeshi boycott movement. For instance "Bhowani Mandir" of Aurobindo Ghosh, which was not just a pamphlet for agitation but a scheme for organising centres of militant

nationalist and revolutionary activity throughout Bengal and simultaneously setting up temples of Bhovani Goddess ~~and~~ all over the country. Bhovani was a symbol and it was mother India who was in bondage and her sons of different cast, creed and languages were to unite together to liberate her. There were to be no images in the temples which were the centres of revolutionary activity. Thus with a purpose national and democratic, it was initiated. "There are certain reasons behind this situation. Firstly we believed in abstract terms."\* Secondly our leaders were Hindus and they tried to solve all socio-economic problems with a fee religious touch ... as the revolutionaries themselves did not have any idea of socio-economic problems.\*\*

Similar tendency is seen with the group of Savarkar even when it was formed abroad. The main political and ideological weapons they forged were derived from the life of Mazzini<sup>12</sup> and the other book was "India's war of Independence" (1857). Both the books were prepared by Savarkar in Marathi and in English and were circulating in a great number among the revolutionary groups in 1909-10. The introduction to Mazzini's life emphasised, "... the importance of revolutionary ideas to the rank of religion and argues that Ramdas the Saint of Maharashtra in the time of Shivaji possessed the same political essence as Mazzini had."<sup>13</sup> Madanlal Dhingra,

\* They were yet to channelise their thoughts into scientific way of thinking. Subjectivism and vagueness were the forces which always over shadowed them.

\*\* Bhupendranath Dutt op. cit. pp. 14.

@ James Campbell Ker. Op. Cit. pp. 185.

assassinated Curzon Wylie, the political Aide-de-camp at the India office, at the imperial institute on the evening of July, 1, 1909, and deposed that he was a Hindu in his statement before the court. In his written statement he said, "Thus war will continue between India and England so long as Hindu and English races last. (If this present unnatural relation does not cease to exist.)@@

Though the religious garb had a negative aspect and upto certain extent it antagonised a large section of the Muslim masses and shared the responsibility of alienating this vast section of the population from the mainstream of the political movement, yet it was just a form to establish contacts with the illiterate, conservative, religious-minded masses. The imperialist repression was so severe that through direct political movement or agitation, it was impossible to attract the masses. Besides the Government of India adopted a policy of non-interference in the religious practices and customs of various communities. Therefore under the garb of religion it was comparatively

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@@ James Campbell Ker, op. cit page 179.

"... Though Madanlal Dhingra in his statement spoke as a Hindu and said that his cause was the cause of Shri Ram and his service was the service of Shri Krishna, he pleaded the cause of the independence of the country in his oral statement before the court in these powerful words..." I maintain that if it is patriotic in an Englishman to fight against the Germans if they were to occupy this country, it is more justifiable and patriotic in any case to fight against the English. I hold the English responsible for the murder of eighty million of my countrymen within the last fifty years and they are also responsible for taking away £ 100,000,00 every year from India to this country. I also hold them responsible for the hanging and deportation of my patriotic countrymen who did just the same as the Englishmen here are advising their countrymen to do."

garb of religion it was comparatively easier to work for the ultimate political action, "... under conditions of same imperialist repression of all direct political agitation and organisation, before the National Movement had reached any mass basis, the use of such forms was justifiable."\*

The Prelude for the Rising Political Consciousness:

The process of realisation, of the undignified, stagnatory and meaningless life started expressing itself early in the last century after renaissance in Bengal and partly in Maharashtra. But the political consciousness was still under a tendency of mystification, under which the real basis of exploitation and the machine of repression was covered in darkness. The dissatisfaction, reflected in the abortive first war of independence, and some local upsurges of peasants and indigo farmers, was still to wait for some more invigorating events. Repressive regime of Lord Curzon, partition of Bengal in 1905 were the events inside the country which enabled the spirit of radicalism and extremism to emerge as a formidable force in the Indian Liberation Movement. It enabled also to crystallise the different trends and approaches to the means and methods adopted in the course of struggle. "Against the ridicule poured on the national character of the Indians and the insult inflicted on the nation itself, the Indian National Congress could do nothing. It proved the uselessness of the "Moderate Ideology" and

\* Rajni Palm Dutt: op. cit. page 304.

gave added force to the 'Extremist School of Politics.'\*

The Trend of Militant Nationalism.

According to some scholars, like Jegesh Chandra Bagal, Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, the spirit of radicalism was marked in the Indian Liberation struggle outside the Congress only after this anti-partition agitation. But in fact if we trace back its history, the growth of the revolutionary movement in India can be traced back from as early as the second half of the 19th. century. The oath of the Abhinav Bharat Group,\*\* to which Chapekar brothers and Ranade belonged, says that every member of this group wanted absolute political independence and they knew that India can never acquire her place among the nations of the world without political independence.

This trend of militant nationalism aimed at complete independence when the moderates aimed at administrative reforms and upto certain extent self-government and the extremists were heading towards a compromise instead of their demand of complete Swaraj. Though it was only in the first few years of this century when the secret organisations and the underground societies could come up with ideological and organisational clarity, but "... Individual terror had never been an end in itself for the Indian patriots. It was resorted to merely as a method of struggle, intended

\* P.B.Sinha, Indian National Liberation Movement and Russia; ( 1906-1917 ) Sterling Publishers, New Delhi...pp. 30.

\*\* A group, which was founded by two brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar, for physical and military training and for the defence of Hinduism in 1895, This group was shaped later as Abhinav Bharat.

to the awakening of the people and their preparation for the revolution."<sup>1</sup>

Before 1905, except some isolated phenomenon, like the heroic though unsuccessful attempt of Vasudeo Balwant Phadke in the seventies, the revolutionary groups were not shaped in the form of real movement. The heroic act of Chapekar Brothers is another example of a spirit which was 'nationalist' and 'revolutionary' without any planning "ready for the general rising". Preparations were made to wage "a bloody and relentless war against the foreigner." Few of them had a wider conception of terrorism and for them it was the first stage of an armed revolution. For the transitional period which was to prepare for an allout war against the imperialists, the militant nationalists considered that individual terrorism had two purposes, to serve. "To demoralise the bureaucracy and paralyse the administration" and on the other hand "to arouse the people". They believed in the political terrorism. But they were aware of this fact too that terrorism was necessary only in a phase "... Terrorism or individual assassination was only the first stage of revolution... ultimate goal, the final revolution, a pitched battle with the Imperialists must be kept in view"<sup>2</sup> "... In preparation for this send out men to America or France for the purpose of learning the manufacture of arms, ammunition of the latest type and of studying the essential of the military training."<sup>3</sup> At the same time

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1. Raikov, Alexi, "Indian National Revolutionaries and Marxism". Social Sciences, USSR Academy of Sciences, No.4 1972 pp.134.

2. Hemchandra Kanungo, 'Bengali Biplab Prachesta', Calcutta, 1928, opp. 100.

3. Ibid, page 175.

an article was published in the paper "Bande Mataram" edited by Mdm Cama on the unity of the colonial people fighting against British imperialism. The importance of political assassination has been related here aptly. "Dhingra has served not only the Indian people but the whole of humanity. For the significance of this grand exploit is immense indeed. The British Empire is the Octopus which is sucking the blood of different nations in the world and a blow struck at this hydra headed monster in its own stronghold must put new life into all those groaning under tyranny... Dhingra's pistol shot has been heard by the coolies in their far off huts, by the Egyptian fellah working on the field, by the labourer in the dark mine and every victim of British greed has felt a thrill of joy at the promise of emancipation held out by the Indian heroic deed." 1

The same article chalks out the perspective of struggles thus: "The initial stage of revolution is marked by the policy of individual assassination. Later on will come guerilla warfare and pitched battles, which will free India from the foreign rule."

This campaign of separate assassinations spread from Bengal and Maharashtra to Punjab and Delhi. The imperialist police record says that this campaign was a well knit conspiracy as every significant act was organised by a group which had a programme of its own. As early as 1899, a group called "Mitra Mela" was organised in Nasik which later developed into a well spread organisation of "Abhinav Bharat". This "Abhinav Bharat," which was formed secretly in 1907, consisted of many other

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1. Extracts from 'Bande Mataram' edited by Mdm. Cama, Paris-  
(Microfilm Section, Ajoy Bhawan Archives, Date not available).



organisations too, in which Chapekar Association and the Nav Bharat Society of Gwalior were significant for their revolutionary role. The conspirational organisations had spread up all over the country with plans of "... collection of funds by violence and arms, terrorism, Guerilla bands etc. and end in an uprising."

In this, period, these secret organisations were deeply influenced by the examples of the French revolution, American war of independence and the revolutionary secret societies of west like those of Italy, Ireland and Russia.

The Interconnection Between the Two Radical Wings:  
within and without the Congress.

The militant nationalists outside the Congress had the support of 'the extremists' from within, in this period. The stagnation of the organisation as well as failure of the moderate policy were the reasons which brought forth this support from Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Sri Aurobindo.

As early as in 1897, when Chapekar brothers and Ranade assassinated Rand and Ayerst, Balgandhar Tilak was accused of having conspirational links with the deed and that his writings and speeches instigated it. Tilak subsequently lashed out with vibrant force at this alarming statement of the Government spokesman but together with it, he never uttered a word of condemnation against the Chapekars and Ranade till the last.

Tilak was arrested for sedition and convicted in his trial for eighteen months. This action of Chapekar brothers is referred in the sedition committee report at the beginning... "indications of a revolutionary movement were first observed in western India." Though the movement had not taken a revolutionary trend till then.

The daily paper "Punjabi" of Lala Lajpat Rai was a constant source of inspiration for these revolutionaries. When the Government decided to increase the tax on water, the agitation launched by the militant wing of the Congress, under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai had complete support of the revolutionaries. Along with Sardar Ajit Singh this peasant movement was initiated by Lalaji and he was deported to Bureau for this act. As effect of this agitation, whole of Punjab was seething with dissatisfaction. Many Britishers were attacked by people.

Apart from these prominent nationalists, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal was himself "the father of this nationalist movement" even outside Congress. In 1902, he sent Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Yatindranath to Bengal to organise secret groups. The famous Manektolia Garden Society, which was the most important secret society among several secret societies was organised by Barindra Kumar Ghosh and his friends and had complete support of Sri Aurobindo. Even the vehicle of their propaganda in English, "Bande Mataram" was edited by Aurobindo for which he was accused by the Government. In the period

of 1905-6 he started even campaigning for armed revolution and established a bomb-factory in the Morari Pukur Garden House of Manektolā.

Later Shri Aurobindo himself wrote in his reminiscences that he with his group "... took advantage, however of the Swadeshi movement to popularise the idea of violent revolt in future."<sup>1</sup>

But this support did not mean that these leading spokesmen of the radical wing of the Congress adopted a policy of total rejection or the condemnation of the policies of the Congress. Lokmanay Tilak, who supported so much the outbursts in Maharashtra, was correctly characterised by Ker, in the 'Political Trouble'.

"... Tilak was persistent opponent of the Government, his policy being to obtain self-government by any means possible, favouring even rebellion if it had any chance of success." As it is clear from his own writings that he would have accepted the path of armed rebellion, if there would have been any chance of its success. To him, the nature of resistance was immaterial. The only criteria was the chances of success. Expressing his views ~~for~~ boycott, he said, "The boycott is a substitute for war. As we cannot go to war as did the Boers in South Africa, the next best thing is to refuse to buy the British goods."<sup>2</sup> This proves that for Lokmanya Tilak boycott was only next armed resistance.

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1. Sri Aurobindo " on himself" and other writings page 43-44.
  2. D.V. Tahmankar, 'Lokmanya Tilak' p. 107 quoted P.B.Sinha, Indian National Liberation Movement and Russian, 1905-1917 Sterling Publishers 1975 pp. 70.

Same is true about another Extremist leader Ganesh Sri Krishna Khaparde, who was the closest association of Tilak and "the fate of the bomb in Bengal."

Bipin Chandra Pal who supported in the militant Nationalists in Bengal upto certain extent believed that the people of India should adopt a policy of peaceful resistance only. The violent and open movement without any political awakening would be killed by the Government without difficulty, which would also be the end of any attempt for Swarajya.

The approach of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was different altogether. He supported passive resistance and non-cooperation for open and public actions and as against it he believed that it was not the only means of struggle and maintained a secret revolutionary activity also for an open revolt. He was aptly attributed by Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, as "a prophet of passive resistance and also the philosopher of revolution."

Precisely the creed of the militant nationalists differed in content from that of the radical wing of the Congress. Another factor was the severe suppression adopted against them by the Government. Lala Lajpat Rai alongwith Ajit Singh was deported to Burma. The prevention of seditious meeting Act was passed. As the Government was not succeeding in crushing the revolutionary trend completely, two extremely repressive acts were passed, which were the explosive substances Act and the newspapers Act. These acts were used to unleash terror on the

leaders and press of radical views, especially in the deportation of the Bengali leaders, imprisonment of Tialm, Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal. The external effect was that of indifference. But in fact it was in this phase, that the movement was entering in the phase of collection of arms and that of action, though with a purpose to rouse the masses through heroic deeds. The main channel of the liberation movement that was organised by the Congress had withdrawn its support upto certain extent, but the undercurrent of this trend remained.

They succeeded in giving impetus to the growth of national consciousness, spirit of patriotism and desire to be free from the foreign bondage. The flame flickered in the messages they conveyed through their papers, "Kesari" "Bande Mataram", "Punjabi", "Sandhya", "Nabashakti", "Yugantar" etc. through the martyrdom of the heroic youth and the organisations secretly organised.

Thus before 1905 the militant nationalist movement outside the Congress was mainly confined in preparing weapons silently, importing them from other countries, setting up secret societies and lastly presenting before the people the highest spirit of self-abnegation for the cause of national freedom. To convince people of the absolute necessity of independence and to prepare them for the sake of the freedom of the motherland they had adopted the path of martyrdom. The political assassination which was one of the most important feature and tactics was sometime disapproved, rarely, though, by revolutionaries like Jadu Gopal and Har Dayal, but it was never condemned. The purpose of this assassination those people who were respon-

sible for the persecution of the secret societies or their members. The purpose it served was firstly it warned the other culprits not to adopt the same way and secondly, to take revenge. Again they never considered it a sin to kill a man who hinders the path of independence. The most important purpose it served, was made clear by Barindra Kumar Ghosh when he was tried, "we did not mean or expect to liberate our country by killing a few Englishmen. We wanted to show people how to dare and die."<sup>1</sup> And the reason was explained once by one of them, "~~Laws~~ Laws of the English are based on their brutal force. If we want to liberate ourselves from these laws, it is brute force that is necessary for us to accumulate. It is there then the right course of action now lies for us. It will not go against the law of all times. Swarajya will never be established if in the humiliation of truth is sought protection... In our country must be enacted what has happened in other countries. There is no other door of admission into life but death ..."<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Quoted in P.B.Sinha op. cit page 2 P.
2. Interview with Shri Dharani, Goswami, once again a terrorist, later joined workers and Peasants Party in Bengal, now a leading member in the Communist Party of India.

CHAPTER II

The Growth and Development of  
the National Revolutionary  
Movement in the Period of 1905-  
1917

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## **'B' The Growth and Development of the National Revolutionary Movement in the Period of 1905-1917**

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In the wake of this century the trends which emerged in the Indian political scene were as followings: the liberal trend of the 'Moderates' which was already present with the organisation of the Congress and the radical trend which emerged within and without the Congress and loved to be called Nationalist. Trend, outside the Congress had some common points with these Nationalists, but since their goal was "complete independence" and that too with a programme of armed revolution, they were called the militant nationalists or the revolutionaries. Another aspect of this rebellious movement which came up in a large scale and sharpened the difference between the radical wing and the liberals was the spontaneous rising of workers' and peasants' movement. One more trend was also creeping in which was nourished by the British imperialism. It was the trend of Muslim Communalism, which found a concrete expression in 1906, in the form of All India Muslim League.

### **The cross-Current of Events on the International and National Level**

In the process of tracing back the emergence of the liberation movement, the first phase of vagueness and the isolation from the masses ends upto certain extent by the year of 1905-6. Inside the country, the partition of Bengal, viceroyalty of Lord Curzon and consequently changes in the life of the Indian masses, <sup>t</sup> The University Bill and the agitation against it and on top of it the boycott. Swadeshi movement which was intensified on the background of these



events; inspired the flickering flame of the movement all the more. On the International level also events of immense significance were taking place which inspired the Indian revolutionary youth all the more and they were determined to do anything to break the chains of slavery. The one of the important event was the Russo-Japanese war. It was a struggle of Asia and Europe in which Japan was the awakening East and Russia was the offensive imperialist. For Indian nationalists and the revolutionaries also the event had great effect since the victory, as Shyamji Krishna Varma observed in his "the Indian Sociologist"... the news of the victory will be assuredly received with great satisfaction throughout Asia... — their pluck and success will breed new life and hope into all those who have lost political freedom, and who are oppressed by the foreign domination."\*\*

But this great victory was not the sole cause of crystallisation of the emerging trend. The prelude was already prepared for the 'unrest' which followed after 1905. Though the British imperialists preferred to characterise the upsurges which took place after this phase as an outcome of this event only. The sedition committee report, as late as in 1918 explained in its own terms that the revolutionary movement in India would not have emerged, "... did not the whole world and especially the Asiatic world, been electrified and amazed by victories of Japan over Russia...."<sup>2</sup> Though this comment overestimates the impression, the great victory had made on the national liberation movement, yet the fact cannot be ignored that it added more radicalism to the movement and the approaches.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Indian sociologist", Jan. 1905, quoted in Indulal Yajnik, "Shyamji Krishna Varma (Life and Times of an Indian revolutionary) Bombay 1950, p. 125.

Another event of a immense significance took place in the same year and it was the Russian Revolution of 1905. Not only India and the countries of the East but the whole world examined its farreaching influences. The revolutions of Iran and Turkey and later in China were deeply influenced by this great event. The establishment of constitutional Government in Iran and Turkey had its own impact on India.

But the direct effect on Indian people was on their "determination to stretch democratic rights and constitutional liberties from an unbending autocratic despotism. In fact with the advent of the vice-royalty of Lord Curzon the government of India became so autocratic and oppressive that the revolution in Russia opened new horizons for the Indian militant nationalists. Even Lord Curzon himself had foreseen the situation and in a published paper he drew even a parallel... between the dangers confronting the Teardom and the similar dangers that confronted the similar despotism in Hindustan." 1

#### The Four-Point Programme: A New Wave in the Congress

As a result of these developments a rapid swing forward in the Indian liberation movement came. Even the moderates under the stopping influence of the extremists were made to adopt a programme in 1906 in which "... the aim of Swaraj <sup>defined as colonial</sup> or self-government within the Empire ("the system of government obtaining in the selfgoverning British colonies), support of the boycott movement, support of Swadeshi or the promotion of indigenous industries and National Education. Swaraj, boycott, Swadeshi and the National Education became now the four cardinal points of the Congress programme." 2 . Though programme was adopted, the

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1. R.P.Arnot, A short history of the Russian revolution (from 1905 to the present day), Vol. I from 1905 to Feb., 1917. (The New People's Library, Vol IV) London 1937, p. 64 quoted in P.B.Sinha, Indian Liberation Movement and Russia p. 186.

2. R.P.Dutt: India Today, page 330.

explanation of it varied in various shades of opinion. The moderates still considered that the policy of boycott was a "temporary measure adopted for the purpose of modifying the partition of Bengal." 3. The Swadeshi movement was "a means of protectionism in the interest of the local manufacturing industry." 4<sup>2</sup>

The difference of approach emerged more sharply afterwards when the Moderates wanted to retrace their steps. As R.C. Muzumdar observed, "... one may well wonder why the moderates insisted on changing the resolution even at the risk of a split in the Congress rank. There is little doubt that this was due, at least to a large extent to the influence of Lord Morley and Minto." \* Harmless social reform work with support of bureaucracy was their process and therefore the difference emerged on the question of Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education. The moderate group lost the image of a national organisation and neither they could achieve any conspicuous success in the Government nor they could reflect the militant awakening of the country. The outcome was the radical wing. With partition and the split at Surat this radical wing emerged with a distinct and permeable political force.

#### The Trend of National-Revolutionaries: As a Considerable Force in the Liberation Movement

The Extremist group came up mainly in Maharashtra and Bengal as the background was that of a series of uprising of workers and peasants, in these two places. The militant nationalism in Maharashtra had deep influence of religio-historical trends. The "Mitra Mela" was formed and associated with the Ganpati festival, the Shivaji Utsav was also one of the important festivals celebrated in this period.

1. N.C. Sengupta, "The boycott movement" the India Review Madras, May 1906 p. 251, quoted in Sarkar Ghosh, the Western Impact p. 71.
2. I.M. Reinsner, "Revolutionary... Idar 1905.08.1956.p.412 (\*up53e by P.B. Sinha).
3. \* R.C. Muzumdar, "EMM" Vol. II, page 244 Quoted by P.B. Sinha op. cit. page 53

In Bengal symbolised Bankimchandra came with Ananda Math and symbolised Goddess Kali with the Motherland. But the credit of justifying this theory with a logical outcome goes to Aurobindo. He combined the spiritualism with the religion of nationalism. In Bengal the radical nationalism was mingled with religion so much that patriotism was considered the only way for salvation. This reciprocal exchange between nationalism and the religion was the most important feature of the extremist section in Bengal.

Since the radical wing in the country was based on the past greatness and religion, they shared a common aim. But as far as the means was concerned <sup>he</sup> there was a sharp difference between the extremists who were inside the Congress and the revolutionaries who were <sup>on</sup> side the Congress. The ideal of complete independence or Swaraj was the proclaimed aim of the extremist wing which consisted of Balgangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipinchandra Pal. Aurobindo Ghosh\* was a leader who had intimate links with the revolutionary group. In the wake of this century we observe traces of some support for the revolutionary groups in Lokmanya Tilak. But later there was a shift in his stand. The ideal of the abolition of British Raj was considered too far and hence the timely substitute for that was to gain a large share in the Administration of the country. It was Lokmanya Tilak and Lala Lajpat <sup>Rai, who identified themselves with the moderate thinking</sup> regarding the aim, though they had sheer contempt for the method adopted by the moderates. This radical wing inside the Congress had deep conviction in "self reliant" methods. It was meant to infuse people with a new confidence to put up a massive and organised resistance.

#### A Rising Awareness of the Role of the Masses

The extremists had realised that the masses alone can initiate a real political movement with a strong and invincible force. Since most of

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\* Aurobindo Ghosh was the main ideologue of the federation of Yugantar till he surrendered himself to religion.

them were from the lower middle class and had an intimate link with the vast masses. They knew the urgency of it. The radical wing of the Congress realised its aim with perfect clarity which was to be non-violent, passive resistance. On the other hand the revolutionaries, who had observed the strength of the masses in the series of upsurges sparking up in Maharashtra and Bengal, believed in aggressive and violent resistance.

### The Creed of Passive Resistance

'Passive Resistance' was not aggressive resistance but non-aggressive active resistance. Lala Lajpat Rai first initiated this doctrine in Benaras Session of the Congress in 1905. He characterised it as the most legitimate constitutional form of protest. Bipinchandra Pal, Shri Aurobindo were the other spokesmen of this form of protest. But the aggressive and violent method was not contradictory to the theory of passive resistance. They considered it the only possible method of struggle as the brutal force of the government had full capability to smash the open movement in the country. The time was not mature enough to declare an open mass revolt. The other reason of this difference was the performance of the chance of success. Since the armed revolution was not possible and for them 'boycott was a substitute for war', they preferred this process to fight for independence.

The extremist wing inside the Congress has the credit of adding a realistic and democratic conception in the programme of the Congress. The whole channel of the National Liberation Movement was transferred into a new level of self-reliant methods, through which the real face of the British government was unmasked. Again it was this radical wing only which realised first the urgency of the political consciousness among the masses. Though the narrow outlook and upto certain extent, the isolated social base caused a basic flaw in conception of the

political propaganda. They did not include the claim of the starving peasantry who really constituted the Indian masses. The call of 'boycott', 'Home rule' or even 'Swadeshi' had no significance for the masses. The outcome was that people, suffering from famine, feudal atrocities and living in feudal and semicolonial conditions colonial suppression did not respond to the call of the national liberation movement.

The radical wing outside the Congress differed from that of the group inside. It had faith in the farreaching aim of complete independence, for which Congress had to take thirty years to realise. They were poles apart from the general trend of the movement both in their means and end. They believed in an armed revolution and this revolution was to come through stages. Through "... secret societies collection of funds by violence and arms terrorism, guerilla bands etc. and in an uprising", They wanted to achieve the goal. In the preliminary stage they initiated with a tinge of spiritualism even. In Maharashtra "Mitra Mela", Gwalior, (M.P.) "Nav Bharat" or in the later stage "Abhinav Bharat" had celebrated Ganpati Utsav. In Bengal also they adopted the same process. The underlying purpose was to gain active support from the masses. The other means of propagating the ideal were revolutionary literature, papers and lectures. The secret organisations were sprouting up all over the country even before the partition of Bengal and the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. Vinayak Damodar Sarvarkar organised a group "Abhinav Bharat" which had its branches in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. In Punjab and UP Yogeshchandra Chatterjee was making attempts to organise groups and in Saharsanpur, Roorki they had branches. After the partition of Bengal these secret groups had intimate links with the Bengal revolutionary group too. Shirish Chandra Ghosh, Chandrakant were the links between these two. Lala Hardayal, Ajit Singh, Amba Prasad were the leading personalities of these groups. Later Hardayal left for abroad to collect funds and arms. This group had links with Lala Lajpat Rai, though vaguely. After Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat

Rai were deported, the membership of these groups increased an immediate reaction.

### The First Bomb Outrage and the Development in Bengal

Apart from these developments on the all India level, the event which caused the government serious alarm occurred in April 1908. An attempt on the district judge of Muzaffarpore was made by Khoudiram Bose and Prafullachaki and instead wife and daughter of Mr Kennedy were killed. But even before this known event the groups active in Bengal had a very significant role to play. 'Anushilan' was the only organised group which was formed as early as 1900-1901 by Satishchandra Bose. Later in 1902, Premathnath Mitra took over the leadership of the group. Explaining the ideological development of the revolutionary group in Bengal Sri Bhpendra Nath Dutt writes... "At this time common people could not differentiate between the radical wing of the Congress, led by Bipinchandra Pal Chittaranarayan and Aurobindo and the revolutionary group. We were known as <sup>P</sup>"~~P.M.~~ Mitra's group". It is obvious from this observation that these organisations had intimate links with the Extremist wing of the Congress. As Sri Gopal Halder also observed, "... the Swadeshi Movement had encouraged the formation of such local groups and each of them in its turn had its branches."<sup>2</sup> But the difficulty with these groups was that the degree of centralisation of them varied from each other. But upto certain extent Premathnath Mitra, Berin Ghosh and Pullin Das were working together. Pullin Das had relatively more control on the organisations active in East Bengal and the Dacca group started operating independently.

At this stage a federation of group started function in Bengal under the

(Bhupindra Nath Dutt: Bharate Duitiya Swadhinta Sangram (Typed Bengal manuscript) page 68.

<sup>2</sup>Shri Gopal Halder 'Revolutionary Terrorism' page 242.

(Bhupendranath Dutt also writes in his "Aprakarhita Rajnaitik Itihās", 1955, p. 228-30, that the plan of murdering Lt Governor Fuller, chalked out by Barindra and his followers, had the support of Sri Surendranath. He even gave assurance of contributing eight thousand also, though openly in his book he denied it.)

banner of Yugantar. It is difficult to trace out the date and year of this formation. According to some scholars it became a distinct group only in course of war in 1914-15. Thus these two parallel under currents in the revolutionary trend in Bengal remained even till the end of pre-independence period.

The other group which claimed a longer past than even Anushilan was Atomonati Samiti. After 1905 this group also emerged as an active group in Bengal under the leadership of Bepin Ganguli and Anukul Mukherjee.

This group functioned as an open forum from the revolutionary group when they were declared illegal. It has also in its credit of murdering the Indian police officer who tried to arrest Prafulla Ghaki, murder of a terrorist who turned traitor and the famous robber of the Rodda and Company.

The group in the federation of Yugantar and the branches of Anushilan had also their separate plans for action and hence there is a long list of isolated outrages in the Rowlett Report. But the goal and the process to achieve this goal was same. And hence the papers coming out at this time propagated almost a common end and means, "Sandhya", Nabashakti, Yugantar and the English Bande Mataram had a common ideal to share.



New Creed in the Movement.

At this turning point of the century, when the atmosphere in the country was charged with the events on national and international plane, like the university bill agitation, partition of Bengal, Swadeshi Movement, Victory of Japan in Russia- Japanese War and the revolution in Russia, there was creeping in an undercurrent of a new creed which culminated later in the history of this pre-independence period.

The mouth-pieces of the revolutionary group in Bengal had stressed on the first outbreak of revolution in Russia and showing how revolutionaries worked among the troops of Czar, it said, " - - - Revolutionaries must very cautiously spread the gospel of independence among native troops."<sup>1</sup> Again in its second issue the editorial was written in support of cottage industry and handicrafts as against the growth of capitalism in India. In the same issue, Shri Aurobindo advocated the economic theory of Friedrich List. Afterwards the journal never accepted any advertisement from the big capitalist concerns.<sup>2</sup> Thus, with the goal of complete independence, in which a vague conception of economic emancipation was also creeping in the revolutionary movement commenced with an irresistible force, with which the traditional limitations of the nationalists movement ends up. As early as in 1907, Hemchandra Kanungo contacted the underground Russian socialists in Paris. This trend becomes more distinct among the Indian revolutionaries abroad and as early as 1907. They participated in the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International.

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\* Kesari, country's misfortune, June 9, 1908.

\*\* Charles Tegart, Terrorism in India (London: the Royal Empire Society) page 7.

Again, the first mass upsurge of political character came up through the channels of this revolutionary movement only. The first significant incident organised by the Bengal revolutionaries was the Muzzaffarpore Bomb case. When Khoudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki were convicted, Tilak wrote in his paper "Kesari" under the caption "Country's Misfortune" \*. Tilak was prosecuted for this in July 1908. Just after this in Bombay, a mass strike was organised by the workers. The so-called "inert and cool" \*\* masses of India was now conscious enough to resist and agitate against repressive policies of the Government. In India too, the Proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle, and that being the case, the Russian style British regime in India is doomed. †<sup>3</sup>

These events provided the necessary emotional <sup>stimulation</sup> ~~stage~~ for the revolutionaries to commence ahead. The process was still the collection of arms and funds and through heroic actions rouse the masses. The consistent and scientific union was missing. The group led by Shri Aurobindo and Berindra in Bengal initiated the movement on a mass scale in their own way of martyrdom and heroic action. Khoudiram and Prafulla Chaki were the first martyrs. Alipore Conspiracy Case (1908-9) had involved Berindra, Vilaskar Dutt and Hemchandra and they were sent for life transportation. Aurobindo and Jatindranath were released in this case. But the chain of political assassinations was started. The Rodda Company incident<sup>4</sup>\*\*\* was the most famous one.

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1. \* Kesari, country's misfortune, June 9, 1908
  2. \*\* Charles Tegart, Terrorism in India (London: the Royal Empire Society) page 7.
  3. \*\*\* Lenin in the National Liberation Movement in the East "Inflammable materials in the World Politics" Moscow 1962 p.15
  4. \*\*\*\* The sedition committee considered it. "An event of the greatest importance in development of revolutionary crime in Bengal".

Haridas Dutt, Kalidas Bhowe and Bujanga Dhar were executed in this case, though it came up rather later. By this time, Dacca conspiracy Case Pulin Das was sent for life transportation. Trailokychkeranath and Madan Mohan Bhaumik were sent for life transportation in the second Barisal Case. In Howrah Conspiracy Case, Government mentioned the name of "Yugantar Group" for the first time. In 1913 in the floods of Bardwan and Kanthi, volunteers came from all revolutionary groups of Bengal. They all joined hands under the leadership of Yatindranath in 1913-14. This nameless decentralised group was entitled as "Yugantar" in the history of the revolutionary movement. The prosecution could not establish the charge against the accused in the Howrah Conspiracy Case. Some scholars differ a little on this question. ShriJadu Gopal Mukherjee, Aurobindo Ghosh and Yatindranath Bandopadhyaya established the Yugantar Group. After Jatin Mukherjee this leadership was taken over by Jadugopal Mukherjee. Among the leading members of this group were Narendra Bhattacharya (later Ranabendrenath Roy), Manoranjan Gupta, Kisan Shankar Mukherjee, Bhupati Muzandar, Dhupendra Kumar Dutte.

In Bengal, the revolutionary wing was not complete in its own, the leaders differed on various issues. The terrorism of assassination and robbery, initiated broadly by the group of Barindra and his friends was not supported by the exponents of underground Anushilan group. These were some other plans also to involve in a greater struggle instead of these violated events. Except Barindra Ghosh in Bengal, two other leaders were also active with their own groups. One was organisation of Pulia Das, who centralised it in Dacca and the other one emerged in the later years led by Rash Behari Bose.

The Expansion of National Revolutionary Group, outside Bengal.

Outside Bengal also the secret organisations were actively participating in their own limits. In Maharashtra three bomb-organisations emerged, Khore Gosthi, Kolapur Gosthi and Mahajan Gosthi (Poona). In Nasik Kurve Gosthi was formed, who assassinated Jackson in 1909. But after the murder<sup>-or</sup> was arrested, the Gosthi became slowly inactive.

In Bihar<sup>\*</sup> and Orissa many groups were organised by Shachindranath Sanyal and his Comrades. In U.P. also the movement was spreading up secretly. In South India Chidambaram Pillai and Subramaniam Shiv Tiruvelli were two most important leaders of the group.

In Punjab revolutionary activity was again coming up after 1909. Ajit Singh started taking active participation. Lala Hardayal had left for the United States, but J.M.Chatterjee and Dina Nath had shouldered his responsibility. J.M.Chatterjee left for abroad after some time, but before going away, he established a link between Dina Nath and Rashbehari.

In the pre-world war I period, the most striking event was the bombing attempt on Lord Hardinge<sup>2</sup> \*\*\* - - the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ anti-partition agitation in Bengal had resulted in the Government's decision to reunite the two halves of the province, but at the same time the capital of British India was moved from Calcutta to Delhi.<sup>3</sup> \*\*\* This attempt on the life of Hardinge was made when he was going to inaugurate the new capital of the country. The group which participated in this act was from North India but closely linked with the Bengal revolutionary group led by Rash Behari Bose.

1 \* A report published by Govt. of Bihar and edited by U. Sealy 1917

2 \*\* December 23, 1912. Government

3 \*\*\* David M. Lanshoy, Bengal Terrorism & Marxist Left; Calcutta, 1975. p.10.

### The Struggle Against Imperialism.

In this period there was a consistent effort to launch a combined struggle against the imperial yoke. Therefore, during the war the scattered revolutionary groups of Yugantar and Anushilan, constituted certain aims for themselves and tried to cooperate with each other to achieve this aim.

As Gopal Halder relates these plans :

- (1) to seduce the Indian Section of the armed forces posted in India and Burma;
- (2) to throw into the country the Ghadar element of the Punjabi revolutionaries who began to return to India for this purpose;
- (3) to effectively carry out the Indo-German plot for shipment of German arms for Indian revolutionaries particularly those of Bengal ;
- (4) to coordinate activities of the societies in India to some extent , enlarge membership of each, train them, equip them and necessarily finance them and defend them from all enemies by terrorist means as necessary.\*

Though this elaborate plan was drawn with the cooperation of different leaders, but still they failed to fulfil any one of the programme. The unity was established in different groups of India and even abroad, who were preparing for the liberation struggle, but in Bengal itself there was considerable disagreement. In the period of war, in Bengal itself many few actions could take place, but outside Bengal, Bengalis were active. Except for the Rodda and Company action of 1914, which was claimed to be " . . . an event of greatest importance in development of revolutionary crime <sup>2</sup> in Bengal, no other

revolutionary action could be seen for some time, though the

1 \* Gopal Halder, "Revolutionary Terrorism" p.245.

2 \*\* The sedition Committee Report.

revolutionary under-current was writing for the right moment to spark off. After the attempt at Lord Hardinge, Rash Behari brought his central working association to Banaras, as the Govt. had started having suspicion on him, in 1913. In Banaras he formed a group, together with Sachindranath Sanyal. In this group Vineyak Rao Kople, Damodarveroop, Pratap Singh, Awadhbehari, Kartar Singh, Vishnuganesh Pingley etc. were the leading figures.\* Some of these members had returned from America with other sikh members of the Ghadar Party.

In this period a common programme was finalised between the groups of Punjab, Bengal and U.P. including the emissaries of the Ghadar Group. The groups working outside the countries also now became active. The pioneering work among them was that of Shyamji Krishna Varma who was the first to declare the ideal of complete independence as the ultimate goal. He conveyed his message through his campaign for the 'Home Rule' in the teeth of sharp opposition of Dadabhai Naoroji and his British Committee of the Congress. As early as 1906 he started his paper 'The Indian Sociologist' and established 'India House' which became a meeting point for the nationalist Indians. Madam Cama, S.R. Rana, Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and V.V.S. Aiyar were the other stalwarts of this group from which Shyamji Krishna Varma himself in the later years. By 1910, the centre was shifted to Paris where the mouth-piece of the organisation was Bande Matram edited by Madam Cama. Paris group of the Indian revolutionaries became very weak after V.V.S. Aiyar left for India and Hardayal left for Martinique in 1910. Madam Cama and S.R. Rana were returned.

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\* J.C. Kap<sup>e</sup>r, op. cit. p. 196.

\*\* Taraknath Das went to USA as early as 1906 and initiated his revolutionary career by bringing out a paper.

The other group of emigrants who were teething with dissatisfaction and working for the liberation movement were active in Berlin, Canada and America mainly ... " ... Berlin, the capital of the country which is at present most hostile in spirit to England ... the Cultivation of friendly relations with the powerful German nation will be a great advantage to the cause of Indian independence.\*\* Paris group depicted its views in the Bande Mataram and the policy of the revolutionaries abroad worked on these lines. In fact with the outbreak of the world war, the revolutionary Indian centres shifted their concentration from San Francisco to Berlin and from Berlin to India. As the enemy of the enemy was our friend, the Government of Germany helped us in establishing "Indian National Party" or "Indian Independence Committee". The leading members of this group were Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Champak Ramen Pillal etc. When the Ghadar Party also became concerned about it, then Hardeyal, Taraknath Das, Mohamed Barakatullah also joined. A combined effort of all these people, together with the Govt. of Germany strengthened the liberation movement in India had two-fold significance. Firstly, there was consistent effort to pave the way of an armed revolution in India and for that they wanted to send arms and ammunition. For this they had contacts in Bengal and outside too. Unfortunately, just before the culmination, the whole scheme was betrayed. There was an encounter with the police. Jotindranath Mukherjee and Chittapriya Ray Choudury were killed in the encounter with the police. It was the initiation of severe repression by the Govt. The whole movement collapsed in Bengal for some time.

1. The 'Bande Mataram', February 1910, Quoted in J.C. Ker op. cit. page 114

The other significance was that it became easier to build up detachments of revolutionaries in the territory of neutral countries and though these borders they wanted to enter the country and liberate it from the imperial clutches. The members of the Ghadar Party and other Indians settled in Burma, Thailand etc. were to get proper training for the armed revolution. But this scheme was also leaked out and the whole programme fixed out. The scheme to utilise Burma also failed.

Then there was a scheme to utilise the neutral Muslim countries and with their help attack India with an excuse of the defence of Islam in India. It was expected that the Indian Muslim will properly respond to the plan and join the militant group. The scheme was planned out so elaborately that even a provisional government was set up in Kabul in which Mahendra Pratap, Barakatullah Qvedullah were the participants. But this scheme also could not succeed. The saddest part of the story is that even the German Government started withdrawing its support and the whole movement ended in fiasco. Many revolutionaries were even arrested in by the Government of the United States. Ghadar Party and their associates had to face extremely difficult time.

Ghadar Party :

But apart from Berlin Committee, there was another plan too, which was also finalised with the help of the Ghadaritis. The gross dissatisfaction of the Indian emigrants was one helping factor in it. Ghadar Party was the outcome of this dissatisfaction only. In 1913, the Ghadar Party was established with the proclaimed purpose, "... we have to overthrow British rule in India. Peasants and workers who have been organised and made cautious are best suited for the work. Here we have ten to twelve thousand Punjabi Kisans, who are earning their bread by manual



**labour**

labour. We have excellent opportunity of organising them, and of carrying political propoganda among them in their own language. For this purpose we must organise a political party among them, which will work on democratic lines; and will keep away from all religious and communal matters. This party which is now being formed in America, will, as in 1857, work to unite all Indians to bring about a Ghadar in India against British rule. The aim is to replace it by an all Indian Government, like the Americans have in their country. Under such Government, there will be no discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, rich and poor, and all will be ensured democratic character of the party with a touch of socialism too as they did not believe in contradiction of the classes, they wanted to have complete equality, both on economic basis and on so called spiritual basis. The other leaders of the group were Keshiram, Bhai Parmanand, etc. Ram Chandra Peshawari was the Editor of their paper "Gadhar" which was mouthpiece of the armed revolt and its preparation.

After the outbreak of war, the Ghadar Party assumed a well organised form. It established contacts with the revolutionaries in Berlin, they participated in that scheme. They had properly trained up members and had a plan to enter India, with the cooperation of the revolutionaries, they would have organised an upsurge in which active troops and the masses were also to join. Thousands of their members started returning to India from that of Berlin Committee. The Sanfrancisco group disbanded itself upto certain extent and went to Germany (Europe) and through German help, went to Asian countries to organise revolt.

\* Lala Hardayal: Opening speech in the night of March 5, 1913. As described by Harnam Singh: A statement taken down in September, 1944 by an eye witness.

The other group came to India. They wanted to initiate the process of rebellion with the help of Indian soldiers. According to this scheme, the political work was in full swing in the days of the first world war. Through lectures, literature and discussions, the soldiers were attracted towards an armed uprising. The key centres were Ferozepore, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Banaras and Dinapore. They were confident enough that the soldiers from Meerut, Lucknow, Faizabad, Kanpur and Allahabad would follow the lead. The scheme was that the first outbreak would spark off in Punjab, then the revolutionaries and their comrades in the army would also follow the same. And then the rest was to follow the course. The scheme was that the banner of revolt would be lifted first in the regiments of Lahore and Ferozepore first and then the whole armed revolt would step in. But the unfortunate part of the incident is that "... due to the fact that the police were able to introduce to inner circle of the revolutionaries a spy named Kirpal Singh," the whole scheme leaked out. The revolutionaries realised this misfortune and hurriedly changed the date for the signal. Kirpal Singh informed even his change to the police. The failure of this Lahore rising broke down the whole scheme. A series of repression started by the Government after this. All important leaders ~~except~~ Rash Behari were arrested.

In this way, all the attempts of the Indian revolutionaries, though with most sincerity and devotion they worked, could not succeed in overthrowing the colonial yoke from the country.

The Drawbacks of the Movement Initiated by the National Revolutionaries.

In the period of 1905 to 1918 the attempts made by the revolutionaries had their own share in the history of the

National Liberation struggle. Therefore, to bring out the reasons of the weakness of this movement is extremely desirable.

First of all the organisation had to face the weakness in their own organisation. The societies which worked secretly for this cause had shared a common cause with the groups in the other parts of the country. But there was no proper coordination among them. Therefore, they could never become a vanguard force for the rebelling masses in the country. They just remained a scattered and hence negligible force in the Indian political scene. There was no revolutionary Party covering the whole country which could provide them a common forum and pose a challenge to the British Government. In Bengal, it was tried but subjective differences obstructed the final solution. This great weakness had caused other flaws also in this revolutionary trend. They neither had a source of financial help nor any resources to obtain arms. This technical ~~was~~ difficulty created great hazards in their way to secure arms. Even if they could secure it, they had to face another problem. Bad technique or lack of sufficient training made them incapable to handle these fire-arms. Many accidents also took place in the previous and ~~later~~ later period too.

7 To solve the problem of financial difficulty they tried to take up deceptions. But through adoption of these criminal ways, they gained unpopularity too. The upper section of the masses or the rich were terribly displeased with these actions. This could not have hindered them at all, if they had the grip of the poverty-stricken masses. The real Indian population was passive and indifferent to all these waves of the movement. The revolutionaries had anticipated by this time that the mass support was the greatest weapon they could have against the

Britishers. But the realisation was vague indeed. They had an understanding that the masses would join the movement spontaneously when the outbreak of the armed revolt would materialise. In the later period, they realised this gravest weakness of their organisation.

Since the revolutionaries had a vague notion of the urgency of the need of mass support they started their activity under the garb of religion. To establish contact with the conservative, God-fearing masses, the revolutionaries painted their ideal in the deep colours of spiritualism.\* But consequently it led to estrangement with the other communities of the country. The image of Bhovani Mandir did not have any emotional support in the Muslim masses. The ganapati Utsav or the cult of Shivaji alienated them all the more. Though this mistake was realised later in 1908-9 and this cult was eliminated, but by this time great damage was already done and the imperialist Government had golden opportunity to utilise this rift.

#### Khalifat Movement.

Not only Hindu cult but Muslim revolutionaries also committed the same mistake; the Pan Islamic Banner of Khalifat Movement isolated them from the vast masses of the Hindu community. In the later period after 1912, there was some coordination, which was vague indeed.

The revolutionaries did not have a complete programme of their own. With vague ideal of liberty, freedom and democratic Government, they wanted to initiate people for the cause of liberation. But without a motive force to appeal to poverty-stricken workers and peasantry, for whom the dream of freedom and democracy did not mean anything, the revolt for Independence

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\*Speech of Hardayal, at the time of the formation of "Ghadar Party".

for which the revolutionaries claimed to fight.

This weakness of the movement came as an outcome of a limited goal. The martyrdom of the revolutionaries and the heroic actions of political assassinations had sympathetic response in the masses. But this sympathy was never scientifically channelised towards the participation in the revolution. The half-conceived ideal of democracy and socialism\*, the vague process of the different stages of revolution and limitations of the ultimate goal hindered the movement fatally despite their most sincere desire to overthrow the colonial yoke. The other difficulty for the revolutionaries was the process of underground organisation. The brutal repression of the Government forced them to work underground which prohibited mass contacts. The idea of armed revolution, which was later based mainly on the native soldiers of the Army was two-fold and had a programme to gain mass support too. But the preference was on the soldiers. Hence, when the efforts could not gain success, the revolutionaries could not depend on the masses, but they had to seek help from abroad.

This process, apart from the mistakes committed by the revolutionaries, suffered from the suppressive policies of the Government too. The most important reason of their weakness and the zig-zag process of the movement is this only.

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\*Speech by Hardeyal, at the time of the formation of "Ghadar Party". He claimed to fight for a society, which was free from contradiction of the classes, religion and caste. Again Shupendgenath Dutt also described the goal of a society which had, economic religious and inner freedom in "Aarak-Ratit."

### The strength of the Movement.

The revolutionaries, had their own role in the struggle for Indian independence. The most radical wing of the liberation movement which never hesitated to take up fatal plans to achieve success. They were the most uncompromising fighters. Even the extremists abandoned their demand of complete Swaraj at a time, but the revolutionaries did not surrender. They sacrificed their lives, suffered endlessly in course of struggle without any desire for personal gain. They could succeed to have an active support from the masses but their martyrdom and the heroic actions gained popular support and deep sympathy from the masses.

They had a vague notion of a democratic Government and no ✓ scheme for socio-economic reform of social reconstruction. Yet they cherished a dream which was of a new society free from the imperial yoke, exploitation of the upper section of the society. This conviction was in itself a motive force which enforced the revolutionary zeal in them.

The revolutionaries never allowed a setback to affect their movement. At times, when the series of oppressive policies of even the national movement, the revolutionaries do not seem to have been demoralised.

✓ The ideas of secularism and socialism were infused in the trend inside the country from the revolutionaries abroad. The experiences of the democratic and socialistic movements in Europe had a deep influence in their scheme of solving though the understanding <sup>of</sup> ~~was~~ ~~vague~~ the problem of Indian democratic Government. <sup>was vague</sup> They did not realise the existence of class ✓ contradiction, they never worked directly for the class interest of the starving working people in villages and in cities, \*... still they represented the most progressive section in the trend of national liberation movement, as they had a consistent

~~(C. S. Chatterjee, Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 151)~~

spirit to fight against colonialism, to establish a democratic independent state, without poverty, without exploitation, as Prof. Raikov has observed. Therefore, despite their failure, they did make a significant contribution, which deserves a "... determined support".

CHAPTER -III

The Militant Awakening Before  
and after the non-cooperation  
Movement : ( 1919 - 1930 )



The Militant Awakening Before and After  
The Non-Cooperation Movement : (1919-1930)

⊗ Rowlatt Act or the Revolutionary and Anarchical Crimes Act was passed in March 1919, provoking a storm of criticism even among the liberal Indian Nationalists, as the terrorist movement was already crushed in the series<sup>e</sup> of trials and the preventive detention under the Defence of India Act. It was obvious that the Rowlatt Act was not passed merely to suppress the terrorist movement, but they had a realization after a more subjective evaluation of this revolutionary threat to the British imperialism, that there was a possibility of great disorder after the trend would be coupled with Communism... "There are dangers that justify this emergent and exceptional power at a period of the close of the war, with all the difficulties of peace, and when Bolshovism, even though its attractions are waning, is still a force to be reckoned with". \*

But in real sense the Rowlatt Act was a political blunder. The terrorist groups did not have any roots left. But through this act a coordination emerged with the National Liberation Movement for them. Even the moderates got infuriated at this cruel Act and under the leadership of Gandhiji, a "Hartal" was organised. Through this event Gandhiji emerged as a national leader and later led the non-cooperation movement also.

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\* 116.H.C. Deb. 55 Col. 632. Quoted in David M. Laushey,  
Bengal Terrorism and Marxist left, Calcutta 1975. P. 18

## The changing attitude of the Government

It was at this time, a major shift in the Governmental apparatus came. Indians were promised to be given more association in the power aiming at complete self-government within the Empire. But in fact these reforms decided the functioning of Central Government and the provincial Government. The provincial government was decided more into transferred subjects were in the hands of the Indian Muslims. The legislative councils of the centre and provinces were given to popularly elected Indian majority. To prevent a deadlock between the legislatures and the administration concerning the transferred subjects, the governors were entrusted with powers in the absence of any Indian Minister. Again these governors had the power to legislate by ordinance which were valid for six months and they had the right to pass the Bill without any acceptance from the popular assemblies.

This was the most defective provision in these reforms which infuriated even the moderates. But the most disastrous event was perhaps Jallianwallabagh massacre in Amritsar on April 13, 1919. Demonstrations were being led by support of Gandhiji. In series to these events, a meeting was arranged in Jallianwallabagh despite prohibiting orders. General Dyer, with an armed detachment of troops attacked these innocent people. Estimation of the killed was around one thousand. But shockingly enough the Indian Moderates waited for the reaction of the Government. When obviously there remained no chance of compromise about the reforms the total refusal proposals came. Within one year the movement of non-cooperation was unleashed. It was at this moment that under the banner of Pan-Islamism<sup>m</sup>, the Muslims also joined this protest against British atrocities in Turkey after her defeat in the first world war.

National Revolutionaries and the Congress

With the proclamation of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, simultaneously most of the revolutionaries were released by virtue of Royal Amnesty. The main participants coming out of jail were in disarray. Instead of resuming their own terrorist activity, some of them joined the non-cooperation movement. In this group mainly 'Yugantar' group was more active since C.R. Das had an influence on them. As the Bengal intelligence also brings out, C.R. Das had an understanding with the revolutionary group that the terrorists would give him the political support in the election followed later, and "... the headquarters of both parties were at one and the same place."

Anushilan in contrast started a pamphlet which came out in a series in "Hak-Katha". Anushilan was very categorical in its opposition to the Congress policies. In this atmosphere of the country the revolutionary groups had various developments to observe. To reorganise their scattered groups, they wanted to recruit new cadres from this new wave of struggle. They were interested in the movement of Gandhi also. They wanted to observe the outcome of this novel process. Hence in the period of 1920-22, no major upsurge had taken place.

The peaceful process of the non-cooperational movement could not be maintained till the end. There was an outburst of violence as the peaceful process had to meet the sparks of rebellion. IN UP the tragic incident of Chauri Chaura had taken place.

As a result the non-violent process failed and Gandhiji called off the whole movement. This withdrawal of the movement caused a serious dissatisfaction among the revolutionaries. Especially the younger generation was in a confused and bitter state. It was this time

\*Bengal Secretariat 'Historical Note on Proposals Made from Time to Time for Dealing with the Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement and its Members in Bengal,' Home political, file NO. 4/41, 1932 ~~Quoted in~~ ~~Source~~ U. ~~Source~~, ~~page~~ 46.

that the revolutionary group realised the need of a programme of their own. From the militant left wing of the nationalist movement, new cadres had joined the revolutionary trend. From the outset they had a dim idea that the struggle for independence was to be a revolution not only to overthrow foreign imperial yoke, which will be for the achievement of National independence, but to achieve an independent national state ~~along which will be~~ <sup>that is</sup> a federation of republics and in which princely states would have no place, again, the socio-economic demands of the broad-masses will be realised, so that the toiling peasantry get their land for <sup>c</sup>village, without any feudal exploitation and that the toiler and worker is ensured his democratic right to organise and unite in defence of his living standards, against the attacks and exploitation by imperialists, capitalists, and other vested interests.

Emergence of a New Trend

After amnesty, the revolutionary group which came out of jail and the new cadres who joined the group fresh, had undergone a process in which the old ideas became of no use. This new development came with the impact of two great ~~as~~ events. One was the Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the other was the rise of the ideas of workers and peasants movement. ~~and~~ Its initial but practical steps, ~~which~~ were, although, promptly sought to be crushed by the British rulers in Peshawar Conspiracy Case (1922-23) and Kappur Conspiracy Case (1924 March-April).

It was at this time when a fresh course of action was launched by the revolutionaries in Bengal. The Bengal press started bringing out propaganda leaflets. Nationalist newspaper and revolutionary journals were published. The new consciousness of the revolutionaries is to be observed <sup>through</sup> with the attention the government of Bengal)

with the <sup>resist certain</sup> aspects of this movement. The first <sup>steps of attention</sup> ~~paper~~, which brought a paper under prohibition was that it professed to deal in a detached and scientific manner with various methods of the use of forces.\* The foreseeing goal of revolution was gaining now new dimensions for the revolutionary group and the British Government was concerned not about the revival of this trend, but for this <sup>unique</sup> dimension. It was a time when Communist <sup>G</sup> group was also formed in the country, who brought their manifesto <sup>as early as</sup> ~~even~~ to the Gaya Session of the Congress in 1923. The general channel of the national liberation movement led by the Congress had a mass support and hence the other organisations also wanted to have advantage of it. Hence the terrorist organisations had also increasing association with the Congress, mainly in Bengal. The "Swaraj Party" which came out with C. R. Das in the Congress session of 1923 had popular support of these revolutionaries also. It was the predict of these revolutionaries only that Swaraj Party and C. R. Das could win the legislative council election in Bengal in 1923. They visualised this as the first step to inspire confidence in the mass base. They wanted to prove to the Indian Masses that the oppressors were not unconquerable. They had another dream too. They visualised that the next step would be to create armed band of revolutionaries for partisan attacks on arsenal and to capture more arms\* to win over the units of the enemy army and to create a demoralising effect on the Indian soldiers..... "A general survey of the condition shows that the cult had many marked waves <sup>of</sup> intensity, which were fostered by political conditions in the country and in turn subdued by a strong action on the part of the authorities. " 3

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\* Among these journal and newspapers cited by the government of Bengal were the following: Narain Sankha, Dhumketu, Atma Shakti, Probitak, Nav Sangha, Bijli, Banga Bani, Sarathi, Prabashi, Prabhati, Tarun, Muktikam and Sonar Bharat.

\*\* Chittagong Armoury Raid  
3. Government of India, Home Department, The Intelligence Bureau, 1935  
~~consult Dr. ... ..~~

While the revolutionary group of "Yugantar" had contacts with the Congress, and on other side they were busy with their political assassinations and dacoities, the Anushilan group was forming an armed detachment in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab "the Hindustan Republican Association". The most important event was the assassination of Mr. E. Day by Gopi Mohan Saha in 1924. Mr. Day was mistaken for Charles Tegart which was later confused by Gopi Mohan Saha himself. This assassination was not committed in a complete isolation. When Gopi Mohan was convicted and was given the capital punishment, C.R. Das tried to pass a resolution of condolence in the Congress session. But it initiated a controversy in which the supporters of the resolution left the hall and under the leadership of Gandhi the resolution was voted against by the opponents. Though the resolution could not succeed but it proved the degrees of support the revolutionaries had in the Congress itself.

By this time the revolutionaries had captured the executive committees of many district councils of the Congress. The Swarajists, who were pro-Congress and who wanted to take part in the legislation and initiate the disaster from within were mostly from the revolutionary group. This "Yugantar" and the Swarajists came closer to each other.\*

The revolutionaries had close association with the corporation also in Calcutta when the Mayor was to be the speaker in the corporation council. C. R. Das was promptly elected its first mayor in 1923 itself. The chosen chief executive officer was Subhash Chandra Bose. Das and Bose helped the revolutionaries to penetrate in the corporation. Thus at every level in the Congress.

\* The Bengal Criminal Investigation Dept. reported that by 1924, 28 ex-detenu-  
sus or political ex-councils were office bearers of the Beng. Prov. Cong. Com.  
and 21 revolutionaries or sympathisers were elected to the AICC (Ray, "Briefnote  
on the alliance of the Congress with terrorism in Bengal" Home Political file  
no. 4/21, 1932.)

organisation in Bengal the revolutionaries had their own hold. This popular participation in the Congress aims at the point that the revolutionary wing was preparing on a larger scale. The preventive arrests of Swarajists was not to crush the Congress movement, but to nip the rising wide<sup>s</sup>pread upsurge organised by the terrorists.

In India, it was the phase of countrywide ill<sup>e</sup>teracy, with prevalence of religion and the ideological and orga<sup>n</sup>isational strength was a lso completely absent from the masses. The militant revolutionaries in fact represented the most radical wing of the liberation movement, who ~~believed~~ believed mainly in the armed uprising to overthrow the colonial yoke. But "the national revolutiona<sup>r</sup>ies took the stand of bourgeois nationalism; They did not recognise the existence of class<sup>e</sup> contradiction in the India<sup>n</sup> Society, nor did they differentiate the class interest of the working people from the general one."

#### The Search for Alternatives

The means they adopted to comm<sup>e</sup>nce ahead where the ~~unstable~~ underground organisations, uniting radical intellectuals and students also. This section of the Society, which mainly comes from the urban social base, cannot represent the rural poor, who actually constitutes the Indian<sup>e</sup> Society. Therefore the unstable material and social position of this group, with added quality of inconsistent, → P.T.O

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\* Raikov Alexi, "Indian National Revolutionaries and Marxism," Social Sciences, USSR Academy of Sciences, No.4 1972. pp.135.

political ideal provided them an uncertain background in the <sup>in</sup> mainstream of the nationalist movement. Especially in this period in their constant search for alternatives, they shifted their stand with many political shades. It was a time when the country was in a ferment. The question of the unity of the whole nation was proving itself contradictory to the situation as the means of implementation was rather vague and some time confusing also. The non-violent ideals of Gandhiji were proving themselves to be inadequate for the situation. At this stage, the personal~~al~~ experience and the objective situation led these revolutionaries towards disillusionment that freedom, equality and fraternity cannot be attained through this process of revolution. They had disappointment in their participation <sup>with</sup> in the Swarajists. They were disappointed on their own conspirational<sup>or a</sup> organisation. They had a vague notion that without a long sustained work among the masses, no revolution can be carried out, because armed uprising of the masses <sup>only</sup> can lead to revolution. These factors led them to think in terms of developing a democratic programme, to provide socio-economic reforms. It was at this time the process of search had taken a concrete shape. As in Bengal the revolutionary trend was deeply affected by the suppressive policies of the Government, the revolutionaries formed their groups outside Bengal. The most famous group was <sup>✓</sup>Hindustan Republican Army. As the name has itself the connotation of a democratic set up, the organisation had its own programme too. The initial impetus was provided by the anushilan group of Bengal, though later a rift emerged between the leader of <sup>✓</sup>HRA Shadindranath Sanyal



and the leader of Anushilan in Bengal Narendra Sen. This group had a majority of the fresh cadre coming out of non-cooperation movement and the group disillusioned from the Anushilan group of older members. The programme of the organisation was....."the immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a feudal republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution...."

"...this revolutionary movement is the manifestation of the new life that has taken birth in the nation....to denounce it is to denounce one's own understanding...".\* It was obvious that the character of this struggle was yet to be substantiated with the objective prerequisite that is <sup>the</sup> role of the mass movement. They had to seek satisfaction only in individual armed action as was advocated by Sachindranath Sanyal, the leader of H.R.A. The another aspect of this organisation was that they wanted to seek support from abroad. The pamphlet "Revolutionary" brought out by Sachindranath advocated that the organisation was indebted to Soviet Union as the revolution in Russia, the socialist reconstruction in the Soviet Union under the dictatorship of the workingclass, all these events were opening new horizons of socialism, its ideas and principles to these revolutionary youth. Even one resolution of the H.R.A. had explained as its basis the preaching of "...social revolutionary ideas and communistic principles."<sup>2</sup>

\*\* The group of H.R.A. had a <sup>e</sup>drum to establish a democratic state first, as the colonial yoke was intolerable —>

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(\* "The Revolutionary": An organ of the Revolutionary Party of India, India. 1 January 1925. Vol. I.No.I Page.2. (Ajay Bhawan),

<sup>2</sup>\*\*Government of Bengal, ma morandum on the History of terrorism in Bengal, 1905, to 1933, page 11.

for them. They wanted to initiate the process of armed rebellion to launch an anti-imperialist struggle, ~~though they had a confused under-struggle~~, though they had a confused understanding of socio-economic reconstruction. Hence they wanted to establishment a democratic set up, with a socialist structure. Therefore advocating the principles of communism in the programme did not add a scientific ideal of socialism in the organisation. The first organiser of H.R.A. Jogeshchandra Chatterjee was deeply influenced by the ideals of scientific socialism as he studied a lot about it while in prison. But it would be the gravest mistake to consider him a Marxist, as he never expressed any grip over the other aspect of socialism, except the socio-economic principles. Same was the situation with Suchindranath Sanyal. In his autobiography "Bandi Jiwan" he has referred his contacts with some communists who had failed to convert him completely. He was impressed by Bukharin and studied some works of Lenin also. But since he was too baffled at the progress of the western capitalist countries, he could never swallow the programme of the dictatorship of the proleteriat.<sup>(1)</sup> That is why he even refused to include the word "Communist" or "Socialist" in the name of the organisation. However the revolutionary trend of H.R.A. was the first to initiate the conversion of terrorism to communism. The other part of the programme <sup>2</sup> was explained by Shri ~~-----~~ Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee as following - P.T.O

1. Sachindranath Sanyal was influenced with the glorious past of the Hindu Religion also and he believed in Vedanta. He could never overcome his faith in God, as he himself confused in his 'Bandi Jivan'
2. Birley to the secretary to the Government of India, Activities of the Revolutionaries in Bengal from the 1st. September 1924 to the 31st. March, 1925. Home Political, File no. 253, 1925 the major programme of the H.R.A. in U.P. was explained by Jogeshchandra Chatterjee, in October, 1924.

☐ In every province there will be a vernacular and English newspaper, with an object to criticize continuously the criminal investigation department as to gain <sup>The sympathy of the masses. In fact the non co-operation</sup> the movement and the attitude of different groups towards it brought a split among the Bengal revolutionaries, both from Anushilan and Yuganter. (1) Chhittagong group of Yugantar, led by Surya Sen had clearly independent programme from the established organisation of Yuganter. It was also in contact with other groups, which came off from Anushilan. One was the group led by Nalini Dutt in Dacca and this controversy emerged because of the agent sent by M.N.Roy. Nalini Gupta, who was a proclaimed Marxist, and came here with a purpose to convert some revolutionaries into Communist, <sup>and</sup> gained popularity in the group as he knew the Science of bomb-making. This popularity created a contradiction among the leaders of the group and at last Nalini Dutt came off. In fact two more groups, led by Charu Bikash Dutt came off, from Anushilan. H.R.A. 2 claimed itself free from Anushilan and in fact Sanyal was making efforts to attract the young general~~s~~ from the older organisations of Bengal. His efforts echoed with his arrest in 1925. After the main leaders

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1. At this time the new groups working were Shree Sangha, Bengal volunteers, led by Hemchandra Ghosh and the HSRA, a revolutionary transformation, emerging out of the ruins of H.R.A. In Anushilan also there were two refractory groups, one led by Nalini Dutt, Dacca and the other lead by Charu Bikash Dutt of Chattagong.

2. The major programme of this H.R.A. group finalised by Jogeshchandra Chatterjee, in October, 1925. was following:

A. To have a Vernacular and English newspaper in every state which should continuously criticize the criminal investigation department. It would arouse the sympathy of the vast masses of India. The criminal investigation department had their own intelligence also. The revolutionaries were to search for them and kill them.

B. To collect fund and arms.

C. To send the selected men abroad to acquire knowledge about naval, military and aerial tactics.

D. The last one was to seek support from the Soviet Union financial and other helps, through M.N.Roy. These revolutionaries had no idea about the confused working and the mistakes in that process committed by M.N.Roy.

were put in jail by 1925, the organisation was facing great difficulty in impelmenting its plan to march forward. The leaders of the group, who had ~~taken~~ taken over the responsibility of the party decided to concentrate on robbing the Government money. An extremely ambitious plan was finalised by the nine members of the party. It was to rob Government money from a train near ~~Kakoi~~ Kakoi in the United Provinces. On August 9, 1925, the dacoity was completed under the leadership of Ram Prasad Bismil. But this daring adventure and the subsequent police investigation broke down the whole organisation. Chandrashekhara Azad, Ashfaqulla and Sachindranath Bakshi, who participated in this action fled away, though later the last two were caught. Ram Prasad Bismil and other three were hanged. Sachindra Nath Sanyal was sent for transportation of life and Hogesh Chatterjee received extra ten years of imprisonment.

However, Chandrashekhara Azad and Bhagat Singh could not be arrested. The other group, which was quite active in Bengal, the New Violence Party of Bengal, as Government named them, <sup>who</sup> and did not emphasise much on robbery, also came under the observation of police. In November, ~~xxxx~~ 1925, there was a raid in the bomb-factory of Da Kshineswar. Eleven members of the party were arrested.

Therefore in Bengal and united province, there was a stunning silence after these arrests. The situation had become so outwardly quite that the Government wanted to release the prisoners, though the revolutionaries, who escaped arrest were quite active. Two organisations came up in Bengal. That was Shree Sangh and Bengal Volunteers. Under the leadership of Hemchandra Ghosh the group of Bengal volunteers came up breaking off from the Anushilan Group. They had clear links with Yugantar. But on very personal grounds

the group of Shri Sangh came out of B.V.Group, <sup>under</sup> the leadership of Anil Roy and Leela Nag. One more prominent member of Shri Sangh was Bupendra Rakshit Roy who brought out 'Nationa' as the mouthpiece of their organisation. All this splitting and breaking shows the organisational ferment of these groups in this period. The old Guard leadership was coming to an end and the <sup>major</sup> ~~kaner~~ trends developing in the revolutionary movement intensified the zeal of the participants. It was at this period, the different scattered groups in Bengal wanted to have a common front. The efforts were made several times but failed. Yugantar remained a federation of group which were self-sufficient. The leadership which was transferred to Yatindrantha after Shri Aurobindo, was later handed over to Pragganand. These groups had close relations with each other, but not on principles. That is the reason why after the Chittagong armoury raid, the big five leaders of the group decided to act independently under the banner of Indian Republican Army.

Apart from these groups, there was a revolutionary change in the programme too. The association with Congress Swaraj Party was <sup>a</sup> ~~knew~~ dimension in the <sup>h</sup> ~~programme~~ of the revolutionary thinking itself. But after 1924, when C.R.Das passed away and later Subhash Chandra Bose was sent for exile, the successors of both the groups realised that they were interdependent.

The revolutionary group needed financial help and the Swarajists wanted a strong support at election times. The "Karmi-Sangh" group (1) which was active with the Congress had developed a bitter antagonism with the Muslims. But the leaders of the Congress realised that without <sup>any</sup> help from Karmi-Sangh, to remain in power was impossible. The plight of Sasmal was there who was bolted out from the political scene of Bengal, as he opposed the Karmi-Sangh, G.M. Sengupta who succeeded Subhash Bose realised this difficulty and supported them. Later when Subhash Bose was realised, he made them agree to work together in the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

In Karmi Sangh, some members of Anushilan were also included and upto certain extent both the groups of Anushilan and Yugantar were coordinating with each other. As Jadu Gopal Mukherjee has pointed out that from jail only these two groups were making efforts to combine together. Just after the release of Jadu Gopal these two groups had a meeting in 1927. Jadu Gopal Mukherjee, Bhupati Mazumdar and <sup>a</sup>Menoranjan Gupta represented the Yugantar Group and Pratul Ganguly and Rabisen had Anushilan. Other small groups were also present. (2) The leaders decided to create a common platform together with Congress demanding complete independence. They <sup>had</sup> draw up plans for the India Independence League, for which Subhash Chandra Bose was their spokesman on all India level.

1. The terrorist group, representing the Yugantar Group inside the Congress. They were known by this name.
2. These other small groups were affiliated to Yugantar only represented by Bipin Ganguly, Girin Mukherjee, Purna Das.

However after much controversy the plans and programme were finalised for the group at least one year before the all Party Conference in Lucknow.

The main forces behind this programme was an urge to have a combined platform for the revolutionary process and together with its cooperation with the mainstream of the National Liberation Movement. The two other reasons were firstly the impact of Hindu glory and the Muslim communalism in Bengal. The old guards of the Party were deeply worried about this development. The other one was the growing influence of Marxism on the young members of the party.

On the otherhand the internal situation of the country was also not of a quite atmosphere. There was a break in the stagnant silence. The great strike of Bombay workers led by Girni Kamgar Union, strike struggle in Calcutta and Cawnpore were the sparks which attracted universal attention. It had a hammering effect on the revolutionaries. They were shaken to the roots with these succeeding events, though they could hardly realise the significance of it.

Mass Awakening Against the Ruling Imperialism and the Role of the National Revolutionaries.

It was at this moment the another series of reaction emerges in the country. The Rowlett Act was a political blunder committed by the British Government. But Simon Commission of 1927 was even greater mistake which helped to create a complete unity in the forces fighting for independence. Though this unity had a negative character, but from the blazing movement of the terrorists

to constitutional moderates, all were together in opposition to it. It was at that time when Gandhians had no unity with the new left wing of the Congress led by Subhash Bose and Nehru. <sup>Even</sup> Then Nehru and Bose <sup>cliffed with each other</sup> themselves and on the revolutionary side between Anushilan <sup>who were also cliffing.</sup> and Yugantar. But when Simon Commission arrived here, a nationwide hartal was organised against it. The Congress had taken the decision to oppose the Commission and with the instigation of the revolutionaries a goal of complete independence was proclaimed as aim of the Congress. They organised a working Committee also to contact other parties to draw up a draft constitution of the future independent India.<sup>1</sup> But later the draft presented by the Committee under the leadership of Motilal Nehru provided only the demand of dominion status. Nehru and Bose who were against this proposal voiced their <sup>disagreement</sup> disapproval and finalised the programme of India Independence League which was earlier planned out by the revolutionaries of Bengal.

#### The Impact of the Working Class Movement in the Country.

Precisely in the tense atmosphere of the country, a wave of inconcilable struggle was rising against imperialism, different groups were involved in this unrest but in real senses, there was a tide of strikes and demonstrations, in which the poverty stricken masses of India, the working class played a vanguard role which was really an open challenge for the Congress leadership and the reformist trade union leadership. As ~~xxx~~ Bombay Chronicle, reflected, "... socialism is in the air, ... for months past. Socialist principles have been preached in India at various conferences especially those of peasants and workers" <sup>2</sup>

1. This Independence League was not organised till the all parties conference had taken place in Lucknow, 1928. Bose never mentioned the fact that the idea originally emerged from the National-----x.



Various youth leagues were also sprouting up making their centre in Bombay. But the <sup>the</sup> ~~most important~~ was the final goundup of the leaders of this movement in March 1919. By this time the Revolutionary <sup>had</sup> had close contacts with the working class movement ... " there has been a tremendous strengthening of the revolutionary upsurge of the toiling masses during the recent years. The working class movement has grown in strength and consciousness and has begun to come out as in independent political force. There has been a tremendous growth in the discontent of the middle class which found its expression in the spread of the terrorist movement. <sup>1</sup> These revolutionaries considered that the imperialist tyranny had gripped the masses in fear and the opportunist section of the society was taking advantage of constitutional illusion, and to smash it, they planned a series of blows on appropriate points and occasions, against the enemy, which would also break the imposed calmness. A mass movement would be unleashed, and there by <sup>upnake</sup> inaugurate a fresh phase of open revolutionary activity. The former members of H.R.A. met in Delhi on September 8 and 9, 1928 to organise a revolutionary movement in North India. Punjab, Bihar and U.P. were also represented. The absence of Bengal, that too from Anushilan was conspicuous for the occasion. Actually the old guards of Anushilan, who once initiated the H.R.A. in Northern India and now were <sup>re</sup> shiykiag, had revised.

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\* revolutionaries.

1. Extracts from an unpublished document, C.P.I. 1931  
Ajoy Bhawan Archives.

the principles of their organisation. The old leaders of the Samiti, with their much <sup>desired</sup> directed aim of complete independence and programme for that, were now inert for the young generation. In fact the confused leadership of Anushilan and the revolutionary group of North India had some disagreement between them since the New Programme of the new organisation was basically different from the forum. H.S.R.A., under the leadership of Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad and few others <sup>was</sup> started with clear distinction <sup>the programme. It abstained from</sup> from general dacoity and concentrated on <sup>1/2</sup> robbing banks, post office, Government offices etc. Again the party was formed under the ideal of democratic centralism. Bhagat Singh, who had a vague notion of democratic centralism wanted the party to function in accordance with the Communist Party <sup>-functioning and</sup> the leadership was to be divided among different leaders, it would not be the personification of one leader. Still Chandrashekhar Azad was made the commander in-chief of this army. Again H.S.R.A. had no confidence in murdering a few police officials or some suspected ex-revolutionary. The provincial unit was entitled to take any action without the prior approval of the centre. Bhagat Singh and Vijoy Kumar were selected as coordinating body between the units of the <sup>provinces</sup> and the centre.

In fact the whole movement was led by not so much with clarity of reasoning, but with force, passion and earnestness. The first action, proposed by the revolutionaries of the H.S.R.A. was to oppose the Simon Commission and to commit an act of terror. In the mean time in Lahore a demonstration was arranged to oppose Simon. One <sup>prominent leader</sup> of the Extremists <sup>in</sup> of the National leadership, Lala Lajpat ~~Rai~~ Rai, headed the procession. Consequently the procession had to face Lathi charge in which Lala Lajpat Rai

received fatal injuries. Later he succumbed to the injuries. H.S.R.A. wanted to avenge it. A carefully planned out assassination was committed in December 17, 1928, and Mr Saunders was killed in action in which Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and two other members of the H.S.R.A. participated. After the incident a leaflet was issued by Balraj which was actually the code name of Sachindranath Sanyal and then Azad. This incident was a direct blow on the British Imperialism in this phase of the terrorist action.

Just after this, the period of a new transformation comes. The Nehru Report, which was not acceptable for the left wing of the Congress, was agreed upon in Calcutta with a condition that the British refusal of the ~~same or their acceptance~~ <sup>same or their acceptance</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> within year would decide the course of action. This compromise between the two wings was a significant event for the terrorists also. Subhash Chandra who was a leader of the revolutionary group also gave a call for 2,000 volunteers who were to be trained up. The real composition of the Congress volunteers was that almost all terrorist groups had their representation in it. Jatin Das, who used <sup>to</sup> the manufacture bombs for the H.S.R.A. group was posted here as Major. It was this volunteer group only, which worked to form a common form for both Yugantar and Anushilan group.

In this period, the Bengal group remained outwardely quite, quiet but other groups were quite active. An attempt on the life of the Viceroy Irwin was made by H.S.R.A. group. Just after this, in the Lahore Session of the Congress, when the one-year time limit was waning, Gandhiji condemned this terrorist act of the revolutionaries. He wrote an article in "Young India" "The <sup>C</sup>Guilt of Bomb", which was promptly replied by the revolutionaries, in their "Philosophy of Bomb.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROCESS OF IDEOLOGICAL  
CULMINATION AND CONVERSION IN  
DIFFERENT TRENDS.

THE PROCESS OF IDEOLOGICAL CULMINATION  
AND CONVERSION IN DIFFERENT TRENDS.

In fact it was the period when the ideological evolution of the revolutionaries was in the process. Conflicts over the policies and the formation of new policies were carrying forward the ideal towards new level of thinking. The solution of the basic question ".... In what channels and by what means the mass movement unleashed by terror is to be directed? What sort of Government would replace British rule?"<sup>1</sup> was still unreplied. Hence the anger, hatred and frustration smothered the way to scientific thinking. They felt affinity with the Communists, in their hatred for imperialisms, in their opposition to constitutionalism, in their striving for socialism, but till now they did not consider the communists as revolutionist, and<sup>2</sup> for them revolution primarily meant armed action and communists considered armed action to be harmful to the mass movement. They adopted socialism as their goal..." socialism for us was An ideal, the principle to guide us to rebuild the society after the capture of power...."<sup>2</sup> \*\* But this turn did not have the connotation of scientific socialism. Instead, the goal was adopted in the means to attain the ideal. A vague realization was creeping in the lack of faith in the conspirational organisations and a consistent search for alternative. This was a time when the revolutionaries had developed close contacts also with the communists...<sup>3</sup> all know us as revolutionaries and we had close association with them through open and secret working"<sup>3</sup> But as the social structure of the Indian society was developing very slowly and the revolutionaries mostly <sup>were</sup> came from the middle strata of the society the ideological evolution of these revolutionary groups was also very slow. Now in these changed circumstances of disillusionment, the trips made to Soviet Union did not aim at obtaining money and arms to fight the

imperialists... They wanted to learn the process of the socialist reconstruction. As an old revolutionary recalls now<sup>1</sup>, the party grasped the significance of the socialist revolution and decided that as a first step responsible comrades should be sent to the Soviet Union. The idea was that more and more Comrades should have the understanding of the socialist theories propounded by Marx and Lenin<sup>2</sup>. In fact it was only after 1920 that Marxist influence appeared in this militant group. The initial impact was made by the Russian revolution and its literature. A very significant fact in this connection is that the building up the Communist Party in India, M.N. Roy, who had been a member of the terrorist group, had a great share. One more fact is to be observed that the movement initiated by M.N. Roy had no direct contact with the terrorist movement, but it was not completely untouched by these revolutionary ideals, It was a period of transition, in which every phase had a set of ideology which was upholding itself for perfection. "In this transition, one of the most prominent <sup>head</sup> for us was scientific socialism."<sup>2</sup> The general atmosphere of the country was in the advent of working class movement. The "general industrial unrest"<sup>3</sup> had increased considerably. Between 1928-29, two hundred strikes were organised in which thirty one million working days were the example of net loss to the authorities."<sup>4</sup> Communists were of course heavily involved in these activities. The formation of worker's and

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 1. In a personal interview with Dharani Goswami, an ex-linelist.  
 2. \* Ajoy Ghosh. Bhasat Singh and his comrades. Op.cit. page 16  
 3. \*\*Ibid. page 17  
 4. £ New Age, Nov.5, 1967 p.15.

peasants' party, <sup>T</sup>he organisation of Socialist Youth League, a Young Comrades' League and lastly the Samyraj Party\* were the organisations sprouting up all over the country. Upto this time the terrorists did not pay much attention to the working class, now they realised their mistake. In this process of realisation, the accumulated reasons of this frustration were mainly, dissatisfaction with the old leadership and the lack of mass contact. The stream of literature which used to flow in underground were also helping to open new venues.

In response to this seething <sup>e</sup>fermentation, the Government of India replied with smashing blows. They brought out two bills. First was to empower the Government to arrest or deport the foreign communists, The other was really a hammering one. This was called Trade Disputers Bill. It's purpose was to limit the rights of labourer to strike. This whole episode reflected in the terrorist movement also. For them, it was an attack against a common cause, against a movement, for which they had deep love and sympathy. They resolved to express their dissatisfaction in their own way which was to give a smashing blow to the imperialist policy towards the growth of constitutional illusions and..." unleashing terror against the people of the other."\*

And as soon as trade dispute bill was passed, which was a blow to the working class movement, a bomb blasted in the Central Assembly. The glaring statement, admitting the responsibility and explaining the cause, once again, revealed the unprecedented terrorism of these revolutionary youth, though with a vague sense of realisation for the cause..." If no heed was paid to our warning, a fierce

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\* Ajoy Ghosh, "Bhagat Singh & his comrades." Ajoy Ghosh, Articles and Speeches, Moscow, 1962. pp. 18

battle will ensure against today's policy of the Government, the policy that is acting like a stumbling block, will be destroyed so that the way for revolution is paved by establishing the rule of the proletariat and the peasant." \*

Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were the heroes of the action and we <sup>ve</sup> arrested <sup>Together</sup> with this, a bomb-factory was discovered in Lahore, which led to the arrests of Sakhdeo, Kishorilal and others. And then followed a <sup>s</sup>eries of arrests, confessions, then arrest and again confession. The shattering effect of these incidents was immense. Disappointment was extreme when ever the members of the Central Committee betrayed. This time again, though the staunch belief in the ideology was not broken, a keen conflict was emerging sharply. It was in this atmosphere that the Manifesto of the Communist Party on Individual Terrorism, with special reference to the Lahore Conspiracy Case, came out. It was sent by the famous prisoners of the Meerut Conspiracy Case \*\* to the Lahore prisoners. Showing deep admiration and concern for the heroic deeds of these revolutionaries but in very categorical terms pointing also towards the mistaken ideas, the communists said\*.... we as Communists, have never made any secret of our strong opposition to the methods of individual terrorism.. We are convinced that socialism and an eventual communist society are only to be obtained by the organised mass violence of the toiling millions of the world, against the the capitalist sharks and the imperialist bandits... we are equally convinced that individual acts of terrorism by themselves are definitely useless and indirectly serve - - - - - >

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\* Extract from the joint statement delivered by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt on June, 8 1929 in the court of session judge, cited by Viswanath Vaishampayan, "Amarsaheed Chandrashekhar Azad., Vol.II, III (Mirzapore, Krankari Prakashan Mala, pp.292-303,1967)

\*\* In 1929, there was a famous Meerut Consp. Case against the Communists.



the reaction. "Again the Manifesto resolves to appeal to these elements, "To throw in their lot with the communist movement, to employ their great courage and revolutionary zeal; in the organisation of revolutionary workers and peasants". Thus criticising correctly the <sup>mis</sup>terrotis policy but not ignoring their heroic zeal, the Manifesto gives an edge to the contradiction, which was later channalised scientifically<sup>ly</sup>.

Inside the jail, the revolutionaries tried to make use of the trial, which was according to Shri Ajoy Ghosh was to expose the brutal policies of the Government, and as against it, the unconquestable spirit of the revolutionaries. The outcome was the great 60 days hungerstrike of Lahore jail, which followed the life sacrifice of Yatindranath Das. The Meerut prisoners also joined the strike. Undoubtedly the revolutionaries succeeded in leaving a deep impression on the Indian people. The changing situation in India roused a deep concern all over the world. And a few revolutionaries were really seuceessful in exposing the blood and terror policy of the Government ins@de the jail.

The Lahore conspiracy case was a turning point for the H.S.R.A. Group. Bhagat Singh was perhaps the first to realise that the armed action is needed only as an integral part of the mass movement, "Subordinated to its needs and requirement\*\*.

In this period a vague sense of disappointment was also creeping in as they failed to channalise the nationalist movement. The urgent need for mass work, to organise workers and peasants for a mass movement was also keenly felt.

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\* Ajoy Ghosh: op.cit. page. 19.

The Lahore Conspiracy case had far reaching effects since the phase of revolution and observation was emerging now in the series of torture and struggle. To intensify the process of disillusionment, other factors were also added. The betrayal of the comrades, repeated failure to build up the Party, growing internal dissensions were some of them. Demoralised and frustrated from within and ruthlessly suppressed from without the party was slowly dismantling

In Bengal the situation was <sup>the</sup> same. The confidential report of the government considered that the movement initiated by the communist and that of the terrorists were same from the very beginning. The emissaries of M.N Roy to India were the members of the old revolutionary group and they intended to bring together all the comrades, in the initiation for a new "ideology", that is communism. Abani Mukherjee, who was a member of the Anushilan Samiti, and later accompanied M.N. Roy to Moscow and was initiated with the ideal of scientific socialism came back in 1923-24 to Bengal and the Anushilan Samiti ~~has~~ offered him shelter in Dacca. Two members of this Samiti became chief exponents of Marxism in the later period. These were Satish Pakrashi and Santosh Mitra. As Pakrashi\* has later related that the leaders of this revolutionary movement in India were indifferent towards scientific socialism, Comintern or even any political relation with the Soviet Union. They did not have any clear idea of mass revolution and therefore the suggestion of Abani Mukherjee did not have much influence on them.

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\* P akrashi Satish. Agni Dinerkatha, Calcutta, National Book Agency, 1947.

But one fact remained still. They were concerned about getting arms from any source, and Soviet Union was one possible resource for that. But as soon <sup>as</sup> this realisation came that Russia had more interest in sending literature and printing presses to publish propaganda papers than to send arms, they remained indifferent to the ideological development towards this trend. In fact Nalini Gupta had succeeded more in establishing contacts than Abani Mukherjee. He managed to send two members of the Anushilan Samiti abroad.

It was a phase, when the revolutionary wing was losing its grip over the students and the conscious group of cadres. Therefore a split wing of the party started <sup>an</sup> organised propaganda programme among students, labourers and peasants, who were conscious of the developments in the ideology itself. They started working in the revolutionary group inside the Congress \* also, to use it as a political forum, <sup>and</sup> ~~hastily~~ these new revolutionary cadres initiated to implement the old programme of the party, which was actually to form volunteer group\*\* and get adequate military training also for the same. This group <sup>was</sup> led by Gopen Chakravarty, who was sent abroad by Nalini Gupta. This new group did not have any support from the elder leaders, but the younger cadres did give him support. One remarkable change in the programme of this group was that this did not believe in individual action, nor they wanted to collect arms.

The other leader of the revolutionary group, who brought a

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\* In Bengal the Jugantar Group was in deep touch with C.R. Doss and Subhashchandra Bose. They worked inside the Congress.

\*\* As it has been referred earlier also that Subhashchandra gave a call to Bengal Youth to form a volunteer groups, which will work inside the Congress, but would ~~not~~ get proper military training too. Hence the revolutionary group joined <sup>to</sup> this corps.

The other leader of the revolutionary group, who brought a considerable number of people to the new splitting was Dharani Goswami. In ~~considerable number of people~~ In 1926, he left the old group of leaders who wanted to get help from the comintern, but were not prepared to accept the principles of scientific socialism. Though the number of followers is not known, but Dharani Goswami came out with a <sup>large</sup> ~~considerable~~ group, as the British intelligence considered this conversion in this new ideology to be "... a landmark in the history of terrorism in Bengal. From the end of 1926 onwards the penetration of terrorist bodies went steadily on, side by side with the organisation of those whose violent inclinations were of a less impulsive kind, who prepared to await the day when an armed man rebellion was more possible of attainment." These groups which were sprouting up not only in Bengal but in the whole country, were mainly workers' and peasants' party, socialist youth league\*\* Young Comrades' League,<sup>3</sup>\*\* and Samrajya Party<sup>4</sup>

Apart from these strong external forces, the members of the revolutionary groups themselves were passing through a phase of ~~rapid~~ ideological evolution. Till now, these selfless patriots had a vague sense of their cause, an illusion of national liberation movement, which was to bring freedom, equality and fraternity spontaneously. But these expectations had crumbled down. their conspiratorial tactics had failed by now to provoke an uprising against the

D.T.O

1. "India and Communism" Home Department, Intelligence branch revised Edition, Simla, Government of India Press 1935

2. \*\* This organisation was formed by Santosh Mitra who was converted into new 'ideology' and was sent abroad by Abani Mukherjee.

rou] 3 This group emerged in 1928 under the leadership of Dharani Goswami.

4 This group was the transformation of HSRA group in which entire membership of HSRA was initiated and later attracted Bengal terrorist group also.

against the imperialists. The first world war was over and the hopes to get help from foreign power to liberate India had also ended in fiasco. Thus their own experiences, and the objective situation in the country helped them in their search for alternative. The country was oppressed under the foreign rulers, the prevalence of religion had shadowed the path of revolution for them and the countrywide illiterary had added to the negative factors in the process. Thus it was the ideological evolution inside the revolutionary movement itself which brought them to socialism. Same is the reason for this unique development too, that the scientific socialism was accepted in India not as an end, but as means. India was not one among the advanced capitalist countries. It was a colonial country dominated by socioeconomic relations. The industrial proletariat was yet to come and the cause to fulfil was not a socialist revolution, but the liberation of the country. The evolutionary process was already initiated among the progressive elements of the revolutionary wing, as new ideological and political atmosphere was emerging with the October Socialist Revolution in Soviet Union. There was a significant change in their world outlook and the "nationalist narrow mindedness". The importance of mass movement was also being <sup>realised</sup> ~~realised~~. One of the most important factors in this phase of transition was the representation of the Indian revolutionaries in the second Congress of the Comintern in 1920. In this Congress a thesis on the national colonial question was adopted in which it was decided that... "a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, — — — — — > P.T.O

with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movement"\* Another important factor, which linked together the closest alliance between Soviet Union and the liberation movement in India, was the establishment of the Communist Party in 1925. The very first document of the C.P.I had its own formulations regarding the national revolutionary movement. They gave a call to fight together alongwith the workers and peasants to achieve the goal of a free and democratic India.

\*.. we make a special appeal to all those revolutionary elements who are <sup>ca</sup>sacrificing their lives, and rotting in prison, for noble but ineffectual revolutionary activity, to join us as comrades working together for these ends. We say to your comrades, your energy and enthusiasm is being fruitlessly wasted in chasing a "will-<sup>o</sup>-the-wisp", you are bringing anarchy and chaos, not to the state apparatus but to the revolutionary movement in the country, you are facilitating Government repression and sacrificing you lives and liberty needlessly"\*\*\*x

In these circumstances, a number of younger splitwingers were converted into Marxism. The dissatisfaction with old leadership and the objective forces in ~~the~~the socioeconomic condition and the political atmosphere coupled with the efforts of Marxists themselves, and adoption of the new ideology was facilitated.

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\* V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.31 page 146

\*\* Manifesto of the communist party of individual terrorism with special reference to Lahore Conspiracy Case; Issued by the Meerut prisoners in 1928

The detension camps also played a major role in it. In Berhampore, Buxar, Higli and Deoli revolutionaries were imprisoned in these camps. By this time the famous Chittagong Armoury Raid was also performed by a group of people\* who later wanted to merge in the federation of ~~X~~ Yuganhar. These revolutionaries, led by Surya Sen brought a new dimension in the terrorist action. The revolt group in all the parties of revolutionaries wanted action and very ambitious plans for action were brought out. Though the whole programme could not be implemented, but the situation became so tense that by the end of July, 1931, the Bengal Government wanted extra powers to suppress this new outbreak. Hence despite the roundtable conference had not concluded by them the Government of India implemented the India Press (Emergency Powers) Act in 1931. Then with clear aims of "Cursing terrorism and restoring the prestige of Government and the moral of its servants in those parts of Bengal, where the danger was greatest, especially <sup>y</sup> Chittagong"\*\*.

Though this severity suggests a note of deputation on the side of the <sup>Government</sup> ~~Govt.~~ the terrorist actions could not be suppressed by it. The At this time, Gandhi came back after the failure in the round table conference. Another series of civil disobedience movement started.

P.T.O

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\*It was called Indian Republican Army

\*\* H. William So, Memorandum June, 20, 1934. Home Political

file no. 35/12, 1935 Quoted in "Bengal Terrorism and Marxist Left:" ~~Lausky~~

Lausky, David M. 1975 page 78.

and Gandhi was again put in jail. The most effective action of this phase was second upsurge in Chittagong. After two unsuccessful attempts, third attempt was made under the leadership of Pritilata Wad~~kar~~<sup>describes</sup>, who committed suicide after the action. This was also organised by the "Indian Republican group" only. The Chittagong action was the last in this series.

A comprehensive account of the terrorist acts ~~indiscrible~~ that the severity of the movement was not less than the earlier outbreaks. The outrages committed were mainly by the Chittagong Raiders, the main Calcutta Jugantar. The P.V. or the Shree Sangha. In this phase Anushilan Samiti was under the cautious control of senior leaders. But some young rebell<sup>ions</sup> came out indeed and joined the new split wing, joined the terrorist acts even.

After 1930, the culmination of the evolutionary process had already started. Who were not arrested ~~or~~ could manage to remain without the bars, became a wave of the mistakes of their own movement, some time jointly some time independently of each other. The search for alternatives, which <sup>was</sup> initiated long back, was now culminating. Those who were in jails and detention camps, were also deeply involved in this process of transition. Therefore a large number of terrorists converted themselves to Marxism. When they were released, they joined either Communist Party or other left parties. Those who could not accept the ideology of scientific socialism, switched over to Congress. The number of subh revolutionaries was not very great.

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