

## CHAPTER XX

### NEW SITUATION ON JAPANESE VICTORIES

Japanese thumping victories and their triumphant march towards India's borders, smashing and crushing the British forces, created a great stir in India. Prior to this there was no life in India. C. P. I.'s move was to cooperate with the British government since German army marched against Soviet Russia. Their leader P. C. Joshi had an interview with the then Home Secy. Mr. Reginald Maxwell and the comrades came out of jail. Gandhiji had started preaching through the press that he would start his movement after the war was over. But the new situation created by Japan reversed the position altogether. The British prestige in the east was brought down to the lowest point. A new hope was generated in our country. Churchill was compelled to send Cripps Mission to pacify India at this most critical hour. Nehru was ready to accept it but Gandhiji's wishes prevailed at the eleventh hour and the Mission failed.

Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the ex-Home Minister was living in Room No. 6 of the Councillors Residence. I was living very near him and was spending hours daily in his room. Many people came daily from various places to meet. As I

could not move about due to C.I.D. vigilance, his house was the best meeting place for me.

One morning myself and Rafi Saheb were strolling in the lawn. He was in a pensive mood. Suddenly he halted, turned to me and said "Jogesh Babu, the communists have gone over to the Government side, the Congress is dead and if you people, who have fought heroically against the British Government, are also to be inactive, then what's the future of India? For a moment I was dumbfounded and then I looked at him and said "This is war time and all my friends are in jail. Yet I shall try to mobilise the youth of the country. Can I bank on your support?" To this he gave an emphatic assent and he was quite true to his words.

I had just left for Farrukhabad by the morning train for Kanpur. After about an hour Rafi Saheb got the information that I was under warrant of arrest. He sent Durgaji and Ram Krishna Khatri to Kanpur by the next train to convey the information and I went underground. Rafi Saheb was arrested and thrown into prison shortly after this when no other eminent Congress leader was under arrest. The political Adviser to the Govt. hard-pressed by the press representatives told them that his early arrest was due to his association with me.

## 1942 MOVEMENT

My secret movement in U. P. was not an easy affair. Yet I came in contact with a good number of revolutionary youths of this province and contacted youths of Bengal and Bihar too. These youths played a very big part in the August Movement of 1942. My plan then was, as I stated to many eminent persons, that we should keep ourselves prepared to rise in revolt and join forces with the I. N. A. as soon they marched into India.

I invited two Bengal comrades at Muzaffarpur and instructed them to make all possible efforts to establish contact with the I. N. A. through Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and through Assam, if possible.

I had contacted youths from Banaras and Saharanpur, but before I could get them organized and activated properly, the premature 1942 August rising took place. Congress leaders throughout the country were arrested immediately after they passed the resolution to launch a movement at Bombay A. I. C. C. meeting on 8-8-42.

Angry people carried on Hartal for 3 days, 9th, 10th and 11th of August, for they knew not what to do in the absence of any programme. The programme was ultimately issued on the 11th night through a B. B. C. broadcast by Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India. America and Russia were the war allies of Great Britain. They were upset by the arrests in their war base in India.

A reply was essential on behalf of British Govt. So Mr. Amery stated point by point that the Congress wanted to oust them from India by various acts of sabotage. The programme of Amery became the Congress programme and it was worked out by the infuriated people in every nook and corner of the country. But all that was done in a week was an accomplished revolution. It could not succeed because it was a spontaneous reaction without any preparation or organization. The country sustained immense losses in wealth and the sufferings and sacrifices of the people were limitless due to Governmental repressions.

All this was in vain as the time was not opportune. If we could organise such activities when the I. N. A. knocked at the doors of India, we certainly would have registered success. Had I.N.A. marched from outside and the rising of the people inside been simultaneous, millions of Indians in the army would have made a common cause with the two forces. In that case the few lakhs of British and American forces could have been forced to surrender. The march to Delhi from the eastern border of India would have been accomplished in a gigantic scale. Not only Britishers would have brought to their knees but their allies, the war profiteers and black-marketeers, could have never escaped the wrath of the serging masses of men fired with the spirit of sublime patriotism. Elimination of the British vested interests of every type

was inevitable and that would have been real freedom earned by the people by their combined efforts. In a word, national enthusiasm would have built a nation, politically, economically and socially.

That chance we lost due to the conflict of ideas in the country—I mean, Revolutionism and Gandhism. During the First World War the only force to fight freedom battle was the nascent force of revolution inside the country. An effort was made to fight the British government with the help of German arms. But during the Second World War the fighting forces had divided allegiances, on the basis of violence and non-violence. Though the country was much advanced politically and the people were much more conscious, yet due to this difference in faith we could not avail of the great opportunity offered to us by the I. N. A. movement backed by Japan. The I. N. A. had no Gandhian influence and so was 1942 movement inside India. But no joint effort was possible between the two.

### ETAH JAIL TRIAL

I was arrested at Soron in the district of Etah along with Thakur Mukund Singh of Sahranpur, Puttoo Singh Chauhan, Ram Larete Pande of Mainpuri and Govardhan Singh of Badaun. The trial was held under the special Courts Ordinance inside the jail for attempt at murder of a police sub-inspector and Arms Act. I was given

10 years R.I. and Govardhan Singh 3 years under Arms Act and others were detained in jail.

The district Magistrate, Mr. G. M. Lobo Probhu, I. C. S. came to see us in jail. I told him that trumped up charges had been brought against us by the police. He promised justice and fairness. The next week he awarded the policemen and witnesses of our case rewards in a Durbar held in the Police Lines. Then again for believing that the C.I.D. report in the case was true, two sub-inspectors of Soron were kept in the police lines under suspension. The D.M. was the supreme authority in the district and he even told my defence counsel, Pandit Girija Shanker Chaturvedi, "Chatterji may be a dangerous man and he may even be detained in jail. But I do not want that any body should be falsely implicated in my district." But I.C.S. sense of justice ended only by paying lip service to it.

After this everybody thought that the case would be withdrawn. But suddenly at this stage, the Governor, Sir Malcolm Haily, came to Kasganj and had an hour's talk with the D.M. The atmosphere changed and we were sentenced. Pandit Girija Shankar happened to be present at Lucknow on the day of my release 4 years later and he told me at my residence before a gathering that the Governor pressed the D.M. saying that I was an enemy of the state and hence not only the case should be proceeded against me but I deserved capital punishment.

On the 7th January 1943, I submitted a written statement before the Court, which shows the condition of my mind at the time. See Appendix.

#### LUCKNOW BARABANKI CONSPIRACY CASE

Govardhan and I were sent to the concentration jail of B Class revolutionaries at the District Jail as Lucknow-Barabanki Conspiracy case was started with myself as the chief accused and I was given 7 years R.I. after a protracted trial. In this case members of R.S.P., H.S.R.A and C.S.P. were involved, The Judge. Mr. K.R. Damle, I.C.S. gave uniform sentence to all. Three letters sent privately by Jharkhande Rai from jail, all of which contained my name and some literature left by me at my residence were kept in an absconders' house at Lucknow. These were seized by the police. They were sufficient to entangle myself and Rai in the case. So Rai got the sentence only for these letters.

The police tried to prove a province-wide conspiracy with myself as the head. But the Govt. did not allow this. So three different cases were instituted, the Lucknow case, the Gorakhpur Conspiracy case with Shri Shibban Lal Saksena and Agra Conspiracy case with Pandit Shri Ram Sharma as the leaders. Another case was to be started at Banaras. But when the Agra case failed in the High Court it was dropped.

I have spent my whole life in the company of

youths. During the Kakori case I was above 30 and faced trial with a big batch of enthusiastic youths. In this case, after the lapse of two decades the very same thing was repeated at Lucknow. Though a bit gray-haired I was taken to Lucknow court daily under fetters with a batch of patriotic youths. We sang and raised slogans as of old.

Lucknow case men were given 'B' class and were in Revolutionary Ward. Lahore case old friends were also there and Shibbanlal Saksena and others were brought from different districts. Life was pleasant and fruitful. Time was passing in studies and discussions. Generally due to confined life petty affairs often give birth to bitterness. But here petty things were not allowed to come between us.

For some time we had the company of K. Rama Rao, the editor of the National Herald. Some Congress leaders were also brought into the jail.

Stories began to pour in from different jails about the inhuman and brutal treatment of 1942 movement prisoners. The news of the treatment of C class revolutionaries in the Gaddha barrack of the Bareilly concentration jail was quite disturbing. Even cattles were not treated like that. They were the finest patriotic youths of the province. A robust youth of Ghazipur, Umashankar Upadhyaya, who came from a wealthy family was some times at Lucknow jail and I was much impressed by him. This brilliant youth was so much tortured



to death when he was unconscious with high temperature.

(Hunger Strike on 16-1-46 to 6-2-46. See my Note Book marked Appendix. For appendix first application to the adviser of the Governor on 25/27-7-45 )

These painful and inhuman torture upon the best elements of the country was unbearable. We all were much disturbed. I sent an application to the Government against all this requesting immediate redress of our grievances. I sent reminders but for 6 months there was no response. This was intolerable. I thought and at last came to a decision. I quietly submitted an application to the authorities giving an ultimatum of one month, on the completion of which I was to resort to hunger strike unto death, unless the grievances were removed. After I handed over my ultimatum to the authorities I divulged the news to my comrades. At this their anger was beyond limit. They discussed this and sent Rai to me to charge me with the betrayal of party principles and discipline. I was quite prepared for it. I asked Rai if they would have allowed me to submit it, had it been shown to them before being sent. He naturally replied in the negative pressing on the point that they would have also joined the strike. I said that was the reason why I did not show it to them. Mass hunger strike was usually ineffective. Hence it

should be done by one and I was the best man for this owing to my past history. Their duty as comrades should be to carry on vigorous propaganda which was essential for the success of it. They submitted to my reasoning and I started the strike fully prepared.

Rama Rao, did a great service to our cause by publishing the news of the strike prominently on the front page. My demands, etc. were given in a different column in detail and the second editorial of the National Herald of the day was on this subject. The grievance was genuine and I had nothing personal in it, because I was already a privileged prisoner in 'B' class. My past life and death struggles by prolonged hunger strikes were already known to all those interested in politics. Therefore this time the politically conscious Indians took up the cause very strongly. My health was deteriorating very fast. Within a few days I was passing through a crisis as I developed extreme biliousness.

My privileges as a superior class prisoner were partially withdrawn. The authorities refused to supply me with any newspaper. This was a hard-earned right during our Kakori conviction. In protest I stopped drinking water and refused to take any medicine. As soon as biliousness created a crisis I was allowed newspapers. Piles troubles disappeared on the administration of medicine. Nasal feeding was impossible and hence I was

passing through a crisis again after two weeks. Press was active in distributing the day to day report on my health. Public agitation was going on vigorously, particularly in Bengal. Powerful papers wrote strong editorial notes. Meetings were held in Calcutta daily.

At this stage Sarat Bose wired to Pandit Nehru to try to settle the matter somehow. Nehru telephoned from Allahabad to C. B. Gupta at Lucknow and asked him to meet me in jail and try to ascertain how it could be terminated. Gupta met me in jail hospital cell. I gave him a cold reception, to which the jailor asked if I knew him. I thought that he had come to ask me to give up the strike unconditionally. He, however, wanted to know that minimum satisfaction I would demand in order to call off the strike.

Nehru reached Lucknow next morning, 6-2-46, and after a discussion with him Gupta went to the Adviser to the Governor. The Adviser was not ready to concede my minimum demands. Yet Nehru sent him to me with a two page letter in his handwriting giving me hope and advising me to give up the strike.\* I was in a very difficult position. To accept this was as much difficult as reject it. Gupta tried to persuade me for nearly two hours but I could not be convinced. He went to our barrack, had a discussion with other friends and then came to me with four of them. They discussed the

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\* See Appendix.

matter with me and I had to agree to give up the strike. Nehru's long statement was published in all papers next morning in support of the cause for which I had to resort to the strike.

In the meanwhile we collected as much materials as we could, on the 1942 movement. We all read them and then we held a serious debate. Our discussions continued for nearly a month though we were meeting daily for some hours. I used to preside over these meetings. The Lahore Case comrades, Sheo Varma, Jaydev Kapur and Dr. Gaya Prasad also joined our discussion at the beginning but later they backed out. They had joined the Communist Party when they were in the Andamans. It was not possible for them to participate because their party was not only not with the 42 movement and the I. N. A., but they worked against these in complete cooperation with the British Government. Their General Secretary, P. C. Joshi, wrote two signed articles in their party organ 'People's War' wherein he wrote that "Subhas was a traitor" and went to the extent of writing that if Bose set his feet on Indian soil, he and his party would welcome him with bullets.

### SHAHEED RAJ NARAIN MISHRA

The most outstanding event in this jail was the arrival of comrade Raj Narain Mishra of Bhikampur, in Lakhimpur Kheri. He was put into a condemned cell under capital sentence. The socialist

comrades, who were with us in the Lucknow-Barabanki Case claimed him to be a member of their party. Though I knew that he and the batch with him was with me and one of them, Makhan Lal, was with me till one day prior to my arrest, yet he was with the Socialist at the time when he was in the Central Jail at Lucknow.

Mishra came to know that I was in that jail and sent me a small slip of paper full of noble sentiments. This slip revealed to all what was in his mind. He naturally wondered how I was not communicating with him, being the leader of the Party with which he was connected through me. But soon we established regular correspondence. I requested him to write his life sketch in the correspondence. And this was done. Under my instructions comrade Rai used to copy out these letters in his note book. This was published after our release in a book form as the life story of Shaheed Raj Narain Mishra.

In the course of my long revolutionary life many of my associates and friends have met their ends by police or military bullets and by the hangman's rope. I heard and read the stories of heroic martyrs facing gallows fearlessly inspired by the glory of the great cause. In Raj Narain I saw another example of this. He behaved, as if, the very facing of the gallows was the biggest ceremony of his life. As the end of his life came nearer and nearer, he became more and more cheerful.

When after our last interview with him we were returning one of us was shedding tears. He chas-tised him from inside his cell "Why shed tears? Be brave and go away laughing."

In the afternoon the clinking sound of fetters attracted my attention towards the jail gate from the gate of our ward. I thought that somebody was being escorted to the gate, because from such a distance I could not recognize the person. "Dada, call them all" were the shouts of Raj Narain. He stopped and I ran inside our ward and called every body. But he was not there. We all waited eagerly for a very long time. Then we saw him returning to his cell. He took his last leave from us all.

Next morning only his slogans were heard, loudest and distinct. Then in a twinkling of an eye everything was over. Raj Narain, so lovely and lively, was only a name. His dead body was taken out by a group of patriots and consigned to flames on the bank of the Ganges at Kanpur.

He came from a poor family and was a victim of social oppressions, conscious and unconscious, by the wealthier sections. So the ideas of social-ism were very appealing to him. He, therefore, advocated, economic and social freedom and thought that they were not of lesser importance than political freedom. In his last letters from the condemned cells to his brothers and to us he gave out his ideas clearly. According to him, a

revolution was necessary and after that the common man must have economic and social rights, otherwise freedom would be meaningless.

People suggested that after his execution his young wife and the small child and another in the mother's womb be sent to the Ashram of Gandhiji at Sevagram. The idea was very unpleasant to him and he wrote to us that this must not be done, because he did not believe in Gandhian Utopia. His daughter, Devaki, was married but became a widow and now earns her living as a teacher. His son, Banarsi, is a student. His wife now gets a meagre pension of Rs. 45/- per month, much less than what a domestic servant earns.

As an absconder he did not hesitate to suffer imprisonment in Madhya Pradesh and in Delhi with an assumed name. And in Midnapore in Bengal he served the afflicted people as a worker of the Marwari Relief Committee. But there too, Raj Narain, the revolutionary socialist, differed seriously with their policy and left the work utterly disgusted.

His life story from his own pen is a piece of valuable treasure. But to day in independent but corrupt India nobody cares to read a book like that. Today we may forget him but he served his beloved country with the last drop of his blood in his own way and helped in bringing about the political change. He was the only man in U. P. to be hanged in the August Movement in 1942.

## CONGRESS GOVERNMENT AGAIN AND RELEASE

Congress formed Government in U. P. on the 1st of April, 1946 and the whole atmosphere was changed. On the 4th day Rafi Saheb came to meet us in jail. I suggested immediate concentration of political prisoners in regional jails as special class and then release them. But he said that would not be necessary if they were released promptly. He did that. C. B Gupta also met us in jail one day. Then on the 17th our turn also came and we were released.

The news of my impending release was published in the papers for some days. One day the Secretary of the City Congress Committee came to the jail gate to receive me and take me to their office. Though not like what happened after the Kakori release, this time too there was enthusiasm and general jubilation on our release and a gathering of more than 10,000 received us in the meeting at Amin-Uddaula Park.



## CHAPTER XXI

### MY RELEASE AND AFTER

I was released from Lucknow Jail on 17th April, 1946, that is, on the seventeenth day of the formation of the Congress Ministry in U.P. Immediately after my release two important friends, namely, Satish Sirkar and Jatin Chakravarty came to meet me at Lucknow from Bengal and they pressed me to issue a statement to the press as the General Secretary of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. They insisted that I was elected the Secretary of R.S.P. at the time of its formation at Ramgarh. Those were war times and Government could not tolerate a separate party of revolutionaries. The Government adopted all measures of oppression and all the leading members of the party were put in jail. Thus the proper functioning of the R.S.P. could not become possible in the absence of the leading members. But now all of them were released and so the party out to function properly with its old Secretary, elected at Ramgarh. I was released from the jail only two days back, so I did not want to take any step so hastily. I wanted to study the situation in the country for a short while before issuing any statement to the press.

## CONVENTION IN DELHI

Those of my friends who were released earlier thought of holding the first party convention in Delhi, the capital city. The idea was good but to make the arrangement was not an easy affair. This much was in my favour in Delhi that I was arrested there in 1937 as the President of a conference and jailed. Therefore my name was popular. So I agreed to this proposal of Comrade Keshava Prasad Sharma. Yet I sent Satyendra-nath Banerjee to arrange everything.

In the mean time I was busy in my tour programme. Meetings were being held and purses were also being presented in certain meetings. Fresh party organisation required resources.

A revolutionary prisoner is in a difficult position just on his release from jail. In jail he has nothing to think of, he gets essential necessities of life at state expense. But on release he has to arrange shelter, food and clothing. These were serious problems. I still remember how after release I purchased some material somehow and asked the tailor to make some clothes for me. But I had nothing in my pocket to pay him. Jatin Chakravarty realised this and paid the money. For such persons to start an organisation was not an easy affair.

Yet we did form an organisation within a very short time. Revolutionaries were strong people and they were not afraid of suffering for the cause.

Such men were to gather in Delhi in a convention. The idea had to be realised. Our friends with their scanty resources started the preparation. Satyen Banerjee failed to get any accommodation for the delegates. He was very much worried.

I was on three days' tour at Allahabad. Satish Sarkar and Jatin Chakravarty came to Allahabad. I was asked by Satyen to go to Delhi at the earliest. I had to cut short my stay at Allahabad and go to Delhi with Sarkar. By the morning of the next day I secured two places for our delegates. The Conference at Gandhi Ground, Chandni Chowk, was a grand success. Through this conference we were established as a party in northern India. On their return to their places, the delegates of the Conference engaged themselves heart and soul for the ramifications of the organisation, the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The historic Delhi Convention was held on the 11th 12th and 13th of May, 1946 and after that the organisational Work of the R.S.P. proceeded briskly, because for the first time the revolutionaries found themselves as an organised public body with the clear objective of getting socialism established through a revolutionary fight.

As a Congress Socialist in 1938-39 I was working mainly in the peasant and labour field. In 1939 I was Secretary of the U.P. Kisan Sabha and also a member of the A.I.K.S. A huge Kisan Conference was held at Gaya in 1939 under the

Presidentship of Acharya Narendra Deva. This was organised by Swami Sahajanand, an eminent Kishan leader of India. In the A.I.K.S. meeting I had a heated controversy with comrade Muzaffar Ahmed, the veteran Communist leader. The fun was that though we were very old acquaintances, after a lapse of many years we did not recognise each other. At the end late Bankim Mukherjee got us freshly introduced.

During the war period the All India Kisan Sabha was practically monopolised by the Communists, because they alone were in the field having decided to cooperate with the Government whereas all other parties were in a fighting mood and their leaders were in jail.

Babu Purshottam Das Tandon, one of the founders of the Kishan Organisation, called a Kisan Conference in Bombay and requested me to go. There was also the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay. On that occasion in the Conference held in Jinnah Hall, the All India Kisan Sangha was formed with Tandonji as President and Swami Sahajanand as General Secretary. On Tandonji's proposal I was elected a Vice-President. A five-member committee was formed for drafting a constitution and I was one of the members of this committee.

The Revolutionary Socialist Party was essentially a mass party and therefore it concentrated its activities mainly on the Kisans and labours.

In the labour front we were working through the All India Trade Union Congress. Jatin Chakravarty was working in Bengal with the help of Mrinal Kanti Bose. In U.P. we were working in sugar labour and other unions. In Bihar our trade union activity registered considerable success under the leadership of Shri Ranen Roy.

When the Revolutionary Socialist Party was formed, all the veteran leaders of the Anushilan Samiti were there. Anushilan leaders, Trailokya nath Chakravarty, late Pratul Chandra Ganguli, Ramesh Acharya, Rabindra Mohan Sen and others who had spent their whole lives in revolutionary fight for freedom, participated. But unfortunately the younger elements in jail in Bengal started a propaganda group-campaign against the veterans that they were not up to date in their ideas.

This fissiparous attitude of the second grade leaders in Bengal was ruinous for the party. The veterans were brilliant guerilla fighters and they had earned public respect through their life-long sufferings and sacrifices. To suppress them meant nothing but suppressing the very movement of the revolutionaries.

In a planned way the younger element suppressed the elders, but somebody was necessary at least to be called as their leader only to show that the party was not leaderless. My name was well-known as a revolutionary fighter and I was outside Bengal. So it was a part of their plan to catch

hold of me to fill up the gap of their want of an All India leader. This motive was in their mind and therefore Satish Sarkar and Jatin Chakravarty ran to Lucknow immediately after my release and pressed me hard to make a statement as the General Secretary of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

I wanted to study the situation and then come to some decision. But after giving the statement my hands and feet were bound down to their design as I realised gradually. But there was no way out. My entry to Bengal was banned by the Muslim League Ministry of Bengal and I met old Anushilan leaders from time to time outside Bengal. I made a last attempt to meet the Anushilan veterans at Deoghar in Bihar and to persuade them to work for the party.

Ramesh Acharya was living at Deoghar. At my request Purnananda Das Gupta arranged a meeting there. Trailokyanath Chakravarty, Pratul Ganguli and others came together with some leaders of the second grade. Satish Sarkar as spokesman of the latter took up such an attitude that it was clear that they were not to go with the veterans. I rebuked him but it was in vain. They went back to Calcutta and I came to Rameshda's residence with other leaders. Here I told them that I was sent to U.P. as the representative of the Anushilan, that is, as their representative, and without them I would feel very uncomfortable. In fact I felt

their absence in the party much, but I was helpless.

We accepted Marxism and Leninism as our line and elders did not disagree. So there was no fundamental difference. Then in the last analysis the idea came to some one's mind that it might be the question of position in the party which was the root cause of rift. The hunger for power, before even the acquirement of real power was, basically a weakness which had retarded our progress even during the days when we were fighting against the British Government.

1946 was one of the most stormy years in the history of freedom struggle of India. One of the most glaring and sensational happenings of this year was the I. N. A. trials. When the news about I. N. A. affairs reached the Indian masses through the enthusiasm of the Indian press, a deep sympathy and reverence among the masses for the I. N. A. people was the outcome. It became a symbol of national feeling and direct fight between British Government in India and the Indian People. At the time of such a national upsurge the trial of I. N. A. men took place in the historic Red Fort. The Congress party also became aware of this nation wide sympathy and support for I. N. A. and thus the top Congress leaders could not remain indifferent to it. Bhula Bhai Desai, a member of the Congress Committee and one of the most prominent lawyers of India took the responsibility of chief defence

lawyer. Even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attended the proceedings of the Court as one of the defence Counsels. The entire British bureaucracy was trying its best to inflict heavy punishments on I. N. A. heroes and India stood united to defend them.

In Calcutta disturbances started. The students movement took place very vehemently. On the way of their march to Dalhousie Square several rounds of firing were ordered. One Hindu and one Muslim student were shot dead. Consequently, disturbances spread throughout the entire city. Military vehicles, American and British, were burnt and destroyed. The military and police also could not remain untouched. The naval power which consisted of very efficient and highly technically equipped men revolted against the Government in Bombay. The British Government ordered the Air Force to bombard the naval unit, but the air force men refused to comply. Now the Government was in a great perplexity. The edifice of British imperialism seemed to be crumbling down before the eyes of those who had nurtured it. Rift within the bureaucracy and disobedience in the armed forces were such factors which could bring the functioning of the British administrative machinery to a standstill. The second world war gave such a crushing blow to England that her entire economy was shattered into pieces. She was not left with enough resources to suppress growing Indian national discontent. The only probable



solution which the White Hall could think, was to compromise with Indian wishes and agree to the demand for freedom.

Britain was compelled to think more deeply about the situation in India. Lord Wavell, the Governor General, was busy with plans. The Labour Government sent the Cabinet Mission and they placed their plan. Prior to that was the Simla Conference at Simla but which had failed as Mr. Jinnah insisted on implementation of Pakistan Resolution. This weakened the nationalist Muslims and Jinnah became dominant.

The Cabinet Mission announced a scheme of Union of India, formation of the Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government at the Centre.

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The Second Convention of the Party was held at Muzaffarpur, Bihar. A strong section was for severing all connections with the Congress but the majority was not in favour. All this happened before the transfer of power.

## PRELUDE TO PARTITION

With freedom almost within the reach, the general election of 1946 was fought with a remarkable enthusiasm on two platforms viz, the Congress and the Muslim League, backed primarily by the nation-

nalists and the average muslim population respectively. An Interim Coalition Government was formed and for the first time in the known history of India power was transferred across a table over a piece of paper with the British masters on one side and the Congress and Muslim League leaders on the other side to accept the power in divided India within the Commonwealth.

Right from the days of Lahore Congress resolution of 1930 the Congress stood firmly for complete ( and unconditional ) Independence and also against the division of the country on communal basis ; but the British plan to transfer power within the Commonwealth and also on the principle of divided India was accepted by the power greedy popular leaders of the Congress.

After the formation of the Interim Coalition Government, the muslims started a communal riot in Calcutta, on 16 August, 1946, which gradually spread to different parts of India. Thus, the entire political atmosphere of the country was vitiated with communal feelings. In these circumstances, the British Government found an opportunity to divide the country on communal basis. They removed the Governor General, Lord Wavell, who was not in favour of partition. He was replaced by Lord Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten with all his military zeal and diplomatic tact began fishing in the troubled water of India for partition. The way in which he manipulated the partition, throws

a pathetic light on the personality, character and integrity of the Congress leaders.

My Entry into Bengal after the transfer of Power :

I have stated earlier that the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal had all along banned my entry into Bengal. But after the transfer of power, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh formed the Congress Ministry in West Bengal on the 15th of August, 1947. This opened the way of my entry into Bengal.

I was invited on behalf of the Jatin Das Memorial Committee to attend the martyr's anniversary on the 13th September, 1947. The Secretary, Satish Sarkar, came to Kanpur and I gave him detailed instructions. I wrote to sympathetic Bengal leaders and received their welcome replies. I asked to raise a purse on the occasion and Sarkar in his telegram from Calcutta stated "fund assured." But the Bengal unit of the party did not allow this as I came to know on arrival at Calcutta. Satish Sarkar felt so much humiliated that after this he took very little interest in the party affairs. I was also shocked at the attitude of the Bengal unit. Purses I received in U. P. were utilised for the All India and U.P. Party, but Bengal took up a strange stand. Later on they explained that they were to raise a fund for a press. On that occasion the popular feeling was so much in our favour that they could easily raise a purse of Rs. 50,000 and

out of that money they also could establish a press. The incident pained me because it indicated an evil intention.

Bengal leaders and the press welcomed me with an open heart. On that day, the 12th September, 1947, all the educational institutions of Calcutta from the University to primary schools were given half holiday to receive me at Howrah Station in the afternoon. Although the train was three hours late, some 25,000 people were present there when the train steamed in. I was taken to the residence of Kiran Das from where I went to my cousin Paresh Chandra Chatterjee's place. He kept at my disposal a new car and a driver with as much coupon for petrol as could be required. This was a great help in my very heavy 13 days' programme.

On the 13th September the morning programme was at the burning ghat at Keoratala, where Jatin Das was cremated. Many prominent revolutionaries and Congress leaders were present there. In the evening was the public meeting at Hazra Park. The well known revolutionary leader Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee presided. The park was overcrowded.

I was given a public reception in the University Institute. The President of BPCC, Shri S. M. Ghose presided. The hall was rather overpacked. The meeting of the university was a grander one. The Vice-Chancellor Dr. Banerjee presided. The students heard me with great attention. Next I

addressed the girl students of the Bethune College.

At the invitation of the All India Radio I also gave a talk on Hindu Muslim unity.

There was a big procession and meeting in Beliaghata. One volunteer organisation of Howrah arranged a procession and a meeting. Meetings and processions also were held at Chinsura, Howrah and other places.

I addressed party members in our party office at Sealdah. I had interviews with important persons like the Chief Minister Dr. P. C. Ghosh, A. C. Dutta, Suhrawardy, Mazumdar of Ananda Bazar Patrika and Hindustan Standard and also T. K. Ghosh of the Amrita Bazar Patrika.

The last very big meeting was held at Kancharapara which was organised by the Railway workers. They had fixed up a date and Dr. Banerjee, the Labour Minister, was also to go according to official programme. The workers wanted me to be there alone. So the date of my visit was changed. The next day I was to leave for Lucknow. So it was decided that I would dine with Heramba Bhattacharya, the proprietor of M/s. M. Bhattacharya & Co. His car waited at Sealdah station for two hours from 8 to 10 p. m. but I could not come. I was very much delayed at Kancharapara. Such a big number of persons had gathered that it was difficult to take me to the hall when the procession stopped near it. The ground was overpacked with men. The organisers realised that it was impossi-

ble to hold the meeting either in the hall or on the ground in front. The workers within an hour and half erected a dias and fitted electric lights and then the huge meeting was held there. So I returned to Calcutta very late in the night and I had to dine with Heramba Babu the next evening on my way to Howrah station.

All these thirteen days, demonstrations clearly showed what a feeling the people of Bengal had for the revolutionary fighters for freedom. Bengal politics was ever dominated by the revolutionaries. Netaji was himself a revolutionary and C. R. Das and J. M. Sen Gupta had mainly to depend on the support of the revolutionaries. Revolutionaries thus dominated the Congress.

## TRANSFER OF POWER

Though it seems a very short time that the struggle for freedom started in the early part of the present century and not before long, India was declared independent but this short period in the history of India was full of events and commotions. It may seem to be a short period in terms of sacrifice for the motherland, will to face the brutal tortures inflicted upon patriots and the socio-political upheaval of the country, this was definitely one of the most glorious periods in the history of India. How did we achieve independence and what were the factors that contributed towards

it are controversial matters. Once success is achieved, interpretations differ.

As it is generally taught to the present generation, who do not have any first hand knowledge of the actual struggle, that only Congress non-violent movement brought independence to this country, it is, in my personal opinion, a grave distortion of historical fact.

It is an undisputed fact that the Congress movement, led by Gandhiji was one of the decisive factors. But we must not forget that there were other factors which contributed towards the awakening of national consciousness among Indians. The daring exploits of the revolutionaries, the patriotic writings of the literateurs, the sacrifice of countless unknown people, the intellectual integrity of some intellectuals and many more things made what India is to-day. International politics also played its vital role in the drama which cannot be ignored altogether.

After the second world war two great powers came into being, viz., USA and USSR both growing rapidly in industry, commerce and science and having divergent political and social ideologies. Even during the second world war Churchill cautioned the British people against the growing power of the Communist World.

The world was to be consolidated into two ideological groups, viz. Communists and non-communists. In this ideological war, USA took

the leadership of the West and Britain was reduced to a second class power. Britain with her vast colonisation monopolised the largest part of the world market. The orthodox Marxist saw an impending clash between the expanding capitalism of U.S.A. and the moribund economy of U. K. But faced with the growing menace of world communism the Western powers were not in a position to afford an inner rift between themselves. And in this tussle, U. K. which was now a comparatively weaker power than the USA, was bound to yield her interest. She yielded and adopted a general policy of liberation of colonies.

United States since the the very beginning of its history is a champion of freedom and not colonisation. They had also suffered British colonialism and its bitter experience were preserved in their memory. So United States ideologically also ridiculed the idea of imperialism and was particularly interested in the liberation of Asian and African countries.

The second block in the world politics, that is, the Communist bloc was very conscious of the importance of Asian and African countries. They knew that inner discontent in these countries had reached up to the brim and revolution was brewing everywhere. If Russia could simply provide the necessary ignition, the explosion would definitely go out of control of the western imperialists. The Communist bloc was waiting anxiously for the matu-



rity of situation when they could exploit it successfully. Now it was for the Western powers to choose whether they should retain their subjection of Asian and African countries and give them chance to explode with the direct and indirect help and sympathy of communist bloc or liberate them honourably and try to win the heart of the subject races with sympathy, goodwill and commercialisation. The latter path was more prudent and they adopted it. Unable to win over the Afro-Asian people to its side Communism consolidated its forces in China, Russia and many of the East European countries. Ruthless suppression of the Hungarian revolt followed.

## CHAPTER XXII

### PARTITION AND AFTER

Within five weeks of the transfer of power ceremony in 1947 the Revolutionary Socialist Party walked out of the Congress. Gradually an uneasy atmosphere began to be felt within the Congress and Sardar Patel decided to reorganise the party under one flag, one name and one leadership. So long the Congress was a common platform of many political opinions. The Congress Socialist Party was also squeezed out of the Congress.

### REFUGEE REHABILITATION

The minority communities of the West Pakistan after a serious loss of lives and property came out rapidly and the Central Government of India, took prompt action to rehabilitate them.

But the refugees from East Pakistan were the worst sufferers. For many years they were not recognised as refugees and were kept in crowded camps on doles. These prolonged inhuman habitations totally deprived them of human good qualities and capacity to work.

West Bengal Government had no sympathy for them and money sanctioned for them was mostly misused. Fifteen lakhs of them were settled in West Bengal without any Government help.

When their lives became absolutely intolerable in East Pakistan, there were mass migrations defying our Government's wrong restrictions put on them there. They came almost naked and were immediately sent to most backward and undeveloped areas in different parts of the country, where no proper rehabilitations were arranged.

These unfortunates left everything in Pakistan but were not given any compensation, whereas refugees from West Pakistan came with their valuable things, got vast evacuee properties left by Muslims, and over and above that got compensation of rupees 300 crores, all their claims having been accepted without any enquiry.

Thus the Hindus of East Pakistan, who suffered much for freedom's fight, received no sympathetic treatment from the rulers of Independent India.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CONFERENCE OF INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES IN DECEMBER

As the Convenor, I called a conference of Indian revolutionaries in Delhi which was held in the Parade Ground on the 13th and 14th December, 1958 under the Presidentship of the veteran revolutionary, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta, younger brother of Swami Vivekananda. About 400 delegates from all over India, including Barindra Kumar Ghosh, younger brother of Sri Aurobindo, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the founder President of the Ghadar Party in America, Dr. Khankhoje ( Ghadar Party ), Dr. Bhagwan Singh ( Ghadar Party ), Dr. V. V. Athalye of Satara Conspiracy case ( 1910 ) attended the conference. Delegates were lodged in the former Delhi District jail.

Pandit Govindballabh Pant inaugurated it and the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, invited the delegates at his residence.

It was a unique thing after 11 years of independence. The Secretary of the Congress Party in Parliament invited the delegates to the Parliament House and entertained them with tea and the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee gave them a tea party in the Constitution Club.

The chairman of the Reception Committee was

Lala Hanumant Sahai, the veteran revolutionary of Delhi who was sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment in the famous Hardinge Bomb Conspiracy case, along with Master Amirchand, Avadbehari, Balmukand, and Basanta Kumar Biswas, who were all hanged in the case.

When in the open conference Mr. Manindra Nath Naik of Chanderanagore stood up to move a memorial resolution on the great Indian revolutionary, late Rashbehari Bose, I introduced him to the audience saying that he was the maker of that bomb which was thrown on the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, the audience hailed him with prolonged cheers and clapping.

The conference passed only one resolution that a history of the contribution of revolutionaries in the freedom movement of India be compiled and memorials to revolutionary martyrs be erected.

For the memorial the Delhi jail was proposed to be preserved. Accordingly I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister. His reply was that because the jail was to be the Maulana Azad National Medical College only a plaque would be put up on the spot where stood the gallows. I was directed to approach the Home Minister. We met him several times. At last he formed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Datar, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Mr. A. D. Pandit, Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Mr. Sehgal, Jt. Secretary, Home and Mr. Sharma, Senior Archi-

tect were the official members and Dr. Yudhvir Singh and myself were non-official members.

After about half an hour's discussion Mr. Pandit suggested that because the jail was going to be a medical college no public memorial could be preserved in it. So he proposed that the memorial be erected in front of the jail gate. I welcomed the idea. Sehgal asked about the cost and Pandit Stated that it would be about two to three lakhs.

Asked by Mr. Datar I submitted a plan with a sketch, a plaster model and a rough estimate of about two lakhs prepared by the famous artist, Ashit Kumar Haldar.

How much anti-revolutionary the Congress Government was, was conclusively proved when after all this the Home Ministry under Pandit Pant flatly refused to do anything.

I later prepared a book on this conference named 'Indian Revolutionaries in Conference' in which about 50 photos of revolutionary martyrs have been given and the correspondence I had with Mr. Datar on this subject has been published. Two photoes in this book, which are today of very great historical importance—one photo of the spot were the Hardinge Bomb case martyrs were hanged, the other photo is of the condemned cells of that jail where the martyrs passed their last days. These two historic things today exist only in these two photoes in that book.

Congress Government will someday go but this

book will remain to commemorate the martyrs, who laid down their lives as heroic Indian fighters for freedom. Delhi will remember Master Amirchand and India will pay her homage to this son of Delhi. In the book I have tried to preserve the memories of many a revolutionary who, thanks to the apathy of the Congress Government, have already been relegated into partial oblivion. Master Amirchand is one such patriot.

Master Amirchand was not an ordinary citizen of Delhi, but was a foremost publicman of this historic city. One instance, as mentioned elsewhere, will show what he was. He was running a weekly in Delhi called "Akash". The editor was Pandit Ram Chandra Bhardwaj of North West Frontier Provinces. Under vernacular Press Act all the papers of the type were stopped by the Government. Amirchand was not much sorry for his own paper. But the *Swarajya* of Allahabad was the prestige paper, of which 3 editors were transported to the Andamans. Amirchand decided to continue the paper and collected money for it and sent the editor of his own paper to Allahabad to restart the *Swarajya*. Rashbehari Bose had no difficulty in picking up such a fiery person as his revolutionary accomplice.

British Government erected four memorials on Lord Hardinge in Delhi, namely, the Hardinge Library, the Hardinge Hospital, the Hardinge Bridge and the Hardinge Avenue. But the independent

Government of India would not erect memorial to Hurdingle Bomb conspiracy case martyrs, who were hanged.

The memorials of only Congress men erected by the Congress Government are not creating much inspiration in the people. In spite of tonnes and tonnes of propaganda publicity, morale of the people are going down. The Congress' attitude towards the revolutionaries was well-known to us. But it became crystal clear to us on the very day on which we achieved our independence. Two days before the 15th of August, 1947, the day of transfer of power to Indian hands, there was a meeting of the Lucknow City Congress Committee. In that meeting I proposed that on the 15th morning we should assemble at Aminuddaula Park and march to the Residency with the Indian national flag and hoist that flag on the Residency building in place of the British flag that was flying there since its British occupation after the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.

The idea appeared to be welcome to all. But Shri C. B. Gupta, the President of the Committee, remarked, "Why on that very day? It may be done later." This clearly indicated the trend of mind of the Congress leaders regarding the transfer of power.

On the 15th August, 1947 it was crystal clear that the Congress was not to bring about the least change in the tradition established by the foreign



rulers. The Congress simply wanted to imitate them in letter and spirit.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu that day assumed charge as the Governor of U.P. A tea party was announced in the Government House in the evening. I was invited there as a member of the City Congress Committee.

In the afternoon my friend, Govinda Charan Kar, a Kakori lifer, came to my place and after tea we went to Aminabad to see how people were observing the day. We found that the freedom fighters of Congress had gathered there and were preparing vigorously to go to the Government House in a torch-light procession.

When they started myself and Govind Kar followed them to encourage them in their enthusiasm. But when they reached the gate they were not allowed to go in. Kar pushed open the gate in defying mood challenging the sentries. On hearing the shouts some City Congress members came near the gate and requested me to get in. But I refused. The demonstrators stayed there for nearly half an hour and then returned cursing the Congress leaders.

Conscious people understood from that very day that power came not for the masses but for a few leaders only.

After the transfer of power, how my entry into Bengal was welcomed by the people on the occasion of the Jatin Das anniversary has been narrated. But

the Congress attitude towards the revolutionary fighters for freedom was distinctly apathetic. This was because they knew that power transfer took place as the direct result of the grim direct-action fight of the revolutionaries. That glaring fact must be wiped out from the memory of the people by somehow pushing these fighters into oblivion and preaching outright that the Congress did everything.

We were also realising this, and, therefore, in the first week of October, 1947, we in our R. S. P. C. C. meeting at Gopalganj in Bihar took the decision to leave the Congress which was announced by me, as the General Secretary of the Party. This received wide publicity.

I was moving heaven and earth for strengthening the Party, but the thought that our veteran leaders were not with us always haunted me. The new leadership of the party treated the veteran very shabbily. Let me cite only one instance of this treatment.

Once I was in our Bengal Office in Calcutta, when Pratul Chandra Ganguli came to see me, the Bengal Secretary, Makhan Paul, kept him waiting for nearly an hour. He was about to go back out of disgust when I was brought before him. I apologised to him but was very much ashamed at heart.

The third all-party conference was held at Basti in U. P. Till then the R. S. P. was gaining strength in U. P. But later on my own friends

developed internal clique and thereby ruined the Party in U.P. An important section left the party and ultimately joined the C. P. I.

U. P. R. S. P. was the creation of my life-long service and when my own lieutenants brought about its ruination I was very much shocked and told the party leadership that I should be relieved of the secretaryship of the party. But yet I was rather compelled to linger on for another three years and ultimately left the party quietly announcing before the Steering Committee meeting in New Delhi that they should elect somebody else as their General Secretary in their all party conference in Bombay, which was about to be held by the end of 1953.

For six long years after we stood against the ruling Congress Party, I, as R. S. P. leader, had one single objective in my mind and that was to create a united front of leftists to stand as a rival to the Congress. We stood by Swami Sahajanand and three years later responded readily to the call of late Sarat Chandra Bose. But unfortunately no real unity could be achieved.

So I left politics out of disgust and spent a year in the hills and jungles of Orissa. The Congress passed the Avadi Resolution in 1955 and I could see a ray of hope. Urged by some friends I met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and through him rejoined the Congress. But gradually I have been disillusioned of the charm of Socialism of the Congress variety.

As a revolutionary, I was never a believer in compromise, because I was convinced that it would degrade that nation. But I could never dream that whatever patriotic spirit we could acquire in the course of our fight for freedom in fifty years would be totally lost only within 18 years of independence. Within such a short time our national character has been so thoroughly degraded that today we have become a nation of self-seekers. Today neither the administration nor the Congress organisation has strong foundation among the people. Only top leadership is there, and that, too, not free from popular distrust.

How this nation is to rise again, that question alone is disturbing the mind of all honest and right-thinking Indians.

I have not the least doubt that a section of the youths of the country would again rise and form the vanguard of revolution and bring about the much-desired change in the atmosphere. The sooner that happens the better it would be for this accursed land of ours. I would very eagerly wait for the day before I breathe my last.















