

British forces in India died under suspicious circumstances, on December 4, 1924, in the Berhampore jail.

To the Government Jatindra Nath Mukherjee, Chittapriya Ray Chowdhury, Manoranjan Sen Gupta, Nirendra Nath Das Gupta and Jyotish Chandra Pal were "proclaimed offenders" under the letter of the law. They were branded as scoundrels, dacoits and murderers. They were declared by wiseacres as bringing the country to the brink of ruin. But in the fulness of time, they would find out their own places in the pages of history and in the hearts of their grateful countrymen.

A Perfect Arrangement

(1915)

Information had reached Mymensingh from Calcutta that the redoubtable Deputy Superintendent of Police, Jatindra Mohan Ghose, would be reaching the place in connection with a trial of some political suspects.

On October 9, 1915, while he and his wife were sitting with a boy of five facing the door of the house, the assailants, numbering five, suddenly appeared and asked Jatin's wife to go away from the place as they had an urgent matter to discuss with the Police Saheb. She had not completely withdrawn from the scene when without the least delay, the visitors fired several shots at Jatin, one of which struck him on the forehead and another passed through his abdomen killing him outright. The boy was also hit by a bullet as a result of which he died.

The Police Officer, as was known to the revolutionaries, was very active in investigating the Howrah and Khulna Gang Cases and also the Nadia Higginbotham Shooting Case. He enjoyed the credit of being selected by the authorities in complicated political cases and became a target of those whose cause had suffered at his hands.

Attacked In The Lair

(1915)

Of the many daring acts performed by the revolutionaries, the one at Masjidbari Street on the night of October 21, 1915, ranks very high.

Four responsible Police Officers had been enjoying a play at dice at No. 99, Masjidbari Street, Calcutta. It was close upon 10-30 p.m. when Girindra Nath Banerjee talked of going back to his own quarters. He was insisted to stay on for some time more so that the chance of the particular game might be settled. The host suggested that for the sake of safety he should go and close the door which opened direct to the lane as at the time the Police Officers were exposed to great risks. One of them actually got up from his seat for the purpose.

At the psychological moment a young man entered into the room followed by three others and asked in intonations of East Bengal dialect if he was not Girindra Nath Banerji. Without waiting for the answer the unknown man fired at Girin which missed its mark. The second shot hit the hurricane lantern and it was smashed. The light went out and the room was engulfed in pitchy darkness.

The four officers now ran out of the room which was only about 7 or 8 feet square in dimension and tried to enter the courtyard of the house closely followed by the raiders. The firing continued unabated. The men running for their lives rushed towards the narrow staircase leading to first floor of the building.

They had barely reached the top of the staircase when Girin fell exhausted from wounds received in the left hip and right side of the chest while trying to escape.

It may be recalled that Girin had a narrow escape when an attempt was made on the life of Basanta Kumar Chatterji, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, in his residence at Mussalmanpara Lane.

A second Police Officer who was also hit in his left elbow and right hip recovered from his injury after a few weeks.

Belated Action

(1915)

The police arrested three suspects from a house in Serpentine Lane after a thorough search of the place in the last week of October 1915. In the expectation of getting some more information about those who might be visiting the place after the arrest

of their friends, Constable Kalap (Kailas) Nath Pathak was placed on guard to watch any new development.

It was a narrow dimly lighted lane. Between 9-30 and 10 p.m. a Bengali young man accompanied by another appeared silently before Kailas and shot him from a close range. A cook of St. Paul's School was leaving for his home and on the suspicion of being followed by him the assailants turned back and shot him very seriously.

Both the victims died within a few hours of the incident.

An Iron Will

The example of a man with congenital physical deformity and offering his life for the emancipation of the Motherland is not very common in the history of the freedom movement of the subjugated countries of the world. In respect of Sufiji's one-handedness and yet fighting for the cause which he held so near to his heart he had a parallel in Charu Bose, a born cripple, devoid of the palm of his right hand (*qv*).

AMBAPRASAD as a young boy used to cut jokes on the absence of his right arm with his friends with the remark that he had lost it in the Sepoy War of 1857. From his early youth he became intoxicated with the love of his country. Before he was twenty-five he published an Urdu journal, *Halum*, from Moradabad, his native district. He was prosecuted for sedition and awarded eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment. He was again prosecuted for sedition as Editor of *Bharat Mata*, and thrown into jail for a year and a half in October 1897.

In 1906, when Bengal was in the throes of a violent political agitation over the Partition, Punjab contacted a full measure of contagion and the peasants suffered the brunt of the Government persecution for their attempt to establish their just rights. Ambaprasad as Assistant Editor of *India*, a Gujranwala Paper, which he joined on April 4, 1907, made common cause with the local leaders of the peasants. He was prosecuted for sedition before the Lahore Sessions on September 24, 1907, but was acquitted on January 11, 1908.

When the leaders were arrested, Ambaprasad became the next target. He somehow managed to slip into Nepal. In the meantime he was able to establish the "Bharat Mata Book Society" for publication of patriotic literature. Finding the country uncongenial to his temperament and unsuitable for his work he went to Kabul and thence to Iran.

Under the direction of the Berlin Revolutionary Committee and with the help of Germany, Sufi Ambaprasad with two other very prominent revolutionaries went to Turkey. They took a letter of introduction from the Turkish authorities and approached the Amir for help in their projected attack on India. The Amir refused to lend any support to the Indian cause but did not hand them over to the British authorities as the Prime Minister was against such a step.

With or without the knowledge of the Prime Minister the revolutionaries set up a Provisional Government of their own and had been quietly making preparations to join the contemplated insurrection on February 21, 1915, by attacking the enemy from the West. But the collapse of the plan through betrayal in Punjab prompted the Kabul Government to take serious steps against the party of Indians still living there.

The other two comrades with great difficulty managed to get out of Kabul and reached Iran (Persia). Ambaprasad was secured by the British agents stationed there. He was severely tortured for making a confession and was locked up in a prison for the night. Ambaprasad received severe injuries in the manhandling to which he was subjected, and was found dead in his cell in the morning nobody knowing when the last moment came.

Another version puts the place of arrest of Ambaprasad as Shiraz (Persia) which was effected after the World War I had come to a successful close for the British. He was ordered to be blown up from the cannon mouth, an event which he escaped through death visiting him the previous night in his cell.

Secrets Well Preserved

(1915)

Not many people even amongst the revolutionaries knew anything about an unpretentious lad charged by Jatin Mukherji with onerous duties connected with the supply of arms from Germany. He was sent to the Far East before 1915 and had inside knowledge about the arrangements abroad. He came to Goa in the same year and in his anxiety about C. Martin (Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, latterly M. N. Roy) sent a wire from Goa to Martin on October 27, 1915, enquiring how he had been doing. This wire furnished a clue to the British police working secretly under cover and forced the Goa police to arrest him. At the intervention of the all-powerful British Government, the Portuguese authorities expelled him from their territory and he was arrested in the frontier and was removed to the Poona *farashkana*.

The usual methods of extorting confession were applied on him and BHOLA NATH CHATTERJI withstood them as best as he could. At a crucial point when he found it impossible for him to hold out any further, he committed suicide with his *dhoti* inside his cell on January 27-28, 1916, and released himself from the clutches of the police sleuth-hounds.

Two At A Time

(1916)

Two constables of the Dacca Criminal Investigation Department, Surendra Bhusan Mukherji and Rohini Kumar Mukherji, engaged in tracing the whereabouts of two absconding members of the revolutionary party, were attacked at about 6 p.m. on June 23, 1916, at Bairagitola in a *mohalla* of the Dacca City.

The assailants were bent upon leaving no chance of the victims' survival and Surendra was shot five times while Rohini received two more, one of which passed through his brain.

Unaccountable Death

(1916)

SANJIB CHANDRA RAY, a young boy of Kishoreganj, Mymiensingh, got rather early into political activities and was noted for his power of organisation and deeds of daring.

In April 1916, an Order for internment under the Defence of India Act was passed against him. When the police officer came with the Order, Sanjib was found missing from his home. He was subsequently arrested in the outskirts of the Sub-Divisional town, Kishoreganj, with some cartridges and a revolver in the bag attached to his cycle. On July 13, 1916, he was convicted and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. He was subjected to inhuman torture which he withstood with commendable courage.

Sanjib was given no respite. In July he was prosecuted while in jail for violation of internment rules in evading service of the Order.

He preferred an appeal against his conviction and was waiting for the hearing of the case. In the meantime, the Government announced in the first week of September 1916, that the prisoner had died of dysentery in the jail. There was not a whisper about his indisposition even the day before he expired. The dead body was not delivered to the relatives for cremation though serious efforts were made for the purpose.

A valuable life was lost in the dark dungeon of British prison-house in India with no body knowing the real fact.

Mysterious Disappearance

(1915)

SRISHI CHANDRA MITRA, *alias* Habu, a name by which he was more popularly known to his friends as also to the police, figured prominently in the Rodda Pistol Theft Case.

Habu managed to evade arrest but found it difficult to escape, police vigilance having been more closely tightened up around him.

It is reported that Habu tried to leave India and slip into China through the frontier on foot. In this daring adventure he was shot by the frontier guard and killed. In any case after he had left his place of hiding in Calcutta there was no trace of him whatsoever.

Pestered To Death

(1916-1917)

SACHINDRA NATH DAS GUPTA of Rangpur, a bright young boy of parts, was suspected of complicity with revolutionary activities and arrested on August 24, 1916, under the Defence of India Act. He was interned in a distant village away from home where he was regularly visited by the police and molested in the usual way. Moreover, the unhealthy climate of the place was too much for Sachin to bear and his health gave way.

On a solemn undertaking given by the father, Sachin was allowed to live with his parents as an internee from December 19, 1916. Under Government orders he had to move about within a small circle without any relaxation in the terms and conditions of his internment. He was a student of the fourth year class of a Calcutta College when arrested. He sought permission of the Government to continue his studies in the local Carmichael College which was refused.

Besides, the internee was not allowed to play, not even to mix with anybody; a visit to the local library was closed to him. He was asked not to talk to anybody except the members of his family.

Sachin was noticed to lose his normal interest in matters around him. On September 18, 1917, he told his mother at night

before retiring, that it was no use leading such a life where he could not do any fruitful work. For all practical purposes his case was worse than that of a locked-up criminal. It was too much for him to become a veritable burden on the family with his cursed existence. He further told that he had become a permanent source of trouble to the family which had to live under constant apprehension of search and molestation.

Sachin was an early riser. When he was seen not to have come out even after 7 a.m. his mother knocked at the bolted door without any response. When it was forced open Sachin was found lying unconscious on the floor with a pot containing a very small quantity of a mixture of milk and opium by his side. He did not regain consciousness and the poor lad expired on September 19, 1917 at about 12 noon. He was then 18 years of age.

Three letters addressed to (i) the District Magistrate, (ii) the C. I. D. Inspector, and (iii) his brother were found in the room. To his brother he repeated his feelings of exasperation at the treatment of the police and all that he had told his mother about his stay in the family. Life had become unbearable to him and he took the painful but fatal step to relieve the family and himself of worries that had been mounting up with every day due to the action of the police.

To the C. I. D. Inspector he wrote, *inter alia*, "I now go to a place where you cannot watch and follow me."

The poignancy of untimely and violent death of Sachin was highlighted by a casual but very pointed reference by Rabindra Nath in the article published under caption 'Chhoto O Baro' (Big and Small) in the *Prabasi*, Agrahayana, 1324. A free (unworthy) rendering of his inimitable language written in Bengali is given below :

The history of all great people proclaims that this urge (for attaining the goal) bubbling, roaring and foaming along its course strewn with rubbles of failures and successes, and breaking all barriers to pieces, mildly descends as blessings on earth. That in spite of the counsel of the sages and lessons drawn from history. forced idleness is worse than death to the boys endowed with natural buoyancy of spirit, would be apparent from a perusal of the heart-rending last letter written by Sachin Das Gupta over his suicide.

Today I notice with supreme pleasure that there is no dearth of young travellers in the difficult path bereft of fortune and honour and beset with untold sufferings. The call came from the high and the response of our youngmen was immediate. On the pinnacle of supreme sacrifice they are getting ready with the support of religious fervour to carve their way through and march onwards. They never entertained the fond hope that the imitation Englishman (the Indian bureaucrat) would appreciate the high ideals or bless their endeavour in any way.

In countries which are the darlings of fortune, where the specialised avenues of service to humanity and to one's Motherland have widened and adopted diverse courses, where the cherished desires and the sphere of their application have met in a happy confluent, the determined, self-sacrificing, non-calculating of earthly gains and losses, and impressionable boys are the priceless treasure.

A perusal of the last epistle of self-immolating Sachindra leads one to think that if the boy had been born in the land of the Englishman who had penalised him, Sachin could live with dignity and die in a greater halo of glory.

Any satrap of the olden or modern times or his henchmen could turn a country from one end to the other into an inert lifeless tract by persecution and suppression of the lads bursting with the fulness of life. The task is quite easy, but barbaric. . . . There could be no more cruel waste of human life than, on the merest suspicion to turn boys who had accidentally slipped down in climbing up, who could be brought back from their perilous journey with a simple word of hope and cheer, into lifelong cripples. It is a questionable statecraft to leave without a murmur every boy, every youth to the mercy of the secret police. It is just like decorating meanness and unpardonable sin with insignia of the State. It is just like letting loose a herd of buffaloes into a green orchard at midnight. The owner of the garden sighs, 'Alas!' and smites his head with the palm of his hand in agony, while the owner of the herd gloats over the incident in supreme glee that not a blade in the field had been left undestroyed.

Rabindra Nath's language masterly reflected the agonisingly doleful thoughts and feelings which the lacerated hearts of the parents and relations of every boy held captive on suspicion had been vainly struggling to find expression.

An Emblem of Self-Respect

(1915-1917)

A daring lad of Madaripur left home at a tender age to become one of the most active partners of revolutionary activities under Jatindra Nath Mukherji. He was 'wanted' in connection with the Garden Reach Dacoity committed on February 12, 1915.

RADHA CHARAN PRAMANICK had been hiding from place to place and ultimately he was arrested at No. 20, Fakir Chand Dutt Street, Calcutta, with a pistol and a few round of cartridges.

He was sent up for trial and was awarded two years' rigorous imprisonment under the Arms Act with conspiracy to commit dacoity, etc., on May 27, 1915.

In the Garden Reach Dacoity Case Radha Charan was made an additional accused on July 2. The case was taken up by the Sessions of August 17. He was charged with committing armed dacoity and the case dragged on till November 22. When another charge of committing simple dacoity was added. He pleaded guilty to the second charge and 'not guilty' to the first. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for seven years on the same date.

He had been in prison for two years when he developed eye-troubles. He asked the Superintendent of the jail to make arrangements for proper treatment of his malady. In return he was told that 'dacoits' and 'murderers' like him should better become blind than cured whereby the Government and the country would be saved of a world of worries.

Radha Charan took the pledge that inside the jail he would neither ask for nor use any medicine supplied at Government cost. Unfortunately, he was attacked with blood dysentery within a few weeks. Drugs were ready but he was adamant in keeping up to his word and refused all medical aid. It was the month of February 1917; a young man of twenty-two sacrificed his life at the altar of self-respect in preference to humiliation.

Rank Betrayal

(1917)

Some Indian revolutionaries who had been working in Germany went over to Persia in the expectation of rendering better services to the country. Their immediate object was to establish contact with their co-workers in India through Iran and to organise, if possible, a guerilla band for the purpose of attacking India.

KEDAR NATH, only 22, was one of these dare-devils. He was given assurances of help by the Indian soldiers stationed in Persia and was almost lured to the Shiraz (Indian) Consulate with the object of handing him over to the British authorities. Kedar Nath had not been feeling very happy with his new friends and decided to cross the desert for a safe haven beyond the sands.

These traitors came to know of Kedar Nath's intention, arrested him and handed him over to his enemies. He was brought to Meshid and transferred thence to Kerman where he was shot dead by the British troops in Lut Desert in Central Persia in 1917.

Friends in Deed

(1917)

Kedar Nath had two comrades, both members of the Berlin Committee, who worked on the same line and met with the same fate perhaps at the same place and on the same day.

DADAJI CHANJI KERSASP was a student of Engineering in Berlin. He was sent to Afghanistan via Iran with the object of despatching arms to India with comparatively less trouble and risk. His mission having proved abortive he tried to come back to Persia and resume his former activities there. He was arrested in Siestan.

BASANTA SINGH formerly of the *Ghadr* party, attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian troops stationed in Mesopotamia where he met with scant success. He then moved

to Afghanistan in the expectation of finding out the Indian Mission for sending money to India through that organisation.

Both Kersasp and Basanta Singh on their way back were arrested at the Kerman-Afghanistan border by the Indian troops. They were shot dead, like Kedar Nath, under the orders of the British Military Officers.

The Destined Way

(1918)

In the discharge of his duties, Haridas Maitra, a Sub-Inspector attached to the Bogra Criminal Investigation Department, went on May 8, 1918, with a *posse* of constables to the house of a woman to arrest a person suspected of complicity with the revolutionary party. Haridas headed the searching party and as soon as he entered the house he was fired point blank by the youth. During the commotion that ensued, the young man though surrounded by the constables, kept on firing all through and managed to escape.

Haridas Maitra died on the spot. The young man could not be traced.

Kaltabazar Encounter

(1918)

The police and the revolutionaries by now had come into close grips because the former had more time and opportunity to concentrate their attention on the few of the revolutionaries left outside after imprisonment, internment without trial, execution, etc. They had been busy now hounding up suspects in secret haunts and rounding them up.

In one of these excursions the police raided a house, on information, at Kaltabazar, Dacca, on June 15, 1918. The residents in hiding found the house completely surrounded and there was no chance of escape through the cordon. There were only three of them, TARINI PRASANNA MAJUMDAR, NALINI KANTA BAGCHI, and another, and they prepared themselves for an open fight, however unequal that might be. Without giving any opportunity

to gain the upper hand the besieged men opened fire which was promptly returned by the police.

A constable, Patiram Singh, was to receive the first mortal shot when he entered the house and tried to disarm one of the three men found there. The next to be wounded was the Sub-Inspector of Police conducting the search.

On the other side, mortally wounded was Tarini who was removed to the Mitford Hospital to die within a few hours. Nalini was so seriously wounded that he died the next day, June 16, 1918, in the same hospital. The same day Patiram also died. The Sub-Inspector ultimately got round. The third man in the besieged house was taken a captive.

Both Tarini and Nalini had long records of service and of facing danger in the past. When the police had been very active in Bengal, the revolutionaries found Assam to be a comparatively safer place and some wended there to find out a shelter. Gradually Gauhati became one of the centres for resting their heads in temporary peace.

One shelter having been found insufficient for the purpose, the fugitives selected two houses one at Atgaon, very close to the jail on its eastern side, the other at Fancybazar. On January 7, 1918, the police raided the Atgaon house at about 3-30 at night when shots were exchanged between the revolutionaries and the police. Any way, the attacked men were able to escape none being arrested at the place. Emerging out of the haunt, they took shelter in Nabagraha Hill in Assam.

The police agents were able to discover this place and on January 10, 1918, a large number of policemen appeared on the scene at about 2 p.m. when the fugitives had just been getting ready for their meals.

There was a fight between the two parties. The police could realise from the gradual infrequency of firing from the other side that the stock of ammunition had been running short with them. The police began to tighten up the cordon around the fighting men. Nalini Kanta Bagchi was one of those so trapped. He stood by the side of the leader absolutely undaunted and got himself prepared to meet the same fate with the leader.

Nalini was at the time deemed a very important unit in the organisation working in secret. The leader commanded Nalini

to withdraw and retire to a place of safety while he would hold the police at bay.

Nalini was able, eminently resourceful as he was, to get out of the difficult situation just to die on June 16, 1918, as a result of an open fight for which he was destined.

Tarini had long been on the list of suspects and he was 'wanted' by the police most resolutely. But he had always succeeded in evading arrest since 1916, when efforts for his apprehension were greatly intensified.

Tarini was entrapped by the police in a shelter in Comilla. He successfully managed to get out of the trap with a revolver and a pistol in his hand which he had in his possession at the time. He was once surrounded by the police in his residence at Kansaripara, Bhawanipore, in Calcutta and there was absolutely no chance for escape for any other man. He took a leap from the roof of the first floor of the house and got one of his legs fractured. His ingenuity did not abandon him in physical pain and imminent danger of arrest. He used his lameness most efficiently at the time. He tore to tatters his wearing cloth and within a few minutes changed himself into a lame beggar and passed through the cordon without exciting any the least suspicion in the minds of so many policemen who had come there with such elaborate arrangements for his arrest.

Pursuing his secret itinerary Tarini reached his destination at Kaltabazar on June 15, 1918, where he fought so valiantly and died like a hero.

Thus closed an eventful career of two friends who had been clinging together in the midst of extreme danger almost throughout their political career and passed together to the realm of the unknown in the closest embrace in the service of the Motherland.

Culpable Homicide

(1918)

A brilliant student of the Calcutta University, a gold medallist in M.A., Examiner in Mathematics of the Calcutta University, MANINDRA NATH SETH, became the Vice-Principal of the Daulatpur Academy in 1916. When the Rangpur College was started he secured in May 1917, the senior professorship in his subject and resigned his post in 'the Academy'. When going to join his duties in June 1917, he was prevented by the Magistrate-Secretary on the ground that he had some secret reports against the Professor supplied by the police and he could not be allowed to join his new position. He was just offered a month's salary, the most gracious act that the Secretary could do for the aggrieved person.

Manindra saw the Political Secretary towards the middle of July 1917, in Darjeeling, where he had gone to plead for his brother, Sachin, an internee, and also to explain his own peculiar position. Asked as to how he could make his living, Manindra was naively told:

"Well, standing on the bank how can I tell you what course the river will take? Babu, you ought to thank yourself that you are not interned." (*The Amrita Basar Patrika*, January 25, 1918).

Manindra was now faced with a serious predicament. It was difficult for him to try for any job far away from home because he had to look after his two younger brothers, aged 12 and 10, respectively, orphaned by the death of the parents with nobody to take charge of them in his absence. In the circumstances, it was absolutely necessary that Sachin should be released or, in the alternative, given a home domicile.

But Fate ordained otherwise. The prophetic words of the Political Secretary came to be true very shortly. Manindra was arrested on August 28, 1917, and removed to the Presidency Jail, Calcutta, where he was kept with undertrials of all sorts not excluding lunatics.

To a fine gentleman of high education and culture, and endowed with fine sense and sensibility, the arrest and stay with

such undesirables were a great shock to him inasmuch as the thought of his two helpless brothers at home told seriously upon his mental and physical health. The result was disastrous. The Superintendent of the Jail on September 11, 1917, reported to the Government that the prisoner "was under observation for symptoms of insanity."

An order for internment was passed hurriedly on Sept. 26, 1917, against which the jail report went to the effect that "he was dangerous". The treatment that these men imprisoned without trial received at the hands of the authorities was evident from the fact that just after a month, October 28 to be precise, the report that emanated from the jail was that "he was not insane but was responsible for his action," and that "tuberculosis was suspected."

A further order for his domicile was passed on November 4, 1917, and the unfortunate man was removed to the house of an unwilling relative in Calcutta. The condition grew critical and on the second day, *i.e.*, the 6th, the internec had to be removed to the Medical College Hospital in haste.

The Professor, a bachelor about whom the opinion of the Daulatpur people was that "Manindra devoted his heart and soul for the cause of suffering humanity; an ideal teacher in the field of education, who tried his utmost to effect the moral regeneration of the student community. He was loved and respected by every one; and was a friend of the needy", was at his journey's end. To the great relief of the Government, the victim breathed his last at 10-30 p.m. on January 16, 1918, in the Calcutta Medical College, with the last words that related to his helpless brothers' fate, while surrounded by watchers, guards and police officials.

Exasperation

(1918)

Education, culture, social standing, family relations, etc., were no bar to a young man coming within the fold of a revolutionary organisation and inviting the attention of the police with its attendant evils. A note from a correspondent was published in *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* on June 25, 1918, to the effect that a sad event had taken place in the Rajshahi Jail at 11 p.m. on June 17, when "a Kayestha, an inhabitant of Mymensingh, an M.A. of the Calcutta University, had committed suicide by besmearing his clothing in kerosene oil and setting fire to it." Nobody could ascribe any reasons for this dastardly act but the fact was there that a valuable life of bright promise was lost in the British prison kept indefinitely without trial.

The conditions in certain jails were such that a number of prisoners had laid violent hands on themselves, turned mad, released just to die or rendered a lifelong physical wreck. The newspaper could not publish the name at the time, such publication in respect of political prisoners being controlled by a Government verbal ukase.

On July 4, 1918, replying to a question put by a member of the Legislative Council, the Home Member disclosed the name of the unfortunate man as RASIK SARKAR and no further detail was vouchsafed.

Step by Step

(1918)

Recklessness is one of the virtues of a revolutionary confronted with contending forces, the family and the country, each claiming priority. Working intimately with the group hauled up in the Benares Conspiracy Case, SUSHIL CHANDRA LAHIRI, of Madanpura, Benares, a science graduate of the Calcutta University, somehow escaped through sheer luck being embroiled in the said trial. The police had, however, been keeping a close watch on his movements and effected arrest on February 21, 1918, at

Lucknow. After a search of his residence a tin containing two revolvers and in his neighbour's room 200 live cartridges were found.

In the meantime Vinayak Rao Kaple, *alias* Satyen, *alias Barra Babu*, once an important member of a political organisation in Bengal and accused of rank defection, was found dead as the result of a bullet wound in Ghasiari Mandi, Lucknow, on February 9, 1918.

A case was started under Section 20 of the Indian Arms Act and on May 6, 1918, the accused, Sushil, was sentenced to a term of five years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000.

The prisoner appealed before the Judicial Commissioner, Oudh, on May 29, and July 29, was fixed for the hearing. The appeal was dismissed outright.

The police did not relax their efforts to find out somebody responsible for the murder of Kaple. After investigation a case was started against Sushil, while in prison, with another *in absentia*, as the persons suspected of the assassination. After the usual judicial enquiry Sushil was committed to the Sessions on July 17, 1918, with the other, an absconding accused in the Benares Conspiracy Case. The Magistrate in the course of his commitment order stated that "the cartridges found in his house were of the same make and pattern as an empty one found on the spot where Vinayak Kaple fell". Charges were framed under Section 302 and 114 I.P.C. and 211(1) Cr. P. C.

Sushil was sentenced to death by the Sessions Court on August 11, 1918. The accused declined to make any statement in self-defence and received the sentence absolutely unperturbed.

The judgment was confirmed by the Judicial Commissioner, Oudh, and his term of imprisonment for five years remained unserved by his untimely exit from the world in October, 1918. Unto the last he maintained equanimity of his mind. He bathed in the morning in water brought from the Ganges, and performed the morning rituals of a devout Brahmin. Then he proceeded unflinching and ascended the steps leading to the gallows with dignity and firmness befitting a hero who had staked everything for independence of his country. The last words in his mouth was *Bande Mataram*, with the noose closely tightening against his throat.

Woeful Exit

(1918)

Like so many hundreds of young men in Bengal, SATYENDRA CHANDRA SARKAR, a lad in his teens, was arrested and after a prison life was interned at Chhougacha, a village in the Jessore district. While passing through all the travails of a detenu's life, hapless Satyendra was one day bitten by a rabid dog in May 1918. His only luck was that he was given some sort of medical aid which was usually denied to most of them. He was sent to Shillong for treatment and stayed there up to June 9, 1918. He then had to go back to his domicile.

In about four months after his return he suddenly fell very seriously ill on October 1, and a message to the effect was sent to the headquarters. In such cases the machinery moves very slow and before any succour came the lad died on the next day at 1 p.m. of hydrophobia. It can be surmised that due to violence of the symptoms of the disease, which Satyen manifested in their worst forms, no care could be taken of the patient as those who would brave the consequence were far far away from the place. No tear was shed on the corpse which was disposed of in what manner nobody knows.

Age not Spared

(1918)

In its mad orgy of indiscriminate arrests and internments the Government of Bengal did not allow peace even to men advanced in age and leading a retired life. SARADA KANTA CHAKRABARTI of Naldanga, Rangpur, an affluent man of 60, made Benares his home for a fairly long time before he was arrested on September 23, 1917. He used to devote most of his time in religious pursuits and out of generosity of his heart would help a number of young men with money for their studies or to maintain the family of the indigent. One by one each of these boys was arrested and thrown into prison.

The old man was forthwith removed to Calcutta after arrest and despatched to Alfadanga, an extremely unhealthy place in Jessore district. He was attacked with malaria almost within a week of his arrival, and because of his age could ill stand its ravages. The allowance that was granted to him was absolutely insufficient for a man who had seen better days and would request his relations every month to supplement his income. He was so afraid of the insalubrity of the place that he would request everybody expressing his desire to see him, not to visit him on any account. The letters that he used to write carried the news of his failing health and in respect of the last letter, it was apparent that he had taken the help of others to scribble out his correspondence. There was natural anxiety in the minds of his relations who sent successive pre-paid telegrams to the Officer-in-charge of the Police Station to ascertain the correct position. One of the rare replies dated December 4, 1918, disclosed that the internee had died on November 30, and this could happen under a civilised Government!

Criminal Negligence

(1918)

At Egra in Midnapore there was no qualified medical man, a big area being served by a gentleman who happened to be a student of the Cuttack Medical School, never obtaining a diploma and another who was a half-qualified veterinary doctor. In such a place a valuable life was kept in detention only to die of sheer neglect and callous indifference.

The victim, KUMUD BANDHU BHATTACHARYA, who, if allowed the choice, might have preferred outright execution, was kept in detention in 1916, with a meagre subsistence allowance which seldom could meet his wants. Due to extreme unhealthiness of the place he was a regular sufferer from malarial fever, a grievance which he brought before the authorities in all possible ways.

His case became desperate by December 1918, and not only his but representation of a Head Constable stationed in charge

of him in the absence of the Sub-Inspector, to the District Superintendent of Police went unheeded and the bright young boy died under the treatment of two medical men who in civilized countries would not be allowed to take charge of animals not to speak of human lives. The boy breathed his last unattended on December 15, 1918, with nobody to mourn over his demise nearby.

Elusive Figure

(1918)

Better known as GIRIJA BABU in the revolutionary world, NAGENDRA NATH DATTA, before getting into vortex of politics, received his early training in social services from his father. When others would be reluctant to come forward for the seriousness of the disease and chances of infection, the patient was sure to see the sympathetic face of Nagendra's father, a lawyer of repute, at his bedside.

When barely fourteen or fifteen he asked one of his playmates to bring his father's revolver so that they may gain some experience in handling fire-arms. Just in a fun he aimed the revolver at his friend and pulled the trigger and as there was no cartridge in that barrel, nothing happened. His turn came but the other barrel had a live cartridge left in it and as soon as his friend fired, the bullet passed through one of Nagendra's thighs which took a long time to heal.

When studying law at Sunamganj, Sylhet, Nagendra Nath took active part in the Anti-Partition movement. He joined the *Anusilan Samiti* and started a branch at the place. He put zest into the organisation which was weakened by the arrest of its leaders. He did not take a long time to attract the attention of the police and had to leave the place for a bigger field of activity.

He came in close contact with Rash Behari Bose and was known to be his right-hand man in his stupendous organisational work extending over a large part of northern India. After Rash Behari had left India, Nagendra Nath struggled hard to maintain solidarity amongst different small groups scattered over a wide

area. He fondly expected that Rash Behari would manage to smuggle arms into India or would come personally with sufficient weapons to complete the unfinished mission.

Girija Babu accompanied Rash Behari during his itinerary through police cordon up to the harbour when Rash Behari boarded the ship in Calcutta in April, 1914.

Before leaving India Rash Behari issued instructions to his followers to work under Girija Babu and another leader so that during his absence the organisation could maintain its perfect form.

Though his intimacy with Rash Behari was rather for a short period, Girija enjoyed, through sincerity, selflessness, intelligence and tact, the greatest confidence of the former and was recognised by the leader as a 'type' by himself.

Girija was arrested in 1915, and was made an accused in the Benares Conspiracy Case. His name also figured prominently in the Delhi and Lahore Conspiracy Cases, but it was convenient for the Government to rope him in the Benares Case. He was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. He was attacked with dysentery in the jail and as a result of a most perfunctory treatment, he expired sometime in 1918, in the Agra jail.

At Supreme Risk (1919)

On the day of the incident, May 9, 1918, a passenger got down from the train at a station in Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, with a bundle in his arm. A constable charged with keeping a watch over all suspects passing through the railway station approached the unknown passenger and wanted to make a search of his belongings. He was allowed to do so. While engaged in his work the owner of the bundle whipped out a revolver and fired at the constable, Prasanna Nandi.

A quantity of ammunition and some implements helpful for political operations were found in the bundle. The culprit ran away and the wounded constable was removed to the hospital in a serious condition where he succumbed to his injuries.

As a Last Resort

(1919)

Amongst many instances of brutal heartlessness and rank irresponsibility the case of MAKHAN LAL GHOSH of Alambazar, a suburb of Calcutta, a mere boy of fifteen and a student of a local school, occupies a peculiarly significant position. Makhan was arrested in the second week of March, 1916, and was prosecuted for complicity in a dacoity case. He was discharged by the Magistrate, but re-arrested under the Defence of India Act and was removed to the Presidency Jail where he was kept in a solitary cell for over a month.

He was then interned at Kalchini, an unhealthy village in the Jalpaiguri district. He fell seriously ill and was removed to the Alipore Jail. Before he could fully recover he was transferred to the Hugli Jail where he remained for over a year. Midnapore Jail was his next shelter where he could scarcely maintain his health.

Next he was sent to the Hazaribagh Jail where he began feeling a little better. Like a kitten carried by the mother cat, Makhan was ordered to proceed to Taldangra in the district of Bankura. His thatched dark dingy abode resembled a veritable death-trap. The area was extremely unhealthy and was infested with poisonous snakes. On his representation the Superintendent of Police visited the place only to abuse him for his complaints and went away administering a sound advice to put up with whatever had been provided by the benign Government. It was impossible for him to stay there any longer; he crossed the boundary of his domicile against internment rules and offered for arrest at the Sadar Police Station.

Instead of proceeding against him in a court of law the internee was forced to go back to Taldangra again where he started a hunger strike. His condition became alarming and he was hurriedly removed to the Bankura Hospital where he resumed taking food.

The scene changed and Makhan was sent to Ondal where he was attacked with cholera. His mother was permitted to look

after his ailing son reaching the place on March 15, 1918. He had scarcely come round when a fresh order was passed asking him to see the Deputy Superintendent of Police of Burdwan. His mother left for her home and the unfortunate lad proceeded towards Burdwan as directed.

No further news were available for over a fortnight and the distracted father tried every means to explore the whereabouts of his son. At long last he was informed that his son had been interned at Maheskhali in Chittagong. Makhan's miseries increased hundred-fold as he communicated to his mother in three successive letters. The last letter written on December 29, 1919, contained that he would "let you know all in time".

A correspondence from the Government dated January 7, 1920, to Makhan's father intimated him that "the Government learn with much regret of the death by suicide of Makhan Lal Ghosh of Maheskhali on the 29th December, 1919, and desire to express their sympathy with his family."

People were left guessing whether it was really a case of death by suicide or the result of snake-bite, malady or assault by the police.

Flare-up in Manipur

(1917-1918)

After the last trouble in 1890-1891, there were no outward signs of the major conflict with British authority in Manipur but the fire was never completely extinguished, it simply smouldered. With the wind of fresh incursion on what the Kukis and Nagas of Manipur thought to be their exclusive right of peaceful existence the fire burst out into flame in a most unexpected manner.

In 1917, during the World War I, the British Government wanted to raise a corps from the people of Manipur to work behind the lines in France. The people, at least a very large section of them composed of the Kukis and Nagas, openly signified their resentment and some of the Chiefs not only resisted the attempt at recruitment themselves but prevented others from helping the outsiders.

Frustrated in every way the Political Agent at Manipur marched in October 1917, with a fairly big party to Mobi, a largely populated Naga village, with the object of capturing Ngulkhup, the Chief, and failing in his attempt put the entire village on fire.

In the meantime the Chins in Burma rose in rebellion which added strength to the Manipuri fighters. They tried to storm the Government headquarters at Manipur in a great force. At Ukha, another village, the Government troops met with stiff resistance and lost a large number of sepoy from the fire discharged by the Kukis from their jungle haunts.

Emboldened by the success they simultaneously attacked a Captain of the Army and also the Political Agent with his party both of whom narrowly escaped with their lives. In revenge, Ukha was reduced to ashes. Several other hostile villages were ransacked ruthlessly and wiped out of existence. Instead of being intimidated or dismayed the Kukis' redoubled their attack and actually raided the Manipur outpost at Tengnoupal, killing the havildar and a number of his men. All communications were disrupted and it seemed that at least for the time being the rebels were having their day of rejoicing.

The Government came to realise the seriousness of the situation. Two strong columns of Assam Rifles were despatched against the rebellious Chiefs in the Southern and Northern Hills while the Government of Burma was ordered to send troops to co-operate with the advancing columns of the Indian army. In addition, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills marched against the Kuki villages situated near the border of his district.

Confronted with heavy odds of trained men armed with the modern weapons, Kukis retreated to the interior of the jungles. The reprisal was brutal; village after village was looted and completely destroyed by fire; property of any worth was removed from the Naga homes.

But in another sector the rebels met with a good deal of success. The escort of the Captain and two riflemen were killed; several others of the party were more or less seriously wounded.

In February 1918, the Naga Hills column was operating very hard but had to be re-inforced by another column from Silchar to help in the march to Imphal and to restore disturbed communications.

It was difficult by itself to face the onslaughts of the redoubtable Kuki and Naga heroes with "their characteristic fighting tactics in the terrain marked by steep and jungle-clad hills." It was a huge task for the British Indian soldiers to bring to bay enemies "that fired at the approaching force and disappeared without waiting for a counter-attack".

The reprisals were intensified not only by destroying village after village, removing every article of use, all forms of sustenance, food of every kind, but also by "harrying that prevents them from cultivating". The number of combatants and army units were increased and co-operation between the forces of the two columns of the Government of Assam and that of Burma was better organised.

The particular revolt of the dauntless Kukis and Nagas was suppressed ultimately, but their spirit could never be coerced into submission. The attempt to bring the Kukis and their neighbours of the hill into service of the War ended in a dismal failure. (Source: *Government Communique* issued on February 21, 1918).

Punjab in Flames

(1919)

Strictly speaking the convulsion that rocked Punjab in 1919 with all the horrors and sufferings to the people of the unfortunate Province does not suitably fit in with the scheme that has been followed in this book.

From the point of view of a violent national awakening of the masses with all its terrible consequences, to the Indians and to some non-official Europeans, the disorders commencing with the passage of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act (popularly known as 'the Rowlatt Act') had never been surpassed in India. But this outburst had been lacking in the essentials of a revolutionary organisation working in secret with the avowed object of making an alien rule impossible through the use of arms and assumption of power from the unwilling hands of the foreigners. It was an open mass movement with complete knowledge of the consequences to the participants. But its treatment is relevant in the sense that the Act was aimed at the revolutionary movement which was apprehended to raise its ugly head, because "the very important powers which have enabled the public peace and order to be preserved during the War will shortly come to an end."

The Punjab conflagration started with a spark seemingly innocuous engulfing in its course a very large part of the Province with the suddenness of lightning. The whole affair had had no previous preparedness, unlike the under-ground movement, just exploding on an issue not guessed before. It created a vicious circle of violence met by counter-violence on both sides.

The administration of Martial Law removed all vestiges of civilised Government from the three districts whereon it was clapped. The trials that were held under its regime surpassed the terror of a mass massacre of a bloody heartless marauder.

In the pages of the history of India, the Punjab episode would occupy a prominent place because it contributed in a large measure to the growth of a most bitter feeling throughout the country against the Government and helped in preparing the soil for lusty

growth of the revolutionary sentiments at the time and thereafter in the thirties of the present century.

The Government wanted to supplement the ordinary criminal law against revolutionary crimes and introduced two Bills in the Imperial Legislative Council on February 6, 1919. The aim of the measure was "to supplement the ordinary criminal law and for the exercise of emergency powers by the Government." The Act held in its various sections provision for the arrest and confinement without assigning any reason and speedy rough and ready trial with no right of appeal.

On February 28, 1919, Gandhiji declared from Bombay that the Bills showed a deep-seated disease in the governing body which should be first removed. The Bills were, however, passed into law on March 18, 1919, at the teeth of public opposition both inside and outside the House.

The country did not take the challenge lying down. The law was declared as "highly inexpedient and injurious to the best interests of the country". To register his active protest Gandhiji resorted to a twenty-four hours' fasting on March 24. It was decided to observe March 30, as a day of mourning and humiliation throughout the country.

The simmering discontent burst out into flame. A serious riot broke out in Delhi on April 1, 1919. Several persons were killed and wounded from firing resorted to by the police for preventing molestation of men unwilling to participate in the protest meetings and or closing down of shops and business organisations.

On April 9, Gandhiji started for Delhi from Bombay. On April 10, he was served with a notice while travelling by the Up Bombay-Baroda and Central India train at Kosi Kalan Station forbidding him to enter that Province. He was taken down from the train and removed to Muttra. He was further ordered by the Delhi and the Punjab authorities not to enter the areas under the administration of both. Gandhiji disobeyed and proceeded to Palwal Station, Gurgaon district. He was arrested and ordered to remain in Bombay and not to go anywhere else. On April 10, 1919, Gandhiji issued a message to his countrymen saying that "it was galling to remain free while the Rowlatt legislations disfigured the Statute Book". A few front rank Punjab leaders were arrested on the same day.

Delhi declared a general strike on April 10, due to Gandhiji's arrest. Serious riots broke out in Lahore and Amritsar. As usual police came out in large numbers fully armed and firings were resorted to in several places killing a large number of people.

On April 11, 1919, Gandhiji returned to Bombay and addressed a very big public meeting. In other parts of the city violence took place followed by police firing.

On April 12, meetings and processions were organised in Calcutta and the mob went out of control within a very short time.

At Lahore, disturbances of a very alarming nature occurred and four Europeans associated with business houses were murdered by the frenzied mob.

On April 13, 1919, was perpetrated the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The incident as described by Dyer himself, the 'hero' of the outrage, before the Punjab Disorders Enquiry Committee (Hunter Committee) on November 19, 1919, was of a nature that history has no parallel.

Dyer said in his evidence :

He arrived at Amritsar in the evening of 11th April, 1919. Requested by the Deputy Commissioner he assumed the command. He understood that roughly the position was that civil law was at an end and military law would have to take its place. It was an extraordinary situation and he justified in taking over when the civil authorities asked him to do so without any Acts and Regulations in support.

He mentioned that disturbed state also existed in places outside Amritsar.

He maintained that the Jallianwala Bagh firing was justified. He had been telling the people by proclamation not to hold meetings and they defied his authority. He felt that his orders were not obeyed. Martial Law had been flouted and it was his duty to disperse the crowd by rapid fire.

He had already made up his mind and opened fire immediately; he got his men in position and did not think any warning necessary. He did not think it necessary to consult the Deputy Commissioner in the absence of regular proclamation of a Martial Law; moreover, there was no Deputy Commissioner present.

He thought it his duty to go on firing until the whole crowd dispersed. A little firing would have dispersed the crowd for

the time being but they would have come back again and he would have made a fool of himself. He thought there was an attempt to isolate him. The situation was serious and he considered the Amritsar mob as rebels. He looked upon the Jallianwala Bagh shooting a duty horrible duty.

Mr. Justice Rankin (a Commissioner): „Excuse me putting it that way, General, but was it not rather a form of frightfulness!

General Dyer: No. It was not. It was a horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful act. I thought that I should shoot well and strong so that I or anybody else would not have to shoot again. If I had the right to fire one shot, I had the right to fire a lot of rounds. I arrived at the logical conclusion that I must disperse the crowd who had defied the arm of the law. There was no middle course. The one thing was force.

It was his opinion that it did a jolly lot of good.

Asked if he did not think it a disservice to the British Raj, witness replied in the negative and said that what he did was right and they ought to be thankful for it.

Question: After firing took place did you take any measures to attend to the wounded?

Answer: No. Certainly not. It was not my job. The hospitals were open and they could have gone there.

Question: Was the action of yours which as we know has resulted in four or five hundred people being killed approved by the Punjab Government?

Answer: I believe so, certainly.

In its attempt to maintain the peace and tranquillity of the land, the Government deemed it necessary to introduce a law which was subversive of the first principles of liberty of a free citizen. It generated the most resolute opposition from the leaders and the masses alike and produced an effect contrary to the aims and objects of the Government.

The outrage of April 13, exasperated the nation and instead of bringing the infuriated people under control, it made them absolutely unmindful of grim fate that awaited them. On April 15, Punjab was "in a state of open rebellion". At Lahore aeroplanes bombed and machine-gunned rioters. Civil rule was given a go-by and the districts of Gujranwala, Lahore and Amritsar were placed under Martial Law.

Under the new regime men, mostly innocent, were stripped

naked and flogged in the streets with hands and legs tied to stands set up for the purpose. The rumour of three or four men succumbing to the effects of flogging was denied by the Government which stated that only thirty-two persons had been flogged in three districts from April 15 to May 15, 1919, "the average number of stripes administered being only eleven".

Thousands of students were forced to walk sixteen miles a day for roll calls; students and professors, numbering hundreds were arrested and detained. School children, between five and seven, were compelled to attend parade and salute the flag.

Owners of property were ordered to bear the responsibility for safety of the Martial Law posters stuck up on their property.

An entire marriage party, without having the least knowledge of any provisions of the Martial Law, was flogged publicly.

Six boys of the Islamia School, simply because they happened to be big, were flogged and no other reasons were adduced anywhere.

To humiliate the people, open cages were constructed and placed in central places where arrested men, some very respectable, were confined like so many ferocious animals.

Novel punishments like the crawling order, the skipping order and others unknown and undreamt of in any law, civil or military, were freely practised on the innocent and the guilty alike. Persons were handcuffed and roped together and kept on open trucks for fifteen hours or more at a stretch under scorching rays of the summer Punjab sun. Hindus and Muslims were handcuffed in pairs with the object of demonstrating the consequences of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Hostages were enforced and property confiscated or destroyed for the purpose of securing the attendance of absentees. A very large number of Indian houses were deprived of electric connections and water supply system was disconnected as a sort of punishment. Indians were forcibly evacuated from their own houses to make room for Europeans. Indian vehicles were commandeered and the same put to the use of Europeans.

Aeroplanes, Lewis guns and the latest paraphernalia of scientific warfare were paraded before an unarmed population to demonstrate the might of the British Raj.

Steps were taken hurriedly to dispose of the cases against

alleged offenders to forestall the termination of the Martial Law period. Military Courts were set up at several places which tried 852 men of whom 582 were convicted. Scores of men were condemned to death, a good number of whom were executed.

These are specimens of the steps taken by O'Dwyer and Dyer to make India safe for Britain. As to how far they had succeeded in their attempt only history bears the unimpeachable evidence. And O'Dwyer could not escape retribution in his turn.

Dogged by Misfortune

(1917-1920)

When thought of independence is in the air nobody knows how it would influence an individual and bestir him into action. The Mainpuri Conspiracy does not seem to have any connection either with Bengal, U. P. or Punjab revolutionaries; it was in this respect may be said to be of independent origin.

The prime mover who conceived the idea of revolutionary action was one GENDALAL DIXIT hailing from Auriya. He had been a teacher in Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School for some time.

He founded the *Shivaji samiti* in honour of the great hero, so that its members may follow the ideal of his life and methods of action.

At the early stage of his political career he tried to propagate his ideas amongst the educated and well-to-do people who, he thought, would from their knowledge of political serfdom of the country and freedom from worries of day-to-day living, join hands with him. The response to his approach was rather discouraging but he did not lose heart. He directed his attention towards desperate men, the robbers of the Gwalior State, who did little care for themselves not excluding life.

Gendalal once tried to enlist himself in the army but was refused. He used to say that the war that had started was going badly for the English and it was an opportune moment for the people to rise in revolt.

In the fulfilment of his mission he came to Gwalior where he met in 1917, Lachmananand Brahmachari, as he was called, who

had for long maintained patriotic sentiments in his mind. There was a complete understanding between the two and Gendalal busied himself in organising patriotic societies for the furtherance of his mission. At different places in U.P. organisations grew up with membership drawn from younger section showing promise and expressing sympathy for the cause.

He began preaching the idea of revolution and told the new recruits that he had joined a society of very able men who were prepared to sacrifice their lives. The society, as Gendalal would say, had four sections dealing with (i) Secret Service; (ii) Enlistment in the Army and learning the use of arms; (iii) Collection of money; and (iv) Propagation of the objective of the Society through literature.

Gendalal took upon himself the task of collecting arms at the initial stage and he was to some extent successful. With the arms thus secured he would teach trainees at Para in shooting. Not content with this he went to Calcutta to learn bomb-making from experts but failed to establish contact with any of them.

When Gendalal and Lachmananand had been able to form a nucleus they began to feel the want of daring men who would be prepared for any contingency. At this juncture they met Panchama Singh, leader of a big band of desperadoes who had courage, men and arms. They agreed to work together and soon selected men who were capable of quick action over distant areas. Gendalal put himself in charge of the United Provinces.

The whole operation was divided among three different groups one of which was under the leadership of Lachmananand. Dacoities were committed at Mainpuri, Etawah, Auriya, Sandhakhera, Para, etc., and the party became bolder with each adventure.

The Government now realised the gravity of the situation created by Gendalal. On January 31, 1918, a large number of Gendalal's party-men had assembled in a jungle in Bind, Gwalior. A very big force of armed police, on the information of a traitor, surrounded them. It was the plan of the Government force to wait till dawn when action would be taken. Somebody amongst the policemen coughed; Gendalal's party became alert and immediately started firing. There was a heavy exchange of shots resulting in serious casualties on both sides. Gendalal lost eight men through death and about twenty-five others suffered

serious injuries. The Brahmachari was killed and Gendalal lost the sight of one eye in the encounter.

Gendalal was arrested; in his possession were found two maps, one of the Mainpuri district, a note book and some other papers. After taking stock of the situation and having realised that the approvers enjoyed a great latitude in their movements, Gendalal assumed an air of surrender and expressed his eagerness to help the Government in the impending trial against the accused.

Gendalal was able to allay all suspicion in the minds of the guards and because of his more frequent meetings with high Government officers, who came to him for information, he was allowed to move rather freely than was usual in case of under-trials. With the advantage thus secured Gendalal made good his escape from the jail never to be arrested alive.

A big conspiracy case was started on February 13, 1919, under Sections 121-A, 120-B etc. I.P.C., against twenty-seven persons of whom nine were absconders including Gendalal. Shiu Krishna, the right-hand man of Gendalal was charged with preparing literature of highly seditious nature and was said to have exhorted his fellow men to gain physical fitness, money and arms "to drive out the deceitful English out of India".

The case was sent to the Sessions for trial on May 18, 1919, and the trial started at Mainpuri on June 3, 1919. While the trial was in progress the principal accused, Shiu Krishna, escaped from prison on June 5, 1919, by cutting the bar of the barrack grating adjacent to his bed. He climbed over the intervening wall into the garden of the jail. From the garden he scaled the outer wall and proceeded in the direction of Boregaon. He was successful in evading arrest and judgment was passed on July 27, 1919, against Gendalal and Shiu Krishna *in absentia* as also against others who were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

Gendalal, the hero, had to pass his days underground and suffered incalculable privations during the period of his absconding itinerary. In the last days of his life he reached a temple in Delhi in a desperate condition. He wrote a letter to a friend who came with Gendalal's wife for his nursing. To his disconsolate friend he said that there was no cause for sorrow as he had reached the straits in serving the Motherland. He would be happily departing in the thought that he had done his humble duty to his country.

He consoled his wife by saying that there were hundreds of thousands of helpless widows who had none to look after them. She should deem herself fortunate if her husband died in his efforts to see the Motherland free. It was a great source of grief to him that he had to leave the world without fulfilling the mission of his life.

The patient was removed with great difficulty to a hospital, and before his identity could be established, he breathed his last at 2 p.m. on December 27, 1920. (Source: *Biplabi Bangali*, October 2, 1959, pp. 601-698; Chatterji, J. C.: *Uttar Pradesiya ek biplabi netar smritikatha*.)

Stormy Petrel

(1903-1922)

More as an earnest student than on any political mission, VEERENDRA NATH CHATTOPADHYAYA, started for Europe in 1903 with a Bachelor's Degree from an Indian University. While a student of the Middle Temple Inns of Court, Veerendra was expelled in 1910 from the institution due to his association with the revolutionaries then residing in the United Kingdom.

He was drawn towards Shyamaji Krishnavarma and assisted him in publishing *The Indian Sociologist*.

In 1906 he met Kamil Pasha, the undisputed leader of the Young Turks, then in England, and sought his help in the people's attempt in driving out the English from India.

Veerendra was present at the International Socialist Conference at Stuttgart, Germany, and through his journey to Cracow (Poland), and Warsaw he became intimately acquainted with the contributor to the *Talwar* an anti-British paper in Europe.

In 1908, he visited Ireland and in 1909, went over to Paris to join the 'Bande Mataram' group of Madam Cama working there in the interests of India. In 1910, he became a regular contributor to the *Talwar*.

He tried to establish contact with the revolutionary parties of Russia, Ireland and particularly with the Riffs of Morocco to gain

military experience which he thought would be very helpful to Indian fighters for freedom.

In 1919 (July 9), he expressed his views in *The Times* (London) to the effect that though he was anxious to obliterate terrorism, he could not conscientiously help the British Government to suppress it as he was firmly convinced of their wrong policy. He further hinted that the catalogue of assassination would be a larger one and that the responsibility would be at the door of those who instead of espousing the cause of India's freedom wish to hold the British interests in India.

He became alert when the diplomatic relations between the two major European countries became strained in the early part of 1914, and he moved to Germany to advance India's cause by writing tracts in Hindi, Urdu and other Indian languages for a publishing firm that had promised support to Indian aspiration. Veerendra was one of the founders of the Berlin Committee and happened to be its first Secretary.

He managed to go over to Russia after the World War I in 1922, where he died, it is alleged under mysterious circumstances. No further news relating to him were available thereafter.