

## CHAPTER XII

### PERSONS ARRESTED IN KAKORI CASE

1. Ram Prasad Bismil of Shahjahanpur Hanged
2. Banarasi Lal Kokash ,, Turned approver & was pardoned
3. Lal Hargovind ,, Let off by Sessions
4. Prem Kishan Khanna ,, 5 years R. I.
5. Indubhushan Mitra ,, Turned approver and was pardoned
6. Roshan Singh ,, Hanged
7. Ramdutt Shukla ,, Let off before trial
8. Ashfaqullah ,, Hanged
9. Birbhadra Tewari of Kanpur Let off by lower court
10. Ramdulare Trivedi ,, 5 years R. I.
11. Gopi Mohan ,, Let off
12. Raj Kumar Sinha ,, 10 years R. I.
13. Suresh Ch. Bhattacharya ,, 10 years R. I.
14. Sachindra N. Bakshi of Banaras Transportation for life
15. Seth Damodar Swarup , Bailed off
16. D. D. Bhattacharya , Let off before trial
17. Manmatha Nath Gupta , 14 years R. I.
18. Ramnath Pande , 5 years R. I.
19. Indravikram Singh , Let off before trial
20. Shitla Sahai of Allahabad Let off before trial
21. Bhupendra N. Sanyal ,, 5 years R. I.

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 22. Sachindra N. Sanyal           | ,                        | Transportation for<br>life      |
| 23. Chandradhar Janhari of Agra   |                          | Let off before trial            |
| 24. Chandrabhal Janbari           | „                        | Let off before trial            |
| 25. Shivcharan Lal                | „                        | Informer<br>(not even arrested) |
| 26. Babu Ram Verma                | of Etah                  | Let off before trial            |
| 27. Jyoti Shankar Dixit of Etawah |                          | Let off from lower<br>court     |
| 28. Harnam Sundarlal of Lucknow   |                          | Let off before trial            |
| 29. Sachindra N. Biswas           | „                        | Let off by the<br>Session       |
| 30. Govinda Charan Kar            | „                        | Transportation<br>for life      |
| 31. Mohanlal Gautam of Lahore     |                          | Let off before trial            |
| 32. Sarat Chandra Guha of Bengal  |                          | Let off before trial            |
| 33. Jogesh Ch. Chatterji          | „                        | Transportation<br>for life      |
| 34. Rajendranath Lahiri           | „                        | Hanged                          |
| 35. Mukundilal                    | of Etawah                | Transportation<br>for life      |
| 36. Ram Ratan Shukla              | „                        | Let off before tria             |
| 37. Vishnu Sharan                 |                          |                                 |
|                                   | Dublish of Meerut        | 10 years R. I.                  |
| 38. Madanlal                      | „                        | Let off before trial            |
| 39. Dhairon Singh                 | „                        | Let off before trial            |
| 40. Kalidas Basu                  | of Berhampur             | Let off before trial            |
| 41. Ram Krishna Khatri of Chanda  |                          | 10 years R. I.                  |
| 42. Pranabesh                     |                          |                                 |
|                                   | Chatterjee of Jubbalpore | 4 years R. I.                   |

43. Banwarilal of Rae-Bareilly 4 years R. I.  
Chandrasekar Sharma Azad of Banaras could not  
be arrested.

Sessions Case :

Mr. Hamilton, Special Sessions Judge,

Sessions trial No. 1 of 1926

Decided on 6th April, 1927

- Assessors :
1. Mr. Abbas Salem Khan
  2. Banwarilal Bhargava
  3. Ganu Babu (Jyan Chatterjee)
  4. Mohammad Ayub

<i>Age</i>	<i>Persons Convicted</i>	<i>Assessors on Accused</i>
22.	1. Banwarilal	Unanimous that none participated in dacoity.
26.	2. Prem Kishan Khanna	Not proved against any
18.	3. M. N. Gupta	
37.	4. Roshan Singh	None of the persons
31.	5. Ram Nath Pande	charged.
21.	6. J. C. Chatterji	Admitted the dacoity in pursuance of the conspiracy.
26.	7. P. K. Chatterjee	
26.	8. V. S. Dubish	
28.	9. S. C. Bhattacharjee	No. 1 finds Banwarilal,
33.	10. Mukandilal	M. N. Gupta, J. C.
22.	11. Ram Krishna Khatri	Chatterji, Ram Prasad,
20.	12. R. K. Sinha	Lahiri and Sanyal guilty
21.	13. Ramdulare Trivedi	of conspiracy. Others
29.	15. Ram Prasad Bismil	find Gupta, Ram

- 30. 15. G. C. Kar
- 24. 16. R. N. Lahiri
- 32. 17. S. N. Sanyal
- 19. 18. B. N. Sanyal

Supplementary Case

- 22 years 19. Ashfaqullah
- 20. S. N. Bakshi

Party names :

In a secret organisation the names of the important members are not used, but each member is given a secret name. These were the secret names of the members :

1. Ram Prasad : Ananda Prakash, Rudra Ram, Paramahans, Master Mahashay and Mohant.
2. Rajendra Nath Lahari ; Nitai, Nitaichand, Nitai Mama, Charu, Jugalkishore, Dixit, Mathura, Mathura Prasad, Jawaharlal Bajpai, K. P. Srivastava.
3. R. K. Khatri : Narendra, Ganga Ram, Govind Prakash.
4. J. C. Chatterji : Roy, Profulla Chandra Roy, Roy Mahashay.
5. Mukundilal : Maharaj
6. Banwarilal : Tara Singh, Ramanda Singh
7. Ashfaqullah : Kunwarji, Mantana, Wari, Krishan
8. Banarsi : Bawa
9. M. N. Gupta : Nawab, Nawab Sahib
10. Chandrasekhar Azad : Quick Silver

11. S. N. Bakshi : Badri, Kanaiyalal, Bagchi
12. Seth Damodar Swarup : Lalaji
13. G. C. Kar : Chaudhury
14. Indubhusan : Goward

A letter of Ashfaquallah to Banarsilal from Bhopal ( translated into English from Urdu ), Ex. P. 14 in Kakori Case :

...“You know that I have not a single shell with me to do business. Service means killing of my conscience. You must remember very well that I want to live free and I worship ‘ freedom ’ and I am ready to sacrifice my life for a glimpse thereof.

“ It would never be for me to have the chain ( yoke ) of servitude round my neck whoever it may be. I weep for hours when I think of it, but my relations press me that I should take up some service and thus I should serve my old mother. It is right to some extent that this is what our religion commands. But in this way I will have an opportunity to serve the motherland.

“ Today if I accept some service in Bhopal Sir Ishrar Hasan Khan Sahib would secure a job at once. My brother asked me to see him and on his slightest recommendations I would get a subedar’s post in the military. ..but then all my schemes would be upset. I donot love my life so that I may hoard money and enjoy but I want to live so that for the attainment of freedom for the country

I may not care in the least even the greatest danger ( I care Not ) if the world calls me mad or insane. It is my belief and I shall live and die for it.

“This is what I feel... I have become tired of wandering aimlessly in the streets of Shahjahanpur... you know that I have a village, no, no my mother is a Zemindar and that I can get as much land as I require without any difficulty. But I want to do cultivation on my own for which I do not have funds, if you approve of this and take interest therein, lay out money thereon, and let us go and take up our abode there. We will live among our brethren cultivators and will carry on our scheme as well and shall have sufficient money within a few years. There we would increase our propaganda on a wide scale and would invite our companions to join us. In short if there can be any pious and advantageous work for us, in this world it is cultivation, if you mind to follow it. If you would reply in negative my heart would break. However, you will have to do something or other for your wife and children, then why should we not take to cultivation. Capital is yours, land mine and labour of us both. We too will live like real brothers in the village and after facing bravely the troubles of the world, shall show to the world that what is there in the world that cannot be accomplished by two youths when they have one and the some idea in view and walk on one and the...

“The lands of Nandia and Solpur are extending their hands towards us and their eyes full of love are gazing at us, the poor and the oppressed cultivators are ready to welcome us, so brother do not disappoint these lands and dishearten these cultivators and let me know your opinion. Are you ready for it? If I had money I would have commenced the work and would have made you my partner, but alas : I am penniless and my relations, instead of rendering any help, are pushing me down into the abyss of slavery. They do not realise what cultivation is and the freedom of India depends only on the cultivators. So let us begin cultivation together...

“See how much benefit have Deonarain and Ganga Singh drawn out of cultivation. There will be many to join us after two years and then we will be able to do every-thing else.”.....Warsi.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SHIVCHARANLAL SHARMA'S ROLE IN KAKORI CASE

Shivcharanlal was the younger brother of Ram Charanlal Sharma who was wanted in Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy case but could not be prosecuted as he took shelter in French Pondicherry and was kept interned there. In connection with my visit to Pondicherry I have written much about him.

Shivcharan was convicted in the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case of 1918. The conspirators were released on condition that they would give up revolutionary activity. But Chandradhar Jauhari and Shivcharanlal started political work and they were compelled to go to the Jail to serve the sentences passed on them in the Mainpuri Case. Shivcharan was serving his term in the Bareilly jail and was about to be released when I went to meet his brother Ram Charanlal.

Shivcharanlal was the mystery man of Mr. Horton through whom he received many genuine information about the secret revolutionaries. Ram Prasad wrote a letter to Shivcharanlal at his Aligarh address and it fell into the hands of Mr. Horton. Again when Govinda Charan Kar was arrested at Lucknow, a letter was found with him signed by Shivcharanlal. Yet this Shivcharanlal was not an accused in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Shivcha-



ranlal also attended the Meerut meeting which formed a major part in the Kakori Case. Despite all such evidences against him Shivcharan was not arrested. These raised suspicions in our minds and we soon came to know that Shivcharan had been as a matter of fact arrested but he had entered into a secret understanding with Mr. Horton. From him Mr. Horton came to know of a proposed money action at Kankhal near Hardwar and also of plans to loot postal money in transit in big towns. As a trusted friend of Ram Prasad, a member of the Provincial Council, he knew many important matters of the secret party.

### PANDIT RAM PRASAD BISMIL

He was born in 1897. He came from Shahjahanpur. As a boy he was very naughty, used to smoke, rob and do various other mischiefs. But a great son of India brought about a thorough change in him. Satyarth Prakash of Swami Dayanand attracted him very much and he became an Arya Samajist. His father, an orthodox Brahmin could not tolerate this and Ram Prasad had to leave his home. But subsequently his father softened and Ram Prasad came back to the family. He was a lover of firearms and was engaged in smuggling them in the Gwalior State.

During the Lucknow Congress in 1916 his activities in support of Lokmanya Tilak put him in touch with the revolutionaries. Pandit Gendalal

Dixit, the leader of the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case who later died in Delhi, had given him much inspiration. The beginnings of the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case can be traced to the confession of a man who was deputed to collect information about a rich relation of his. The idea was to commit a dacoity in this rich relation's house. But the man gave the information to the police and arrests took place and the Mainpuri Conspiracy started in 1918. Ram Prasad was wanted in the case charged of revolutionary conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty over British India.

He had a literary taste and used to write articles. He wrote some booklets and translated others. He wrote good poems. Besides Hindi, Urdu, English he knew Bengali quite well.

After the King's Proclamation his warrant was withdrawn, he came back to Shahjanahpur and started a silk weaving factory for his livelihood.

Ram Prasad was very healthy and good looking. When he was a child, the issue-less Bengali wife of the District Magistrate of Shahjahanpur wanted to adopt him as her child. The parents were agreeable to the proposal, because they had very limited means and the D. M. was wealthy and he had already settled down at Shahjahanpur permanently. But Ram Prasad's grand-mother would not part with her beloved grandchild. When Ram Prasad was under capital sentence and the appeal was being heard, this old lady came to Lucknow and

lay prostrate before the Chief Court for several days giving up food and water. After much persuasion, she could be removed.

In 1923, Sachindra Nath Sanyal met Ram Prasad and requested him to work with him afresh. But his efforts were not successful. Early next year I went to Shahjahanpur and persuaded him to join the party and he joined.

His nerves were made of steel. He scarcely had any efficiency in planning things ; but in action he was easily the undaunted master. His command nobody could dare to disobey. When impassioned and angry, he seemed to be the Rudra incarnate. But in normal mood he was very gentle, generous and affectionate.

His life was so much regulated that he never missed the daily physical exercise, took principal meals only once in the midday, did not smoke or chew betel-nuts. With food he did not take any spice. Dal he took rarely ; thick bread, boiled vegetables and ghee was his main food. In the night he took milk and some fruits.

People loved and respected him, because of his well disciplined life and readiness to serve others. For these traits of character, he had an influential circle of friends around him. Added to this was his revolutionary background. Among his ardent admirers were some patriotic and militant youths like Ashfaqullah and Thakur Roshan Singh, the two other Kakori martyrs.

## ASHFAQULLAH

This brilliant Muslim youth of Shahjahanpur was the only Muslim in the whole of India to be hanged on the charge of revolutionary conspiracy to deprive the king emperor of his sovereignty over British India.

The militant Muslim instinct inspired him to search for Ram Prasad who, he came to know, was a wanted leader of of the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case. Ram Prasad was in hiding at that time, when he came in the open Ashfaq wanted his revolutionary guidance. He won't give any quarter to a Muslim. But Ashfaq's earnest devotion changed the Pandit's attitude and soon he became Ram Prasad's most trusted lieutenant. Ashfaq was ashamed of the lack of patriotism in his own community. He gave up school and joined the 1921 movement. He once laid himself at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi, but came back disappointed.

He came from a wealthy and educated family many of whom were holding high positions in service but none had anything to do with politics. He had less interest in studies but was an expert in swimming, horse riding and hunting. As a child though he derived immense pleasure from doing mischiefs yet he was very generous. Instances were not unknown when a neighbour got very angry with him for robbing his preserved mangoes in company of other boys and decided to punish him when found out. Once one such man searched

the whole neighbourhood for Ashfaq but could not find him. His son was sick, so he had to come back home soon. To his utter surprise he found Ashfaq besides the bed of the sick boy. Ashfaq was nursing the boy. How could he punish him? Ashfaq had a very fine physique. He was tall, broad-shouldered and muscular. When after arrest he was put into the jail he was 185 lbs in weight and there was no sign of fat. Though his shoulders and chest were very broad, his waist was very thin and his legs and arms were very strong and stout.

Syed Ainuddin, the Committing Magistrate, who was a British stooge and an enemy of his countrymen, escorted him from Delhi to Lucknow in a second class compartment. His object as assigned by his British masters was to prevail on Ashfaq as a Muslim and thus get all information from him. So was also the motive of Khan Bahadur Tasadduq Hussain, Deputy S. P. of the Imperial C. I. D. who tried his utmost to inject communalism into the mind of this resolute young revolutionary.

Their arguments were roughly : you are a Muslim, we are also of the same faith. So we are so sorry for you. Why should you spoil your valuable life by being true and faithful to the revolutionary party? Ram Prasad is a Hindu. His object is to establish Hindu Raj in place of the British one. You come from a good and enlightened

Muslim family, why should you join hands with the Kafirs and go against your own faith and against the interest of your own community? But all these arguments were of no avail. Service to the country had already been accepted by Ashfaq as a firm faith; he had already divested his mind of stupid and unpatriotic communal feelings. So he replied; "I am grateful for your good wishes but my ideas are unchangeable. Ram Prasad is not a Hindu to me; he is a Hindusthani. Not Hindu freedom but Hindustan's freedom is his objective. Had he been inspired by Hindu freedom, even then I would have joined hands with him. If I were to choose between Hindu masters and British masters and if my choice was limited to only these two alternatives, I would have chosen the Hindu masters as after all they would have been Indians." Before this strong and undaunted patriotism their arguments vanished into thin air and they had to retire baffled and humiliated.

Ashfaq escaped arrest on the 26th September 1925, when the police arrested several persons in connection with the Kakori case. When his house was surrounded by the police, he was not at home. He went underground for nearly a year and was arrested at Delhi on 8th December, 1925. He was hanged in Fyzabad jail on the 19th of December, 1927.

Revolutionaries go underground not to escape arrest but to carry on their work. Ashfaq's under-

ground life was beset with dangers and difficulties. Only a determined man like him could stand the strain. Ashfaq was a master in the art of changing his appearance and most of his absconding period he spent in the guise of a Hindu. Due to long and intimate association with Hindu revolutionaries, he was well acquainted with the Hindu mode of living. For a considerable period he had been in the hostel of the Banaras Hindu University and nobody could suspect him to be a non-Hindu.

Ashfaq had been in Bihar for months as the friend of a Bengali Railway official and the local Muslim Government officer in charge of the area gradually became his most intimate friend. They were frequently going on hunting excursions and naturally Ashfaq the expert hunter earned his great esteem.

He was later living as the guest of the well known patriot late Arjun Lal Sethi of Rajasthan. He found out that the young daughter of his host was very much attracted to him and so he left the place disregarding the earnest request of Sethiji to stay on. But Sethiji came to know the reason of Ashfaq's sudden departure later when the girl expressed strong inclination to marry him after his arrest. The news of Ashfaq's execution was such a shock to the girl that she fell seriously ill and did not recover.

Ashfaq made up his mind to go abroad. His

object was to go to Russia and for that purpose he wanted first to reach Kabul. For making necessary arrangements he went to Delhi and started preparations,

Here he was living in a Muslim quarter. Nearby was the house of a Muslim engineer. His fine appearance and the story of his good manners was a great attraction for a young daughter of the engineer. One day she sent a letter to him through a maid servant and Ashfaq very politely gave a reply expressing his difficulties. But inspite of this one night the girl herself came to his room. He was taken aback. She proposed to him unhesitatingly but Ashfaq convinced her that their marriage was an impossibility. So the poor girl had to go out disappointed.

Then one day his friend through whom he was trying to go to Kabul betrayed him to the police and he was arrested on the 8th September, 1926.

In the condemned cell he was taking small amount of food and was passing his time in reading and contemplation. Once his mother came to see him and found him to be thin and tears began to trickle down her eyes. Ashfaq told her smilingly 'You think I am getting thin due to the fear of death; not at all. Now I take very light diet. I am deep in thinking. Dietary control helps in the concentration of mind.' This somewhat relieved the pains of the afflicted mother.



He accosted a friend on the last interview that he had with any one 'Well friend, have you come to congratulate me? Yes, tomorrow I am to marry.'

Yes, next morning on the 18th of December, 1927, after bath he wore his own clothes, a special privilege allowed to him, mounted the scaffold and kissed the rope before it was placed round his neck by the hangman.

His last poem uttered before execution meant: "Death is waiting for all. My death is also not unnatural that I should be afraid of it. All things of earth are subject to destruction and merging in God. I am also obeying that leaving Fyzabad jail for eternity.'

His last message was that the revolutionaries were not terrorists. Whatever they do, they do it for the country's emancipation. They do not indulge in violence for violence's sake. But how many innocents were killed in cold blood by the rulers at Jalianwala Bagh? "Let India be free and Indians be happy." He had no regrets. He was proud to be the first Muslim to be hanged for participation in revolutionary activities.

A letter written by Ashfaq from Bhopal to Banarsilal (approver in Kakori case) was an exhibit in the Kakori Case. Nowhere in the case it was mentioned, but this single letter showed what a fine mind and heart Ashfaq possessed. He gave in it a beautiful picture of the life of his

dream. In it he described how he wished and every youngman should wish his own development and serve his own country. Selfish motives degrade the individual and discredit the country. This idea he maintained to the last moment of his life. His one reply to all communal appeals was that even if one Muslim betrays the country, it would tarnish the community. He could have saved his life easily but he never for a moment thought in terms of his own self.

### THAKUR ROSHAN SINGH

Thakur Roshan Singh was born in village Noda in district Shahjahanpur. He had very little academic education, but was very intelligent and efficient in worldly affairs.

He spent his life generally in the village, yet strangely enough, he possessed a fair knowledge of the world at large.

Like Ram Prasad he was also a Arya Samajist, that is to say, he had adopted the reformist cult of Satyarth Prakash of Swami Dayanand. This must have inspired him to be a revolutionary, though he was actually initiated to the revolutionary movement by Ram Prasad who was his very close friend.

The majority of the village population from where Roshan Singh came were Rajputs. Roshan Singh was also a Rajput. In the remote prosperous village he had sufficient fresh air and varieties

of health-giving food, pleasant work and rest. From boyhood he had developed a fine physique by regular exercise and was a leader of the village boys. He was well versed in the art of the use of lathi, sword and gun. He learnt Urdu and Hindi in the village and English in the jail and as a Kakori undertrial he started learning Bengali too.

Though a firm believer in an armed revolution, he joined the non-violent non-cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1921. A patriot could not remain aloof from a national freedom movement whatever might be its form. Roshan had been to various places in connection with his movement and ultimately he was arrested and given 2 years R. I. He was in the Bareilly jail and there he came in touch with many other patriots.

After release he felt disgusted as the non-cooperation movement was withdrawn and also as there was despondency everywhere. He readily accepted Ram Prasad's leadership and became an earnest revolutionary.

Thakur Sahib was a strong man both bodily and mentally. In Lucknow district jail as an under-trial in Kakori Case he used to wrestle with 5 or 6 persons daily as their teacher without getting tired. In the same way during hunger strike he once continued for 16 days without any forced feeding all along doing his normal routine work. He heard the news of his father's death in jail, but remained completely unperturbed.

Unlike the three other Kakori martyrs he was not given capital sentence in the Kakori train dacoity case in which he did not take part, but in another decoity on very weak evidence. We thought that he would get 5 years R. I. in the case and not more than that. Indeed he was given 5 years on the charges of conspiracy but capital sentence in another village decoity. This was a surprise to all. But he took the sentence without the least change in his appearance. He maintained this attitude till the last. As a last measure to save his valuable life his friends persuaded him to submit a mercy petition. But even that went in vain.

Roshan Singh went to the scaffold with the same calmness and shouted 'Bande Mataram' and uttered a sentence in poetic Urdu which meant : "Roshan, realise the greatness of life." Yes, he realised the real greatness of life.

On the 20th of December, 1928, crowds of men were waiting outside the jail for taking his dead body in procession, but all of a sudden the order was given that no procession would be allowed. So his friends did the last rite quietly.

His son who was reading in Gurukul, Brindaban, once came to interview him in the Lucknow jail. The boy had heard wrongly from somebody that his father had given out party secrets to the police. So the boy charged the father with this. Enraged at false charge Thakur Saheb became furious and cried out : "Your father is not ill-born, he is a true Thakur."

### RAJENDRA NATH LAHIRI

Rajen Lahiri was born at Bharenga in the Pabna district of Bengal in 1901. His father late Kshitimohan Lahiri, was an ardent patriot and was respected throughout the district for his generosity and services to the people. He was under police surveillance since the Bengal Partition Movement of 1905. The name of the High School of the village still commemorates his memory.

Rajen inherited all the qualities of his father. From his boyhood he was patriotic and was taking part in service of humanity. He came to Benares for his studies.

He came in touch with a revolutionary of Anushilan Samity, named Shyam Chakravarty, who was temporarily at Banaras. A certain boyish act of Rajen Lahiri so much prejudiced the puritan Anushilanite that he told his successor not to take Lahiri in the Party. But Rajen was very eager to do revolutionary work and approached an old ex-revolutionary, who was once connected with Sachindra Nath Sanyal. This gentleman introduced Rajen to Sanyal. When I reached Banaras, Lahiri was much impressed by me and we talked almost daily for hours. Sanyal being alarmed told him many things against Anushilan Samity but nothing against me.

Besides his university studies, Rajen was always keeping himself engaged in various other activities, had connections with clubs, gymnasium and literary

activities. He was the honorary Secretary of Bengal Sahitya Parishad of B. H. U. He wrote articles in papers like Bangabani and Sankha. He also wrote a number of articles for 'Agradut', a handwritten monthly journal. He was Secretary of the Health Union. He passed B. A. with history and economics and took up history in M. A.,

Up-to-date bomb making was to be started in U. P. Rajen went to Calcutta for the purpose. He read the news of the Kakori arrests from Dakshineswar Bomb factory where he had just gone. His Banaras house was searched and a warrant was issued for his arrest. The Dakshineswar bomb factory was searched on the 10th November, 1925, and he was given 10 years transportation by the Tribunal.

He was then brought to Lucknow as an accused in the Kakori Case and kept separate from others in the Central Jail as he was already a long term. Later he was brought down to the district jail and kept with the other accused in the Kakori case. In the court he never cared to follow anything of the proceedings. He thought that he had done his duty and he was indifferent to the consequences.

He was an out and out revolutionary and revolted against social prejudices and though a Brahmin he threw away the sacred thread. He took pork and beef without the least hesitation. He realised at heart that the social prejudices were great hin-

drances in the path of progress and they were to be broken off mercilessly. That was the real spirit of a true revolutionary.

He had secret party names, such as Charu, Jawahar, Jugalkisore, etc. It was he who stopped the train in the Kakori action by pulling the chain in a second class compartment. He was dressed in short, shirt and a pugree. He had an attractive figure, broad round face, large eyes with piercing looks like those of Swami Vivekananda.

His last letter ran thus : 'Received news yesterday that the Privy Council Appeal has been dismissed. You have done much to save our life. All efforts having failed it seems that our sacrifice of life is necessary for the country. What is death ? It is life alternate. What is life ? It is nothing but the other aspect of death. Why should then a man be afraid of death, or sorry for it. Death is as sure as the light of sun in the morning. If it is true that history repeats itself, then my firm faith is that our death will not be in vain. My last salutation to all.'

He was hanged on the 17th of December at the Gonda jail. He accepted death quietly with a glorious smile which was visible even in the dead man's lips.

Lahiri did not send any mercy petition.

### SACHINDRA NATH SANYAL

In his early youth Sachindra Nath Sanyal independently established Anushilan Samiti at Bana-

ras in 1909. Gradually he came in close touch with important Bengal revolutionaries like Pratul Chandra Ganguli and Rashbehari Bose. During the first World War he along with Girija Babu, the representative of Anushilan Samiti, became lieutenant of Bose and planned for the overthrow of the British Government with the help of the army. In the Banaras conspiracy case Sanyal was given transportation for life and was sent to the Andamans.

He was released in 1920 after Kings Proclamation but again started secret revolutionary activities, first in U. P. and then in Bengal under the Hindustan Republican Association of which he was one of the founders. For issuing a revolutionary leaflet he was sentenced to 2 years R. I. after his arrest in Calcutta in 1925.

These revolutionary leaflets were distributed widely in the country and beyond. Many were seized in different places in U. P. In this connection he was brought as a Kakori under-trial, and although there was no other evidence against him he was given a life sentence as formerly he was a lifer under similar charges.

He developed T. B. in the jail during the Second World War due to extreme mental worries, was released from jail, went to Bhowali T. B. Sanatorium but failed to recover and breathed his last at Gorakhpur early in 1945.



## GOVINDA CHARAN KAR

He was an active member of the Anushilan Samity at Dacca from student days. During the first World War he went underground. In this condition the police surrounded him in a place in North Bengal. There was a prolonged fight with the police in which some policemen were wounded and Kar received several bullet shots. He dropped down unconscious in a paddy field. He was arrested and sentenced for 8 years transportation and sent to the Andamans. Three bullets on his chest and hand were not operated out and they remained in his body. He fell seriously ill in the Andaman cellular jail and was released unconditionally in 1920.

After my arrest Kar came to U. P. to maintain the link between Bengal and U. P. On the day of general Kakori arrests he was also arrested at Lucknow and he thought that Shivchrran Lal was responsible for it.

He did not take part in the Kakori Train Dacoity, yet he was falsely implicated in it and given a life sentence.

After his release he was living in Calcutta. Communal Muslims started the campaign of mass killing of Hindus at Dacca. Kar's relations were there. So he went to Dacca by plane but at the aerodrome he was murderously attacked and escaped death calling himself a Muslim, though he received 22 wounds all over the body. He could

not fully recover from this and died within a few years. Thus came the end of a brave fighter for the country's freedom.

### MUKUNDILAL GUPTA

He comes from a moneyed family of Auraiya, district Etawah. Pandit Gendalal Dixit, the leader of the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case of 1918, was a teacher in this place. Mukundilal came in contact with him and became a full fledged revolutionary. He suffered 6 years R. I. in Mainpuri Conspiracy Case. After release he started a small business at Jhansi. He was recruited to Hindustan Republican Association by Sachindra Nath Bakshi, took part in Kakori Train Dacoity and was given life sentence in Kakori Conspiracy Case. After his release he again plunged himself into the August Movement of 1942 and was given 7 years R. I. This great patriot is passing his old days somehow without anybody to look after him properly.

### SACHINDRA NATH BAKSHI

He was one of the early recruits of the Anushilan Samiti at Banaras. His family had a big three-storeyed house at Pataleswar, a locality in the Banaras city and his father was the proprietor and manager of the Ice Factory at Sikrol. Sachindra was a fountain of energy and was busy day and night with the work of the party. For the furtherance of his work he started clubs and associations and his swimming club earned the attraction of the

whole city when he first started the 13 mile swimming competition from Chunar to Banaras. He was my right-hand man at Banaras at this time.

When the expansion of the organisation was seriously discussed, he offered himself to go anywhere. Lucknow being the headquarter, a man was required there. I knew Chauduri Khaliquzaman through Pratul Ganguli. So I introduced Bakshi to him and some others. Bakshi struggled hard but at that time Lucknow was not suitable for our work. I later placed him at Jhansi and he did much solid work there.

He evaded arrest during the Kakori arrests, had a very hard dock workers, life in Bombay and was arrested at Bhagalpur, Bihar, and stood the trial in the supplementary Kakori Conspiracy Case with Ashfaqullah. He was sentenced to transportation for life. His associates at Jhansi, Bhagwandas Mahora and Sadashiva Raghunath Malkapurkar got 14 years R.I. each in what is known as Bhuswal Bomb Case.

### VISHNU SARAN DUBLISH

He left his college studies when he was preparing for his B.A. examination in 1921 and joined the non-cooperation movement. When leading a procession he was assaulted by the English head of the district and it created a deep impression on his youthful mind. He was sentenced and was in the Bareilly and Lucknow jails. When he came in

contact with Sanyal he turned a very enthusiastic revolutionary and was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in the Kakori Case. In the Naini Central Jail he was falsely implicated in a jail riot and given life sentence which was reduced to 5 years by the High Court.

He was a heavy smoker and he had to smuggle this contraband article in jail. One day the Governor came to see the Naini jail. In the Circle the Governor stepped into a barrack and wanted to see a prisoner's bed. Colonel Palmer, the Superintendent, pushed open the bed folded in the first berth and cigarettes and bidies came out. The Governor wanted to see the prisoner and it was very interesting when it was found that bed belonged to Dublish. Dublish told the Governor that for a heavy smoker life in the jail was very hard. He requested the Governor to transfer him to the Andamans where prisoners were allowed to smoke. Dublish had a good time in the island as a convict writer.

After release he became an M.L.A. and M.P. for many years. Now he is in bad health in advanced age and yet working as the President of the Meerut Zilla Parisad.

### SURESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARJEE

He came from Banaras and was arrested and interned during the First World War. Martyr Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi took much interest in him and under his guidance he learned Hindi

journalism. He was the Hindi teacher in the A.B. School at Kanpur and also edited the 'Vartaman', a Hindi daily when I went to Kanpur in 1924 and lived in the same mess with him at Patkapur.

He took a prominent part in organising the party from 1923. Ramdulare Trivedi, Batukeshwar Dutta, Bijoy Kumar Sinha, Surendranath Pande, etc. were inspired by him. He was the latest Editor of the Hindi Daily 'Pratap'.

### RAM KRISHNA KHATRI

He comes from village Chikhli, district Chanda, now in Maharashtra. From boyhood he was attracted by Lokamanya Tilak and Dr. Moonje. But later he became a Sanyasi, and eventually became the Secretary of the Udasī Sampradaya under the name of Govind Prakash. A closer study of life repulsed him, because he saw that barring a few good souls, most men were exploiters of the society under the garb of religion. They were characterless in many ways.

He came in contact with Chandrasekhar Azad and became a member of the Hindustan Republican Association. He was arrested at Poona and given 10 years R.I. in Kakori Case.

Durring my hunger strike in Lucknow jail he left home and came to Lucknow and moved heaven and earth in support of the strike. This was how ultimately he settled down at Lucknow and after my release pressed me to do so which I actually did.

### RAJ KUMAR SINHA

He is a lovable person. When he was a B.Sc. student of the Banaras Hindu University, two rifles were recovered from his box and he was arrested at Kanpur. He knew nothing about the Kakori Dacoity but the police managed to give him a sentence of 10 years R.I. He passed his jail life very bravely. He is a great lover of Indian classical music but takes Russian language classes at Kanpur for his livelihood. He now teaches Russian.

### MANMATHA NATH GUPTA

He comes from Banaras, was a meritorious student of the Kashi Vidyapith and also was a writer even in his student days. He was also arrested and jailed in early life in 1921.

He was the youngest Kakori accused and had participated in Kakori dacoity and other affairs. He had correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi which was published in 'Young India'.

He was given 14 years R.I. in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, because of his tender age.

In jail he studied much and learnt many foreign languages. He has written dozens of books and has earned a name as a Hindi writer. He is now editing a Hindi paper, a weekly of the Publications Division of the Government of India.

### RAMDULARE TRIVEDI

He led a very hard life in boyhood in Bombay after his father's sudden and untimely death. Even

as a boy he had to maintain himself, his mother and brother.

In the 1921 movement he was given 6 month's R.I. and fought hard with authorities in the Bareilly jail.

He joined the secret movement through Suresh Battacharya and became intimate with me after my arrival at Kanpur. He was later arrested in the Kakori Case and given 5 years R. I. Police were badly after him even after his release and arrested him once in Dehradun-Kanpur Conspiracy Case and again on suspicion that he had killed a boy who was a police informer. He has taken up journalism as his profession. Saheed Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi had a soft corner for him, because of his patriotism and the dignified way in which he struggled.

### PREM KRISAAN KHANNA

His father was a big engineer in Railway Service and he was leading a comfortable life at Shahjahanpur. He came in touch with Ram Prasad Bismil and they became intimate friends. He worked in Delhi.

He had a licenced Mauser pistol and Bismil used it for his revolutionary work, of course, with the knowledge of Khannaji. This led to his arrest in the Kakori Case and he was given 5 years R. I.

He is brave by nature and passed his jail life boldly. After release he started work in the Con-

gress and became an M. L. A. Now he is a member of Parliament.

### BHUPENDRANATH SANYAL

He is the youngest brother of Sachindranath Sanyal. He was arrested in Kakori case when he was a B. Sc. student at Allahabad. He was given 5 years R. I.

He is a very good writer and speaker both in Hindi and English. After release he was again sentenced for his speech in a youth conference. Now he is in service.

### RAM NATH PANDE

He was the post box of Rajendra Nath Lahiri and was the only son of his widow mother. Due to interception of letters by the police he was detected and arrested in Kakori Case. Though he left his mother alone in distress, he was always cheerful in jail and all efforts of the police to get him on their side failed. Pande was strong both physically and mentally. He was given 2 years R. I.

After release Pande studied Homoeopathy and now practises at Banaras as a Homoeopathic doctor.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE JUDGEMENT AND AFTER

I have given a general idea about the Kakori Case. I shall state here a few words about our defence counsels. We were all grateful to them, because they stood by us when our need was the greatest. We had full faith in Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and told him that we would not require any other lawyer from outside if he could take the charge. As he could not take the charge because of his other involvements as the leaders of the Swaraj Party, Mr. B. K. Chaudhury had to be brought from Calcutta. Chaudhury made great sacrifices and defended us so nicely that every one of us was highly satisfied. We developed a love and respect for him and tears trickled down his eyes during the occasion of our last parting with him. Every one of us was moved. Shri Mohanlal Saxena and Shri C. B. Gupta also became very intimate with us and they were working for us to the best of their abilities. Shri Daya Shankar Hazela, late Ajit Prasad Agarwal, Mr. Manilal Kothari and R. F. Bahadurji took much interest in our defence.

Particularly Chaudhury, Saxena and Gupta generally used to spend the Sundays with us in the district Jail and used to lunch with us that day

and we made special preparations for food. Some of us were good cooks. These meetings and lunches were a source of great pleasure to us during the one and half years' undertrial days in the Lucknow jail.

### THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

I have given an idea of the Kakori drama and at the conclusion let me also describe how the curtain was drawn for the last time. That was really a memorable day for all of us.

All of us got up early in the morning that day, perhaps none had sound sleep in the night. Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil did not have a wink of sleep in the whole night as he was very much upset on the submission of mercy petition by Sanyal. He wrote almost a full length book and got it sent outside. He was upset the very day the thing took place. He had taken me beside the secluded barrack and told me that he saw Sanyal's petition in the office. I could not pacify him. I called Lahiri and we both succeeded in pacifying him somehow. But unhappily his bitterness was expressed through writing against the Bengalees in general. To avoid this bitterness I advised Shri Sanyal to submit his petition after the delivery of the judgment, but unfortunately he did not listen to me. Bismil had this grievance but the way of his expression was unwise.

However, all of us finished our morning duties,

bathing etc. to be ready to start for the Court. At this stage we heard that three cells were being cleaned in the Condemned Cells, just beyond our Ward enclosure. This information created a commotion. We knew that Bismil and Lahiri would be given capital sentence. But none of us could think as to who could be the third person. Some thought that Manmatha Nath who took part in all the overt acts might be the person, and others thought that I had been made the leader of the Conspiracy and I might be the person. None could imagine that it could be Thakur Roshan Singh, who was not only given the capital punishment but was actually hanged.

That morning we were called to the office early. From our barrack we went in a procession to the office. We were fettered inside and as soon as we passed the inner gate we saw the jailor, Rai Sahib Champalal standing there almost overwhelmed with tears. I have spent nearly a quarter of a century in the northern Indian jails but nowhere I have found such a jailor. He was weeping as if he was one us, a very dear friend or relative.

In those days executions of prisoners was a common thing in Lucknow jail, yet I have seen how tears were rolling out from the eyes of this old man during the last interview a prisoner held with his dearest one. He was soft, kind and humane and yet he was a Government title-holder. The peculiarity in him was that unlike other jailors

he was not callous. He maintained this trait of his character even in the most dreary life of jail administration, because he possessed a stout heart.

That day also everything took place as usual. For the last one and a half years it was just a part of our routine to go to the Court in a police van, heavily guarded, and then come back to the jail. That day we were brought all together in the same vehicle. It was also known in the city that judgment in the Kakori Case would be delivered on that day. So just in front of the building where our trial was taking place a huge crowd had assembled. The police was already prepared to face this situation. A considerable number of policemen were on duty and they were smartly dressed and equipped. They made a very big cordon and did not allow the public to come near the building. Only the lawyers were permitted inside the Court. Ram Prasad Bismil was leading and reciting a couplet loudly and we were repeating it. He was singing the inspiring patriotic song of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, the celebrated patriotic poet, which read :

“Sar pharoshi ki tamanna ab hamaray did men  
hai,

Dekhna hai zor kitna bazuay katil main hai.”

(Now our earnest desire is to be beheaded, let us test how much might the hand of the executioner possesses.) We entered the Court room singing this song. The judge had not come by that time. We saw our defence lawyers including late G. B.

Pant standing on one side. We shouted 'Bande Mataram' in the court room. The judge was so much upset and nervous that he came to deliver the judgment after making all arrangements to leave Lucknow. Immediately after delivering the judgement he caught a train for Bombay and from there boarded a ship for London. He did not have that moral courage to live in India any more and left India possibly with a guilty conscience. Only parts of the judgement was read by the judge. Ram Prasad Bismil and Rajendra Nath Lahiri were given capital sentence, as we had apprehended earlier, but to our surprise the third man who was given the same sentence was Roshan Singh. He was given only five years' rigorous imprisonment for conspiracy but for participating in dacoity, he was given capital sentence. When the judgement was read, everybody, even our lawyers, were surprised but the Thakur took it very bravely. With his usual coolness and his smiling face, he took my hands in his and stood silently for a while. The Court was adjourned and we were led outside. That day we entered the Court in a grave mood and in a graver mood we left the court after having embraced one another. When it was our turn to board the van the three under capital sentence were separated from us and placed in a different smaller vehicle. Oh, what a painful separation it was !

I stood silently before their car. The three condemned friends, Ram Prasad Bismil, Rajendra

Nath Lahiri and Roshan Singh were so much absorbed in thought that actually they did not turn their eyes to any direction, they did not see anything far or near and yet their eyes were wide open. I stood on the road till the vehicle moved on, yet none of the three looked at me or at any one for that matter. The sudden and abrupt separation from us revealed to them the coming separation from everything of this world and they became sternly pensive.

The small car left that place first and then our van started. Their car was driven through a different route and we did not know where they had been taken. In the jail, we were kept waiting outside the inner gate of the jail. The jail Superintendent was also there and one C. I. D. Inspector who came from Allahabad wanted to have a group photograph of ours. Now we came to know that Bismil, Lahiri and Roshan Singh were also in the same jail, when they were brought from the condemned cells in that yard for their inclusion in the group photograph. And then they were again separated from us and we never met them again. Even today in the Lucknow Jail one big peepal tree reminds me of the smiling faces of these friends who gave their life to erect the foundation of India's freedom. This peepal tree was planted by Thakur Roshan Singh just behind his barrack and he used to water it. One day I asked him how he being an Arya Samajist was worshipping a tree.

He replied humorously that this type of religious show always paid in jail as the other prisoner had regard for it. The tree still stands in pristine calmness, always reminding the sacrifices of my friends hanged on the alter of the freedom of India.

Now it was clear that we all were to be transferred to different jails. Suresh Bhattarjee thought that it would be better if he, myself and Shri Vishnu Saran Dublis could be sent to the Banaras Jail. He talked over this matter to the Deputy jailor. But the I. G. of Prisons consulted the Superintendent of Jail only and the places where we were to be transferred in batches were decided by them. A separate information board for Kakori prisoners was fixed in the I. G.'s office on which the name of every prisoner and the jail where they were to be transferred was written. In a footnote it was written that no Kakori Prisoner would be sent to Banaras Jail.

The instances of bribery were very common in the jail administration. Our Bhattacharjee thought of bribery. He paid Rs. 50/- to the Deputy Jailor who took the money without doing the job he was paid for.

After Colonel Clements, the I. G. of Prisons and Captain Salamatullah, the Superintendent of the Lucknow jail, had decided which batch was to be transferred to which jail, we were sent to different parts of the jail in different batches. A big number of Tongas were brought to the jail gate from the

city and also batches of armed police.

Our batch consisted of 3 persons, myself, Govinda Charan Kar and Ramdulare Trivedi. From the jail we were sent to the hospital. After nightfall we were brought to the jail gate. Two batches of prisoners were already outside the jail gate on Tongas and another batch was brought to the inner gate. We came to know here that our friends under capital sentence were the first to be transferred to three different district jails under cross-bar fetters. These district jails were specialised for condemned prisoners.

The jailor handed over our charge to our escorts and we came to know that we were being transferred to the Fatehgarh Central Prison. We were given a good amount of puris and sweets for our meals on the way. But none of us touched anything. We were not in a mood to take food and there was another serious thing which weighed on our mind.

I have stated that due to hunger strike we were given certain facilities as political prisoners. The Special Sessions Judge during the mediation of the hunger strike had agreed that he would write in his judgement that the dacoities committed by us were for the furtherance of the conspiracy to overthrow His Majesty's Government in India and that the motive was political. The judge did so. We therefore wanted that we should be given special treatment as political prisoners. Our defence counsels had already asked for this.



It was decided between ourselves that in case we were not given special treatment after our conviction, we would start hunger strike from the very day of our sentence. Friends who might be under capital sentence would also resort to hunger strike in their condemned cells. Following this decision we were all on hunger strike from the day the judgement was delivered.

When we were brought to the Raiiway Station we saw some batches of our friends at the Station. All were despatched by the night train. We saw from the distance one of our condemned friends also. We were put into a wait at the Kanpur Station for a long time. Many friends came to meet us. Pandit Balkrishna Sharma was there with two friends. Virbhadra Tewari also came there in khaki. He was holding some post in the Kanpur Municipality. But I was more interested to have a talk with Bijoy Kumar Sinha, the younger brother of Raj Kumar.

He was a member of our Secret party and I had full confidence in him. While Trivedi and Kar Babu were engaged in various discussions with Sharmaji and others I told Bijoy that they should maintain connection with me. We would serve our sentence and they would carry on the work of our mission. I also told him that if our condemned friends were actually hanged, they should try to take me out of the jail so that we could avenge the loss of our friends. I told him that we must

retaliate and let it be known to the people of India that the revolutionaries did not take anything lying down. This had special importance for me as Rajendranath Lahiri, one of our friends who got capital punishment, asked me to take revenge if they were hanged. And I considered that to be a sacred duty. At the station I gave Bijoy a secret code and also made him understand how to cipher and decipher the code. Thus a means of communication was established to carry on secret correspondence.

Bijoy told me that I. D. T. ( Indian Daily Telegraph ) had written a good article on our conviction that day. We got a copy of the paper at the station and read it. But the editorial did not give me satisfaction. The Government was rightly condemned in strong terms for the extraordinary severe sentences passed on us. But the paper also called us misguided youths. This caused us immense pain. We were neither all youths nor were we misguided. Some of us were mature men and we were fully conscious of what we were doing. I could not understand how we could be called misguided youths by the editor of a nationalist paper of Lucknow where under their very eyes the prolonged trial took place. Insults and humiliations were the constant companions of revolutionaries at the hands of the agents of the foreign rulers and revolutionaries did not care the least for that. So long as the country was under

slavery the fighters would naturally be treated like that. But when the nationalist Press called them misguided it was very painful.

### FATEHGARH CENTRAL JAIL : ONE YEAR

From Kanpur we were brought to Fatehgarh Central Jail and the Superintendent, Dr. Rossair and the Head Jailor, Ganda Singh met us at the jail gate. Dr. Rossair delivered a sermon to us and then left us to the jailor. The jail authorities of course, knew that none of us were new comers to the jail and we each had jail records even prior to the under-trial period in the Lucknow jail. We told them that we were on hunger strike.

Our first protest in this jail was against changing of our clothes. Some convicts were engaged to get our clothes changed. After conviction it was the duty of the Lucknow jail to change our clothes. But the jail officials there were in a hurry to transfer us. So our clothes were not changed there. At the Fatehgarh jail the convicts came to change our clothes. We protested. But the convicts forcibly stripped us naked and attired us with the usual clothings of convicts. We were then separated and kept in three different places.

I was sent to the Casual Circle where there were three prisoners who came from middle class families. Mr. Chaube was an Honorary Magistrate and also a visitor of this jail. He was imprisoned on a charge of murder. The other

was Pandit Kalicharan convicted for writing something offensive on the Muslims and third was a Muslim who returned from Persia. At 12 in the night all the prisoners were roused from their sleep and were made to sit in pairs for counting. I refused to leave my bed or to sit in pair. There were threats etc. But I defied everything. I said that was barbarous and under no circumstances I would submit to it. I heard later that my other two friends also did the same in their places.

Gradually we became weak due to hunger strike and were removed to the hospital. Kar Babu was still kept separate. Perhaps on the 42nd day late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi came to the Jail and persuaded us to give up the strike and promised that they would fight for our cause through the legislature. At first I flatly refused to give up the strike. He then went to the other two friends. They referred him to me and so Vidyarthiji again came to me and said that the other two were depending on me. So at my request the other two were brought to my place and we three discussed the position privately. Some had already given up. We three here and two in Naini Jail, Dublshji and M. N. Gupta were continuing. At the appeal of Vidyarthiji we gave up the strike and Dublshji and Gupta also did so when Vidyarthiji met them.

But the attitude of the Government was revol-

ting. We were so weak yet we were not given anything except the C Class Jail diet. Not even milk was continued. We could not recover our lost health. Then came the order that we would be treated as C Class habituals. This was too much to tolerate. Kar Babu became very angry. My argument was that we submitted to Vidyarthiji, but not to the Government. So we should wait and see what our leaders outside were doing for us. Kar Babu did not agree and restarted the strike.

Jailor Ganda Singh, the brute as he was, oppressed him as much as he could. Kar Babu's condition became critical, We were not allowed to see him but when he reached the critical stage we were allowed to meet him and at our earnest entreaty he gave up the strike.

A clever man as Ganda Singh was, he offered to Ram Dulareji a bait that he would manage to give us some better food on medical ground ; not through the hospital but as a favour. This was a trap to get ourselves entangled in corruption and thereby making us pets of Ganda Singh. We refused to be trapped.

Because of our defiance to obey the orders for midnight counting, the authorities thought it advisable to yield to our pressure and the rule was deleted from the jail Manual.

The Head Jailor, Ganda Singh, a thief of the lower grade, was in great difficulty with us. I call

him a low grade thief because he used to sell even jail vegetables and earthen pots made by the convicts in the open market as a daily affair. Local poor women were engaged for this. He had an organisation for his nefarious work both inside and outside the jail. He dominated over the Superintendent and other Jailors, because Col. Clements, the I. G. of Prisons, himself used to get illegal gratification from him. He illegally earned thousands of rupees per month and shared the ill-gotten money with the I. G. But he was always fearful of being detected. He was always afraid that a serious exposé of any vital matter might tumble him down. He tried his utmost to have our cooperation by offering us a little comfort although we were made C Class habituals. But when he was unsuccessful he resorted to different methods.

As habituals we had one advantage. The other habitual long termers became our friends and we earned their full confidence. This was advantageous in the jail, because the jail authorities remained fearful of something untoward happening. Our friend Vishnu Saran Dubish was implicated in Naini Jail riot as I stated. So Ganda Singh was afraid of us. Ganda Singh started brutal repressions on some habitual long termers who were very intimate with me. It was in this connection that so many long-termers were transferred to the other jails. There was one Muslim long-termer

who was transferred from the Fatehgarh Central Jail and just at the time of his departure from that jail, he told Ganda Singh in his office something against me. As a result Ganda Singh became very vigilant. One headwarder was very helpful to me. He was serving as a link between me and Vijay Kumar. Ganda Singh suspected him. One day it so happened that Mr. Sheo Verma came to the Jail area. Though I had an escape plan but there was no move so far for its execution. Ganda Singh got information of his arrival near the jail through the C.I.D. men who were entrusted with this job, and they tried to arrest the man. This incident made Ganda Singh immensely annoyed with me and he fabricated the case that I had received a pistol from outside which was kept hidden somewhere in the jail.

How my comrades outside the jail planned to take me out narrated to me years after by Mr. Surendra Nath Pande who is now working in a manganese mine in Mysore. Bijay Kumar Sinha with whom I was in secret communication from the jail passed on the news of my intention to escape. And Pande hired a house at Hatia, Kanpur, where I would be sheltered after escaping from the Jail.

Pande himself arranged matters, but the plan of my escape was exposed to the Head Jailer through a peculiar way. Two dangerous muslim habitual convicts, both lifers, were being transferred from Fatehgarh to another jail. In the jail gate the Head

Jailor got the news from them that the Head Warder in charge of the Habitual Circle, where I was put up at that time as habitual lifer, was friendly with me.

On this information, Sardar Ganda Singh, the Head Jailor, got the Head Warder's quarter searched. As ill luck would have it, in this search a letter of mine, written to friends outside, was recovered in which there was reference to my escape plan. The Head Warder, a Brahmin, from Kanpur village, was dismissed from service. Pande went to his place saw his mother and wife and offered them help in securing service. The man went to Bombay in search of service, fell ill and died there.

Although it was known that this source was under strong suspicion, yet Mr. Sheo Verma took the risk and went to the jail gate to try to establish a new connection with me. No sooner he reached there he realised that he was being followed by the C.I.D. men. He took the train for Khudlapur and before the train arrived at the station he jumped down from the running train and took shelter with Mr. Gaya Prasad, who was practising there. The C.I.D. man who followed him in the train from Fatehgarh also jumped down and saw Sheo Verma entering the house of Dr. Gaya Prasad at village Jalalabad, just near the station.

In the early morning hours the house was surrounded by the police, but before the search started both Sheo Verma and Gaya Prasad managed



to escape. Later they were both prosecuted in the famous Lahore Conspiracy Case with Sardar Bhagat Singh and others and were given life sentence. My name also appeared prominently in that case for their attempt to take me out from Fatehgarh and Agra jails.

After my transfer to the Agra Jail Pande hired a house at Agra and carried on communications with me. Gradually the Party headquarter was also shifted to Agra and a bomb factory was started there in a separate house where martyr Jatin Das (died in Lahore jail by hunger strike) gave them training in the art of bomb-making.

My transfer was ordered and the police dug up the jail ground at many places in search of the pistol but did not find it. It was just a false accusation and no pistol was brought in by anybody. Ganda Singh wanted to have his own way. After sometime when I was in the Agra jail, I was told by the Head Jailor, C. W. Laig, that Ganda Singh had successfully cashed on that fake case against me as it was due to that he was awarded the title of Sardar Bahadur.

For the head-warder he created an awkward situation by implicating him in a political matter. He got frightened and left the job without any protest and the poor fellow died in Bombay. Only to attract attention of higher authorities he made a mountain out of a mole hill. In fact the I. G. of Prisons was in his hands and the Superintendent of Jail was a

new and inexperienced man. He himself fabricated the accusation against me and then without giving me any chance for any clarification before the Superintendent, he got signed from the Superintendent what he wanted and then he called me and transferred me with the highest possible punishment in those circumstances.

According to the Jail Manual the prisoner accused of any jail offence would be put up before the Superintendent on Peshi. The latter would ask for the explanation. Then if the Superintendent was convinced about his offence, he would write it on his History Ticket. I was not put up before the Superintendent, nor was I told by the Jailor anything of the kind .

And then at the time of my transfer to Agra jail Ganda Singh warned the police men who had to escort me. I was handcuffed, roped, cross bar fettered and then transferred from Fatehgarh jail under a heavy escort of police. I was moving slowly due to cross bar fetters. I was physically put in an Ekka to reach the railway station. At the station every one who saw me was surprised that so many armed men were employed to escort a lean and thin man in chains. We got down at Shikohabad as we had to board another train for Agra. But one overbrige had to be crossed which was not possible for me as I was under cross bar fetters. The police men led me to another platform by crossing the rails. On that platform

when we were waiting for the train for Agra, one law student who was going to Agra to appear in final examination got attracted towards me after seeing such heavy armed escorts with me. He asked me whether I was a South Indian. I told him that I was a Bengali but now he should take me to be of U. P. I was domiciled in U. P. He asked about my case. I told him "Kakori Case". As soon as he heard me, he was astonished to see the behaviour of the police. He told the Havildar incharge that he was giving him money and that he should buy sweetmeats and other eatables of my choice and give them to me. The policeman refused. He said that he could not accept money for this purpose. He came to me and told me that though he was given only four annas for my meals, I should not mind and eat whatever I wanted. He said that he would pay for that. I refused this offer with thanks. We reached the Agra jail in the night and for the whole night I was kept under bell chain. Early in the morning when the Head jailor, Mr. Laing, came and asked whether I could speak English. My answer was "yes". He wanted to know the case in which I was convicted. I told him that it was Kakori Case. In the morning that Havildar who escorted me tendered his apology to me. He told me that he was warned by Ganda Singh that I was a very dangerous man and that some persons would try to make me free on the way ; but he said that he found me a perfect gentleman.

In the train I saw green papers along with my other papers with the Havildar. I took it from the Havildar when the train was in motion and was surprised to read in it that the Superintendent had awarded the highest punishment, namely ( 1 ) cellular confinement for three months, ( 2 ) bar fetters for indefinite period and ( 3 ) exemption from the remission system, for attempt at escape from the jail with the help of firearms and instruments for cutting iron gratings. All this despite the fact that nothing was found even after a thorough search ! All was in the imagination of Ganda Singh for his personal promotion at my cost. This is, however, what I thought at that time. But later I learnt that my friends outside had a plan to take me out of the jail.

#### AGRA CENTRAL JAIL : ONE YEAR

After spending the night under fetters and bell chain when next morning I was put up before the Superintendent, Major Sheikh, at the jail gate I complained to him about the illegal way of punishing me without even telling me what were the charges. He heard me patiently and said that he was not concerned with what the authorities of other jails did but he gave the assurance that no such thing would be done in his jail. He was quite true to his words and in fact I have never seen such an honest and upright Superintendent in my life. I had full confidence in him and he also had confidence in me.

Col. Clements was a petty man. He was cowardly and as a weak man he was prone to put us in trouble. It would not be quite out of place to mention here that in 1921 when Pandit Motilal Nehru was in the Lucknow Jail, Clements was the Superintendent. Petty man as he was, he wanted to show that as the Superintendent he was somebody in the jail. Panditji was a giant before this pigmy. So only to humour him Panditji used to put one smuggled letter before him every morning as a proof that the Superintendent had no control over his jail.

I was kept under lock and key day and night in a cell in the cellular barrack. Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya and Ram Krishna Khattri were sent to this jail immediately after they were sentenced. They were on good terms with the jail authorities as the authorities had come to know that they were not troublesome in any way. From my cell I established contact with them. Suresh Babu was at times smuggling newspapers and he used to send these to me in the midday when the officials used to be absent.

I received a copy of the Leader of Allahabad in my cell in which appeared an editorial note evidently from the pen of the editor, late C. Y. Chintamani extolling and welcoming the ceremonial establishment of the Republic in China. Such a strong editorial from a moderate paper was unthinkable. I read it again and again and then returned the

paper. It was an open support for armed revolution and implied the condemnation of the non-violent movement of India. So also did Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. Though moderate in politics, he preferred a revolution. He was in England as a delegate to the Round Table Conference. At that time Sir John Andersons' name was announced as the Governor designate of Bengal. Sir John earned much notoriety as the war time Governor of Ireland in suppressing the liberation movement of Irish people by ruthless means. So Malviyajji directly challenged the then Secretary of State for India questioning if that was the motive behind this appointment in the presence of many Members of Parliament. There were even hot exchange of words.

I remember even today the article written by late C. Y. Chintamani. Who knew then that after getting China free, the revolution would be betrayed? Who could know then that the communists under Mao after ousting Chiang would become so much expansionist that they would lead a large-scale invasion on India after so much talks of friendship? Yes, this is the enternal rule of politics : Might is Right. Mao's China has created a big might and they must assert their right over their weak neighbours !

To be lodged in a U. P. jail as a C Class habitual prisoner was a strain on the health of a Bengalee. My weight was reduced to about 100 lbs,

This was because I could not take Chapaties and so I took rice and the rice that was served not at all was eatable. I gave up my food and declared a hunger strike. For three days nobody took any notice of me, though my Kakori Associates became very much perturbed.

On the 4th morning I was put up by the Head Jailor Mr. Laing before the Superintendent for the Peshi. When the Superintendent asked me why I was not taking food I told him that it was not possible for me to take such repulsive food. I was a man from East Bengal. I was not used to eating the sort of rice served to me. So was the case with Dal and these two were my day-to-day diet. I was on fetters and it was difficult to pass my janghia through the fetters when I want to answer nature's call.

The reasonable Superintendent understood my genuine grievances and he knew that without any ailment my weight had been reduced to 100 lbs. from 146 lbs. That was a proof before a doctor. He asked me what minimum things I required. I stated that a changed dal and separately cooked rice can give me relief. For changing clothes I might be allowed a lungi on special grounds. It may be mentioned here that this was given to the Muslim and Sikhs. In this the jailor supported me.

The Superintendent gave written orders that my rice and changed dal be cooked separately in

the hospital and he gave me a lungi as a special case and wrote the order on my History Ticket. I gave up hunger strike and thanked the Superintendent and the jailor. From that day we three were getting rice and dal separately cooked for us and it was really a bit tasty. We were getting a little vegetable also from the hospital. Our friends were relieved now.

I had heard that Dublishji had been sent to the Andamans. I wanted to go there. I wrote a letter to Dublishji and received an encouraging reply from him. At this time a demand also came from the Andamans for convict clerks. I gave my name and a casual convict, a Jat, who read up to class VIII also gave his name.

At this time I received a letter from Bijoy Kumar Sinha through Suresh Babu's source. It was very heartening. Then followed a continuous series of correspondence. I informed my friends outside that I had given my name for my transfer to the Andamans. But Bijoy pressed me that I must not go. I agreed and asked for a fever-producing drug named Raskapur. I received this and it was decided that in case I received the transfer order, just before my departure I would take the drug, should get high temperature and thwart all attempts to transfer me. This drug was used by Mr. Satrughna Kumar of the Bareilly shooting case and he ran high temperature and was successful in getting his transfer as a suspected T. B. patient to



Sultanpur Special T. B. Jail. But I did not require to use the drug, because the Andaman authorities rejected my application and accepted that of the Jat.

Though a habitual, I was kept in the Casual Circle as we three were kept in three different places. Suresh Babu was sent to the Habitual Circle and Khatri was kept under the Head Jailor. One black striped man amongst all red-striped men was a striking thing to all. Even the dangerous habituais were on the best of terms with me when I was in the cells. One educated Pathan zamindar of a good family who was a lifer for dacoity told me one Sunday that he would invite more trouble on him. He did not listen to my advice, attacked the Superintendent, received a good thrashing and came back to the cell bleeding profusely and after a week received more than 30 stripes. Another healthy Hindu youth of fine appearance told me a day prior to the annual visit of the I. G. of Prisons that he would assault the Head Jailor during the I. G.'s visit. I entreated him not to do so. But he actually did so and received beatings, stripes and cell life. These showed how much confidence these prisoners had in me.

I was all along having correspondence with my party men through Bijoy. He would write some day that Azad sends his 'namaskar' or on something about Balwant Singh, because that was the name I gave to Bhagat Singh when he came to

Kanpur. Suresh Babu told me one day he had seen some C. I. D. people in the Agra jail with a photo of Bhagat Singh.

Bijoy wanted to know so many things from me about so many persons but never a word was mentioned about Virbhadra Tewari and Tewari was in their full confidence, nay, he was incharge of the U. P. organisation. But we could not rely on him as he was let off by the lower court although there was ample evidence to entangle him in the Kakori Case.

International situation on the North Eastern frontiers was taking a very favourable turn. Amir Amanullah, the king of Afganistan, became pro-Russian under the influence of the Indian revolutionaries, Raja Mahendra Pratap and others. China had already become a single Republic under Chiang. So I was very hopeful about our future.

I advised my friends to establish a line of communication for our secret organisation throughout northern India. At least there must be units established in big railway junctions. The other point I stressed was to try to have communications with Afghanistan and Burma. Later the statement of Kailashpati in the Delhi Conspiracy Case, proved that they did this, as he stated that Badshahgul was given Rs. 2,000 out of Rs. 16,000 looted in the Garodia Bank Dacoity.

I gave them to understand that a political murder was very effective if it served a big public:

purpose. As examples I mentioned the cases of Kudhiram Bose at Muzaffarpur, Kanailal in the Calcutta jail and the Delhi Bomb outrage on Lord Hardinge. I stated that secret organisations had come into prominence and captured the imagination of the general public by such actions. Saunders murder took place not long after this and my suggestions might have given my friends the idea of retaliation of the murder of Lalaji by the British police officers.

That year (1928) Amir Amanullah became a world figure by his open pro-Russian and anti-British demonstrations. The Amir went on European tour, his main objective was to visit Russia. Britain disliked it and despite the King of England's personal request he went to Moscow and placed a wreath on Lenin's Mausoleum.

I saw that these developments were golden opportunities for the Indian revolutionaries and I urged upon my friends to get themselves prepared for the utilisation of the situation. They were making every possible efforts. They even changed the name of the party from 'Hindusthan Republican Association' to 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' or Army in a Delhi meeting. They recruited Badshahgul to the party at this stage. (He is the son of Haji of Turangjai in the no man's land beyond N. W. Frontier Province.)

Not only the Indian revolutionaries but also the nationalists, Hindus and Muslims, were looking

forward with high hopes on the developments of the anti-British fronts in Afganistan and China.

Britain was not unaware of this and they carried on a vigorous underground propaganda in Afgani-  
stan itself during the absence of Amanullah and succeeded in putting a water carrier named Bach-  
chai Sakko on the gaddi of Afghanistan. A Mus-  
lim Head Warder was helping me with all these  
news and he broke this news to me weeping  
bitterly. In reality it was a bomb-shell to me- All  
my hopes were frustrated.

The Simon Commission came facing strong  
opposition from all parties, including the Moderates.  
Our friends wanted to blow up the members by  
bombs on their landing in Bombay. But the  
bombs they were carrying from Banaras for the  
purpose exploded in the train at Manmad. The  
leader was, Manmohan Gupta, the younger brother  
of Manmatha Nath Gupta of Kakori Case.

Leaders demonstrated against the Commission  
and led mass demonstration on the visit of the  
Simon Commission in big cities. Brutal assaults  
on their persons was the planned policy of the  
Government. Lala Lajpat Rai was brutally assaul-  
ted at Lahore, Nehru and Pant at Lucknow, Rajen-  
dra Babu at Patna and Netaji Subhas Bose and  
J. M. Sen Gupta in Calcutta.

The assault of Lalaji was so severe that he died  
within a month. He and other big leaders had in  
the meantime given public statements that time had

come when it had to be seriously pondered over whether to change the method of non-violence. Assaults were deeply resented, but Lalaji's death was a death blow to the nation. That was the feeling in every heart. The simultaneous feelings of an impotent anger and failure to retaliate dampened the minds of the Indians into despondency and dejection which over-cast the nation. But this darkness of national frustration was dispelled by one sudden incident. Just after one month of assault on Lalaji, J. P. Saunders, one of the two British police officers who assaulted Lalaji, was shot dead in broad day light on a street of Lahore near the gate of the police station while he was going out of his office.

The news spread like wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the country and a feeling of jubilation was reigning everywhere. Every one felt with pride that we Indians, also knew how to retaliate, how to meet official terrorism with our terrorism and pay them back in their own coin.

No one knew who did it ! but all were convinced that this was the work of the revolutionaries and their prestige raised to a great height. I guessed from the jail that the actors were no other than our friends.

My instruction to my friends was that in case of a second world war I must somehow be taken out by blowing off a portion of the prison wall. This, they assured me, would be done.

I stressed upon my friends the necessity of doing something occasionally to exhibit the might of the guerilla revolutionaries to the public as a part of our propaganda. I also gave them in writing our methods of committing money actions and murders in a very disciplined way, entrusting different functions to different batches. I instructed that when a murder was planned the most experienced and best persons should be on guard and their assistants should do the actual work.

The U. P. Government set up a Jail Enquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Louis Stewart, the then Chief Judge of the Oudh Chief Court. This Committee had two Indian members and Col. Palmer, the I. G. of Prisons, was its Secretary. This Sir Louis Stewart was a first rate fanatic, and the Congress boycotted and condemned the Enquiry Committee. The Committee visited the Agra Jail also. I was on parade in the casual circle though a habitual convict. They came to that side and passed along without noticing me. When they went to the other parade some of the jail authorities pointed at me. They came to me and told me that I would be called to the jail office. When I was called to the office, I found that instead of asking me anything about my grievances and recording my statement, the Chairman started to talk in a threatening tone and language. He wanted to shout me down. I told him that I never wanted to come before the Committee or to

present myself before it. I had no confidence in him and in the Committee as well. The Congress also had no confidence in him and the Committee under him. It was only due to his request that I went there. If the Committee was not ready to hear me, I would go back as I had no inclination to tell anything to a man in whom I virtually had no faith. I came back. But when the report was submitted by the Committee, it was clearly written there that Mr. Chatterji had no complaint to make before them. I said so many things which were not recorded and then it was falsely presented that since I had no grievance, I did not say anything.

Then one day the Bengal police sent one C. I. D. Inspector to the Agra jail to have elaborate talks with us. The purpose of his visit was not known to me but he called me to the jail office where a jailor was also present all along, and had talks with me for several hours. I repeatedly told him that I had no interest in talking with him and he should not unnecessarily waste his as well as my time. I told him that I was a convict in the U. P. Jail. What business now Bengal C. I. D. had got to disturb me even there? He said that I originally belonged to Bengal and my records were kept by Bengal police, so he had every right to enquire. He started talking rudely and in a threatening language. I snubbed him. I told him that a slave had nothing to lose but his chains. I was

already a habitual and lifer in the jail with bar-fetters on. What more could he inflict upon me. The Government was giving the maximum possible punishment. Then what right the Bengal police had to send its C. I. D. men for giving me pin-pricks ? His face was expressionless and motionless. On the next day he had talks with Sanyal Babu. A few days before this Shri Sanyal came to the Agra jail as he was suspected to be connected with an attempt at escape.

### PLAN TO TAKE ME OUT

I informed my friends outside that I would soon be transferred to Lucknow jail. They wanted to take me out on the way. I gave them my consent and informed that they must be equipped with implements for cutting cross-bar fetters, so that my escape may be speedy. They were to keep strict vigit every night, because dangerous prisoners were generally transferred by the night train. Twenty four hours before the transfer, I gave them further news. They had informed me that the action would take place at a spot about 5 miles west of Kanpur.

Their plan was based on my transfer by the train that left Agra at 10 o'clock in the night. Batukeswar Dutta and Rajguru were keeping watch at the station.

To their utter disappointment I was escorted to the city station at about 6. It was a mere chance



that four guards arrived that day from Lucknow with prisoners and they were to go back. So the police-party that was to escort was there and these four men were given my charge. They took charge of me in the afternoon, we all went to the police office and after the formalities they took me at the Railway station. They did not enter the platform, but kept me seated outside under the charge of two guards while the other two went for marketing. I was there for about an hour and looked round, but found nobody. The escorts were not even armed. Two persons with firearms and a cycle could take me away. About half an hour before the departure of the train the two escorts came back and then we went into the platform. About 15 minutes before the train left Batukeswar Dutta and Rajguru came. Just as the train steamed off Dutta made a sign to me. I took that to be a signal that everything was all right.

I did not sleep in the night and was anxiously expecting that the train would stop suddenly at the appointed place. But nothing happened. The train reached the Kanpur junction and I was locked up in the station office.

What happened has been described in a book recently written by Professor Bhagwandas Mahori of Jhansi who himself participated in this. They had made the preparations only for the train that left at 10 o'clock in the night. But on hearing of my departure by the earlier train they were very

much upset. They all went to Kanpur by the next train and wanted to make the attempt near the Ganga Bridge station early in the morning. But this could not be arranged as the time was very short.

The following persons participated in it: Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Bijoy Kumar Sinha, Batukeswar Dutt, Rajguru, Sheo Verma, Sadashiv Raghunath Malkapurkar and Bhagwandas Mahore. Rajguru was sent to Kanpur by the same train by which I travelled.

At Kanpur station Azad was pick-pocketed of his purse in which he had all the money and also the motordriving licence. Bhagat Singh was very much distressed at this and asked Mahore to purchase tickets for Agra for all. At this stage they saw me going from the office with heavy chain on my legs towards the Lucknow bound train. They were all very much depressed and when they reached their residence at Agra, Bhagat Singh wept bitterly.

The attempt at escape from the Fatehgarh Central Jail as well as this later one of taking me from the police custody during my transfer from Agra Central Jail to Lucknow Central Prison were two of the main charges in the famous Lahore Conspiracy case against the accused. Sardar Baha dur Ganda Singh, the Head Jailor of Fatehgarh Central Prison, was a prosecution witness to prove the Fatehgarh jail incident against the accused and a jailor and the Superintendent of Agra Central

Prison, Col. Jafra IMS, were prosecution witnesses to prove the second attempt.

The accused gave my name as a defence witness in the Lahore Conspiracy case to disprove the Government allegations. And I would have certainly gone there. But in the meantime during the trial there developed a very serious clash between the Special Tribunal, prosecution and the accused. As result of this the accused withdrew their defence and the Special Tribunal gave the ex-parte judgement in Jail. It was no longer a public trial. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged and their mutilated bodies were burnt in the midnight at a great distance on the bank of the Sutlej. For legalising the ex-parte trial an Ordinance had to be passed by the Governor General of India.

One of the accused, Jatin Das, died in the Lahore Jail. He declared hunger strike, refused to take his food till his demands were fulfilled and died. His dead body was taken from Lahore to Calcutta and millions paid their homage to the departed patriot. Three heroes, who took part in the retaliation of the murder of the national leader, Lajpat Rai, were hanged, mutilated and burnt in the darkness of night and Mahatma Gandhi made a pact with the head of that Government soon after this performance of theirs ! Such is politics ?

## LUCKNOW CENTRAL JAIL : ONE YEAR

My friends went back to Agra and I arrived at Lucknow Central Jail on the 18th February, 1929.

Though a habitual 'C' class prisoner, I was lodged in this jail in the European ward cell all alone. To all my protests the Superintendent's only reply used to be that my own friend Sanyal was responsible for this. The Superintendent stated that he was not in favour of my transfer to his jail, but when the I. G. of Prisons pressed him for this he got his permission to keep me alone in the European Ward. The attitude of the Superintendent was distinctly harsh, mainly because Sanyal Babu was involved in an escape plan. Even a habitual convict actually came out of the barrack and made a rope ladder for Sanyal but he did not come out. When the plan was detected the convict was most brutally assaulted and he implicated Sanyal in his statement. This was the reason of the Superintendent's ill treatment.

An Andaman-returned Convict Observer was kept in my ward to keep constant watch on me and this man's behaviour often caused me irritation. He was an uncultured criminal from Hardoi district. I also had the company of two other convicts, one a businessman from Kanpur and another a Pathan from the North West Frontier, who were Head Jailer's Convict Clerks and

were very much interested in me. They were daily visiting me at noon time and talked with me for some hours. The Head Jailor and the Warders were under their tip and so they had a free hand in the Head Jailor ward outside the circles.

The man from Kanpur, Babulalji, was very sympathetic and helpful. Through Babulal I established some connections with my friend outside. I received some information through him. Yar Mohommad Khan, the Pathan, was attracted to me for his hunger for knowledge.

The Superintendent kept me alone, but twice or thrice a week he used to visit me in the evening. He used to stand outside and myself inside the cell and we had long talks on various subjects. For my reading materials he arranged with the Aminuddaula Public Library and under his recommendation I was allowed to subscribe the Modern Review. This was a great boon to me. On my release I learned from my cousin that once he saw the editor, late Ramananda Babu and that very day he gave orders that a free copy should be sent to me and I received it regularly till my release in 1937.

The Head Jailor, Mr. Hearne, knew that I was very much dissatisfied with the Superintendent because of segregation and other things. He himself was also in great difficulty because of the curtailment of his private earnings due to the strictness of the Superintendent. So one day he offered to

supply a revolver to me if I wanted to kill the Superintendent. So poor was his knowledge about political prisoners. A political prisoner would never kill a Superintendent on grounds of personal difficulties.

I learnt something about the N. W. Frontier affairs from Yar Mohammad. As an absconder he had come in close touch with Badshagul, who I came to know later, came in contact with our party. He told me that like our Gandhiji they had also a frontier Gandhi. He must have spoken of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He also spoke of another learned Pathan who was non religious and was married to an English lady. He must have meant Dr. Khan Sahib. Once I talked about escape from the jail. Within a week he smuggled Rs. 200/- for the expenses and told me to arrange the escape. He said after escape our travel upto Rawalpindi would be my risk, but after we crossed the river Attock he would be responsible for my safety. This man remained a few more years in Fyzabad jail and then in Lucknow jail and by that time he turned into a total non believer in religion.

My relations wanted my transfer to a Bengal jail and they even applied for this. The U. P. Government replied that they were ready provided the Bengal Government would accept me. The Bengal Government refused. I complained to Col. Clements, the I. G. of prisons. He said that I was a problem for them, the Andaman authorities

would not accept me and the Bengal Government would not accept me either. He then turned to the Superintendent and told him, "Well, Salamattullah, give him Bengal jail diet ;" I said that I did not want that and started hunger strike that very day. On the tenth day there was a compromise as due to the martyrdom of Jatin Das the question of classification of political prisoners came up and Nawab of Chhatari, the then Home Member, assured me of better-class treatment.

As a result of taking Bengal jail diet I gained 22 lbs, in weight and after we were classified as 'B' class I was again 146 lbs., the weight I had as an under-trial. This was, therefore, a statistical demonstration of the effect of food on the human body.

Jatin Das sacrificed his life with the deliberate determination that political prisoners must be classified as a special class of prisoners. The Government had to yield to public pressure to a certain extent, but only introduced certain changes in the general rule for all prisoners and nothing for the political prisoners in particular. Though in the Lucknow jail I was the only political prisoner, a dozen non-political prisoners were classified as 'B' class and they were all sent to Fyzabad Concentration Jail but I was left alone at Lucknow.

Again we Kakori prisoners were given 'B' class, but Jatin Das's own associate of Lahore Conspiracy Case were not at all given 'B' class. Such was the attitude of the alien rule.

## CHANDRASEKHAR AZAD'S FIGHT TO DEATH

My transfer from Agra jail was on the 17th February and Azad led the attempt to take me out. Then came the Assembly Bomb Case, the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the martyrdom of Jatin Das. Bhagwandas Mahore and Sadashiv Raghunath Malkapurkar were convicted in Bhushawal Bomb Case. Yet, the leader, Chandrasekhar Azad, survived.

One day came the heart-rending news of the fight to the finish of our dearest friend, the pride of our party, Chandrasekhar Azad. On the 27th of February 1931 morning he was talking to a friend sitting on a bench in a corner of the spacious Alfred Park at Allahabad. He was betrayed and police officer, Notbawer, approached him in a car and shot him on the thigh. At once Azad drew up his pistol and shot his assailant on his arm. Then the fight continued for some time. C. I. D. Inspector Bisweswar Singh's jaw was smashed by a shot from Azad. Long drawn fight was not possible, because the police had come prepared with a big force and Azad fell fighting. It was Azad's strongest determination that he would never step into a jail. He was ever alert for that and told so to friends often. The hero of Kakori, Lahore and Delhi cases at last attained the highest laurels at Allahabad Park. His dead body was promptly cremated by the police and was not given over to his friends or relations.



On his way back from the Karachi Congress my cousin, Paresh Chatterjee, came to interview me. He offered me some money but I said that it was unnecessary. The head jailor's writer, a Bengali, Ghosh, a cheat, told him that I required money for private use and a warder was sent to Paresh by Ghosh without my knowledge. But my Kanpur friend, Babulal, who was a convict clerk of the head jailor and was present in the head jailor's office when Paresh came to interview me, was clever enough to understand Ghosh's game. As soon as he saw the Warder coming, he took the money, from him and gave it to me to my surprise. The Warder's share was given and the rest was kept by me.

One day unexpectedly Rajkumar Sinha's mother and sister came to interview me. Rajkumar, along with Manmathanath Gupta, was on hunger strike for better class treatment following the Lahore hunger strike and Rajkumar was on the point of death. He had just given up the strike at the persuasion of the leaders. They had come from there. I was much pleased to meet them. From them I got much information.

Once late Pratul Chandra Ganguli also come to see me. We were not getting any newspapers and therefore these interviews were the only source of information of the condition outside the walls.

Shri Sachindranath Bakshi was transferred to this jail and after a long time I enjoyed his

association. We were both classified as 'B' class. All others were sent to the Fyzabad jail, but we two remained here. We were both on hunger strike as a protest against the discrimination in the diet of Indian and European prisoners and later through compromise with the Superintendent we both took 'C' class diet till the arrival of Col. Palmer, the I. G. of Prisons, who decided the dispute to our satisfaction.

Major Salamatullah was transferred to the Naini Central Jail as Superintendent and Col. Sheikh came to Lucknow in his place.

We again planned to escape. We had contact with outside. One day Shri Satgurudayal Awasthi of Kanpur came outside the main wall of the European ward. Myself and Bakshi were on the big neem tree and through signals we communicated our plan of jumping jail.

Special guards were one day posted and we understood that the matter had leaked out. The I. G. of Prisons visited the jail that day and in the night at 2 A.M. my cell was unlocked by the Chief Head Warden who took me out to the yard. The Head Jailor, Mr. Hearne, was seated in a chair along with the Circle Jailor. Mr. Hearne told me that I was to be transferred at once but he did not reveal the jail where I was to go. I roused Bakshi Babu from sleep, talked to him and gave him some money and accompanied the jailor and others to the gate. I was fettered and then led to the motor

van. The whole jail office was active at this dead hour of the night. The Superintendent had brought the order from the I.G.'s office personally in the evening and gave it to the jailor for the execution. The latter got up at 2 A.M. came to the office, brought other officials and warders. Blacksmith and convict clerks were also taken out. The whole jail was astir.

The escorts were all armed men under a Muslim Subedar. The van took the Kanpur Road, and reached Kanpur at day break. Somebody must have seen me and when we were sitting in the train for Agra, Pandit Balkrishna Sharma entered the compartment and asked me how I was being transferred and how the plan of escape failed. I said that I was betrayed from outside. The Subedar became very stern and did not allow me to talk any more. We went up to Tundla junction and even there we were not allowed to talk.

At Agra Fort Station the Superintendent of Police was at the platform with a detachment of armed men. They cordoned me and led me to the motor van. The officers took me to the gate of the very same Agra Central Prison where I spent a full year under different conditions. The Head Jailor, Mr. Gardener, told me later that he had never before received a prisoner in that style.