

CHAPTER SIX

THE COMBAT DEEPENS

(1924-1930)

The Prelude

The lull of comparative inaction under the spell of the Non-co-operation movement gradually faded out and the revolutionary party of India, particularly in the North, showed signs of renewed activity during a period of about two succeeding decades. It brings to mind a poem that depicts the essence of political philosophy marked by the flow and ebb-tide of events leading to ultimate goal:

*“Great forward leaps,
Followed by fainting falls
Have marked Time’s course ;
Each revelation to mankind vouchsafed
Hath come encompassed by mighty storms
Each gift from Heaven
Hath claimed its price in combat,
For without battle unto death
Is naught obtained”*

The “battle unto death”, marks the steps henceforward in a greater magnitude by hundreds of young men showing reckless courage and marvellous ingenuity in various field of activity.

Mistaken Identity

In point of death of a person or persons who were never objectives for any violence, much less a fatal attack, the event of January 12, 1924, has a special significance.

A European gentleman, E. Day, an employee of a Calcutta mercantile firm, used to enjoy his morning constitutional in the

maidan and its vicinity between 7 and 8-30 a.m. On the fateful day, he was looking at the show-windows of a firm at the crossing of Chowringhee Road and Park Street when a young man, GOPINATH (GOPIMOHAN) SAHA, dressed in white dhoti, khaki shirt and black shoes, fired at him from a distance of about eight to ten feet. The bullet missed its mark; Day turned and faced his assailant. The second shot hit the victim and he fell on the pavement. A few more shots were fired on the prostrate body of the dying man so that he might not escape death in any way. Day was removed to the hospital where he died at 4-30 in the evening.

The assailant advanced down Park Street, first in a leisurely manner. He was chased by a taxi-driver in his taxi at whom Gopinath fired ineffectively. He accelerated his pace, entered Russel Street and doubled a palatial building to appear again on Park Street. Going further ahead towards the east he tried to induce the driver of a standing private motor car to give him a lift. The driver refused and was shot but was saved by the belt used by him. Saha was now on the run followed by a crowd that was growing every minute.

He seemed to stagger at the crossing of Park Street and Free School Street. At this point he was about to be captured when he fired and hit his pursuer in the forearm. He reached Royd Street by way of Free School Street. Then dashed up Cockburn Lane into Ripon Street and reached the tram-line on the Wellesley Street. Here he put his foot on the step of a hackney carriage but the driver refused to move. At this stage a man came up and grappled with him when he fell on the ground. With the help of a constable he was firmly secured after he had been very badly hurt on the head.

At the time of his arrest he was armed with a magazine pistol and a revolver and forty or forty-five live cartridges in his possession.

Police investigation did not take a long time to put up Gopinath (Gopimohan) Saha on trial before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on June 14, 1926. Throughout the proceedings, the accused, a little thin young boy of sallow complexion with his forehead heavily bandaged, maintained a calm and stoic air regarding the proceedings.

In regard to a certain remark of the Public Prosecutor he said,

"The Public Prosecutor says that I was seen loitering at Lal Bazar and that I was noticed entering a house in Bow Bazar in company with another man. This is quite wrong. I always went about alone and loitered alone and was always trying to kill Tegart *sahib*. I know him too well. But unfortunately I have killed an innocent *sahib*. That innocent *sahib*'s appearance was exactly similar to that of Mr. Tegart. Through the Grace of God Tegart has saved himself and it is my misfortune that I failed in my attempt to kill the enemy of my country. I have committed a mistake.

"If there is any patriotic young man in the country he will complete my incomplete task. I hope he will not commit the same mistake that I have committed and I hope he will work more skilfully."

When he said "I was always trying to kill Tegart *sahib*", he stared at Tegart and smiled most jeeringly.

When Gopinath was being removed from the dock he shouted, "Mr. Tegart may think himself safe, but he is not. I failed to complete the work. I leave the unfinished work for others."

On the next day of hearing, February 17, at one stage the accused asked the Public Prosecutor "to hurry up". At the close he said, "What's the use of lengthening the proceedings?"

On January 21, he was charged with murder and culpable homicide not amounting to murder and was committed to the High Court Sessions to take his trial. Asked whether he would like to make any statement and cite any witness in defence, he said: "What it would come to?" On hearing the charges of offence the accused said, "Very well! Very well! Why not add some more sections?"

The High Court Sessions opened on February 13, 1924. On the second day the accused took a livelier interest in the proceedings. When it had come to a close, he stated:

"It is a very auspicious day for me. The mother is calling me in order that I may rest for ever on her bosom and, therefore, I want to go.

"In the beginning of the last year I read in the newspapers that a European gentleman of the name of Tegart, after going all over the world and collecting information regarding freedom for India, was returning to India with a view to obstruct our endeavours. I began meditating very much on the question of this obstruction to our freedom. While ~~thus~~ contemplating over it, I would feel my head getting heated. I could ~~not~~ sleep at night or eat any food, and would walk about at night on the roof.

"In this state I heard the call of the Mother which was this: 'Follow him'. From that time onwards I began collecting information regarding him. . . . Then I began meditating very deeply over all these matters. While meditating I got the call from the Mother: 'Remove him from this world'.

"With regard to the innocent *sahib* whom I have killed, I am extremely sorry. I do not consider anybody to be my enemy because he is a *sahib*."

Judgment was delivered on February 16, 1924, condemning the accused to death. Gopinath received the sentence calmly.

The last words he said in the court room were: 'May every drop of my blood sow the seeds of freedom in every home of India.' Further, "So long repressions such as Jallianwala Bagh, Chandpur, etc. would go on, this state of things would continue. A time would come when the Government, would feel the consequence."

Between the day of judgment and the date of his execution Gopinath gained five lbs. in weight. He always maintained a mood of unconcern about his death as if nothing extraordinary had happened. He was always seen to be cheerful and enjoying his life in the condemned cell of the prison and used to take his meal regularly with good relish. He had a sound sleep the night before his execution took place.

He was led to the place of execution on March 1, 1924, in the Presidency Jail. He walked up to the gallows unaided, smiling all the while and taking the names of gods and goddesses. Cremation took place at 9 a.m. near the outer wall close to the Female Ward.

In the last letter that he wrote he appealed to his mother to pray to the Almighty that every Indian mother should give birth to a son like him, and that every home should be sanctified by a mother like his.

Madras Agency Revolt

(1924)

Starting with the redress of local grievances for the tribals and oppression of Government officials over the poor, uneducated and helpless, ALLURI SITARAMA RAZU otherwise known simply as 'Razu' became a source of great trouble to the ruling authorities in the Agency tracks.

In his early youth Razu showed his inclination more towards religious pursuits than to his studies and devoted himself to social work asking people to live in peace and amity with the neighbours and fellow human beings.

He was once arrested for his activities which resembled the Non-co-operation Movement for which he had no special love in many respects but was released without trial in 1922.

He made up his deficiency in studies during his school days and compensated it by acquiring a good knowledge of Sanskrit and English when outside of it. Realising that peaceful means were not sufficient for his purpose, he gradually drifted towards organising a revolt with arms against the British. He directed his efforts to introduce village *panchayat* for the solution of local problems, to do away with the drink evil and to introduce Swaraj not necessarily by non-violent means.

Naturally his activities aroused suspicion of the Government and a close watch was placed on his movements. In the meantime Razu planned for increasing his influence by enlisting support of the hillmen and the tribals of the Agency Division consisting of the hilly and malarious portion of Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Godavari districts. These tracts were separated from the plains and formed into a separate district called the Agency Division in November, 1920, to bring the more accessible parts under better control and for the purpose of their general development.

Within a short time Razu was recognised as a religious man working for the welfare of the common people. His name became familiar with every hamlet in South India. The hillmen were gradually drawn towards him and he took up their cause in fighting the misdeeds of the Sub-Magistrate and his henchmen to which they were subjected.

Razu was able thus to enhance his popularity and the simple people of the area endowed him with supernatural powers. From Kistna, his native district, to the Agency tracts Razu swayed enormous influence. He was now getting ready for open attacks on police stations. He gathered a large number of hillmen around him all of whom were illiterate and could not be depended upon for big events. He was anxious to enlist support of some capable men to act as his worthy lieutenants and was soon able to find out two leading men of Gudem, GAM MAILU DORAY and GAM GOUTAM DORAY known as Gam brothers who had serious grievances against their *taluk* officers, particularly against the forest reservation policy of the Government. The brothers promised him an all-out support provided he would start a rebellion against the authorities.

Razu agreed and the Gam brothers with their great influence over the hill people became a great source of strength to Razu. Subsequent events proved that these two brothers played a very big and important role in the Agency revolt.

When the arrangements had not fully matured Razu was put under some sort of restraint over his movements by the district authorities. He was removed in early 1920, by the Assistant Commissioner, Rampa Agency, from Krishnadevipeta to Paidiputta where he was given some land for cultivation and peaceful living.

He was able to create confidence in the mind of the Assistant Commissioner and on July 26, 1922, he could induce the officer to issue a passport in his favour for a visit to Nepal. He was allowed to leave Paidiputta on August 4, 1922, but instead of going to Nepal he returned to Gudem Agency to give effect to his former plans.

In connection with the first Fituyiri Rebellion, Madras, it appeared that the rebels under Razu, were scrupulously careful in not antagonising the local officers and the villagers. It was evident that care was taken to avoid hurting people, even when they had definitely refused to join the rebels. Police officers and men when captured were seldom badly treated.

This was the usual practice till the conflict with Razu and his men with the police at Lingapuram took place. The villagers

were then threatened and bullied and police and magisterial officers when captured were beaten up.

With growing strength Razu began to attack police stations and harass Government officers in every possible way. Razu's presence was traced to Rampa, an area overgrown with thick forests. The haunt was selected for many advantages that it afforded, because the hills running parallel with the valley helped noticing the approach of the police forces by the followers and sympathisers of Razu from the adjoining valleys. The further advantage was that the attacking police in the plains were practically helpless against those concealed behind a range of hills.

There had been several skirmishes with the armed police which drew the military forces, particularly by the Assam Rifles and one that took place at Revallu on May 6, 1924, proved unlucky for Razu and his men. More than thirty-seven men were disabled in which a whole detachment of the Assam Rifles took part. On the casualty list were twelve rebels who were killed on the spot including the Fituyiri leader Alluri Sitarama Razu himself.

Thus ended an eventful career that had given no rest to the Government for a period of nothing less than five years.

Razu had many hair-breadth escapes and the heavy reward that was declared on his head proved to be useless because there was not one amongst his followers who could think of betraying him for what was to them filthy lucre.

The fight that was started by Sitarama Razu did not come to an end with his death. Though on the run it was kept alive by Goutam Doray, the most trusted lieutenant of Razu.

In connection with the Agency Fituyiri operations all information as to the movements of Goutam and other members of the gang completely ceased for about a month. On June 7, 1924, a working patrol from Krishnadevipet while making a search for possible hiding places in the country near their camp at Benkadara, came to something like a ravine near the village of Yedumudi and the patrol party, dividing itself into three groups, began a thorough search of the neighbourhood. One of the sections discovered a party of seven or eight of the rebels, but by the time the searching party had realised the identity of the gang, the rebels had started running. Fire was opened and another two sections of the police arrived and joined in the firing.

In this last remnant of the rebels was Goutam Doray himself. He proved his mettle in this unequal fight. He returned the fire and was fired at. Ultimately Goutam Doray and another of his comrades were fatally wounded. There was a serious setback to the Agency Rebellion on June 7, 1924, with the demise of Razu's very able lieutenants.

The lamp glowed dimly for some time more. Mallu Doray, the last surviving chief was regarded as the right-hand man of Rama Razu and was said to be mainly responsible for starting the rebellion. His name figured in about twenty reports and there was abundant evidence that from the first day of the rebellion to the day of his capture he was regarded as the most active, resourceful and dangerous of the rebel band.

He was arrested and in the trial that followed he was sentenced to death on June 19, 1924, and lost his life on the gallows.

One of the Many

(1924)

While taking his round in the Paltan Ground on May 25, 1924, Sub-Inspector of Police, Prafulla Kumar Ray was shot thrice by unknown assailants just after nightfall.

Prafulla was in charge of the Chittagong Shooting Case in which Surya Sen with two of his able lieutenants was an accused. The Sub-Inspector also investigated the Chittagong Robbery Case in which Rs. 17,000 of the Assam Bengal Railway was looted.

The victim was immediately removed to the hospital where after medical inspection it was thought necessary to remove him to Dacca for better surgical aid. He was on his way under competent medical escort but expired at Laksham and his body was brought back to Chittagong for cremation.

The assailants escaped.

Without a Name

(1925)

Before the World War I had started HRISHIKESH LATTA, then a young boy, left India for Persia with Sufi Ambaprasad. Latta went to Germany at the invitation of the Berlin Committee and accompanied Kedar Nath Kersasp to Persia on a common mission. He died there in 1925 as an exile from his Motherland. (Ref: Datta, B. N., Dr.: *Aprakasita swadhinata sangramer rajnitik itihasa* ; p. 178-9).

Tragic Affiliations

(1925)

An unfortunate boy, Ambica Khan, got into the inner circle of some active workers in and around Calcutta and became a suspect of the police. Subsequently, by his own indiscreet acts of vacillation, he lost the confidence of his comrades as well. He was thrown into prison in 1924 and detained in the Alipore Central Jail. His co-prisoners found him gradually depressed possibly due to a struggle passing through his mind. In the early part of 1925, he set fire to his clothes soaked in kerosene oil inside the jail and suffered extensive burns which brought relief to his troubled soul.

Babbar Akali Dal

(1925)

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre set the whole country into commotion and naturally enough created a sense of bitter indignation amongst a group of Punjabis who thought of an armed rising against the Government as reprisal.

The idea of starting an organisation on the line was conceived in 1921, by one KISHEN SINGH GADGAJ of Jullundur with Dhanna Singh of Hoshiarpur which came to be known as Babbar Akali Dal or "Chakrabarties". Kishen Singh had a background

of military training from his connection with the Army where he served as a Havildar of the 2/35 Sikh Regiment. Kishen was not only the brain but the moving spirit of the organisation. He was a man of reckless courage and sometimes in his enthusiasm would throw all cautions to the wind. He delivered fiery speeches condemning the administration of the country and would exhort people to overthrow it by force. Free distribution of a highly seditious leaflet, *Babbar Akali Doaba* first issued in December, 1922, was one of the activities of the organisation.

Kishen Singh and his comrades were soon able to establish branches all over Punjab with Jullundur as centre. The members, as were able, began to collect arms and ammunitions in furtherance of their object. Party discipline was rigidly enforced and overt acts were practised from time to time. They directed their aim against loyalists, *jholie-hucks* as they were named, in particular and were able to murder not a few of them.

The police became alert and warrants were issued as a result of which some of Kishen Singh's trusted men were arrested and put into prison. Kishen was able to escape and he transferred his activities to Doaba where he met a group of men of his own way of thinking. Strengthened by their adherence, he made an itinerary of distant villages with the purpose of enlisting support of a larger number of people. The party was now able to wield great influence over the masses who extended their open or covert sympathy to men who had launched on a bold adventure.

The police redoubled their efforts after murder of a few loyalists and the party was given no rest. On September 1, 1923, a group composed of KARAM SINGH, UDAY SINGH, BISHAN SINGH and MAHENDRA SINGH had been passing through Bomeli in Kapurthala State when they were surrounded by the police and the military from opposite directions closing all avenues of escape. There was a sharp exchange of shots between the two contending forces and everyone of the surrounded men was killed on the spot in an unequal fight. A few of the policemen were also killed.

DIANNA SINGH of Hoshiarpur, the right-hand man of Kishen, proved by his action that it was better to die as a hero than to spend the whole life in prison. He was decoyed to a village, Manahana, by one of the black sheep in the party where a large police force had been waiting for his arrest. He was held fast

by both of his hands by policemen. He somehow crashed himself against one of his escorts and the bomb that he had been carrying with him exploded killing him and five of his captors and the European officer-in-charge of the police force.

It was extremely unfortunate that in the hasty recruitment of men the leaders could not bestow sufficient care in the choice of individual members. There were still more who easily succumbed to the temptation offered by the Government. One such fellow informed the police after offering a shelter to JAWALA SINGH, BANTA SINGH and BARIAM SINGH in his house. On December 12, 1923, the three persons had to fight a posse of armed police where Jawala and Banta were killed. Bariam managed to escape and with great difficulty reached Lyalpur where in turn he got into a trap laid by the police on June 8, 1924. Preferring death to arrest he fought like a lion and died a soldier's death.

The Government rounded up all persons suspected of having complicity with the organisation and got ready for starting a big criminal case against 91 members of the Babbar Akali Dal. After the usual preliminary enquiry the case was committed to the Sessions on April 4, 1924. On June 2, 1924, the accused were charged with the offence of being in possession of imported arms, ammunition and military stores and in such a manner as to indicate the intention that such act might not be known to any public servant; of going about armed without a licence; having committed and attempted to commit murder; cause grievous hurt; committing robbery and dacoity in pursuance of conspiracy entered into between Kishen Singh and several other accused towards the end of 1921 in the eastern part of the Jullundur district. They were further charged with having delivered seditious speeches, warning the people not to help Government by giving any kind of information regarding their movements, propaganda or actions; and that by their speeches they tried to create disaffection against the Government with the object of fomenting rebellion and turn the Britishers out of Punjab.

The trial lasted for over a year from the stage of enquiry to the delivery of judgment and during this period three of the undertrials lost their lives having thus escaped all punishment, capital or otherwise.

On February 28, 1925, in the main Babbar Akali Case, fifty-

four were found guilty, of whom five were sentenced to death and eleven to transportation for life.

Of the five condemned persons—

(i) KISHEN SINGH was declared to be the chief of the organisation.

(ii) KARAM SINGH and (iii) NANDA SINGH were held responsible for the murder of Subedar Gaiinda Singh of Ghurial.

(iv) SANTA SINGH was one of the chief conspirators and declared to have committed murder of several persons, single-handed and also to have committed robberies and dacoities.

(v) DALIP SINGH, a mere boy of 18, was condemned for several murders and other offences.

An appeal was preferred to the High Court including of one accused sentenced to transportation for life. On July 1, 1926, the High Court rejected the appeals and enhanced the sentence of DHARAM SINGH to one of death.

All of them were executed on February 27, 1926.

Master Stroke

(1926)

It is difficult to guess the shape that a revolutionary urge would ultimately assume in its course. It seeks a suitable opportunity for manifestation in a most unexpected manner.

Some youngmen start with collection and storage of chemicals for the manufacture of bombs and odd weapons that would serve their purpose without knowing when and on what object they would be used. They are simply acting on the urge that drives them forward towards a goal when to be achieved nobody knows.

The police got scent of some conspiracy in the course of investigation in the Kakori Case and they searched a house at Bachaspatipara Lane, Dakhineswar, Baranagore, on November 10, 1925. Youngmen found there were arrested and in the house were seized a live bomb, one Welby six-chambered revolver fully loaded, one muzzle-loading horse pistol, a large number of cartridges, gun powder, pellets, several bottles of nitric and sulphuric acid, glass tubes, batteries, etc. In fact this haunt was

described as "a miniature bomb or explosive factory". Several documents were seized, one of which began as follows: "The aim of the present work is to place in the hands of revolutionary people such weapons as explosive materials," and "the simplest and quickest method has been selected and most powerful and most shattering substances have been chosen."

A case against the nine arrested persons were started before a Special Tribunal the first to be constituted under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act (1925) on November 28, 1925, at Alipore. They were declared to be parties to a criminal conspiracy to commit offences under Section 19 (a) and (f) of the Indian Arms Act and 4 (b) of the Explosive Substances Act and 120-B I. P. C. The possession of explosive substances by the accused persons was clearly "malicious and unlawful and they intended to endanger life or to cause serious injury to property in British India either by themselves or through other persons with the help of those articles".

The judgment in the case was delivered on January 9, 1926, in which ANANTAIARI MITRA, RAJENDRA NATH LAHIRI and another were sentenced to ten years' transportation and others to various terms of imprisonment.

About the find at 4, Sovabazar St., PROMODE RANJAN CHOWDHURY and another were arrested on the same day as at Dakhineswar, on November 10, 1925, in the evening. Amongst the articles seized were one five-chambered revolver of Belgian make, 44 rounds of .450 bore cartridges and 31 cartridges of .31 bore.

There was a mass of literature strewn on the floor. Amongst this was a manuscript in English entitled *Formation of Young India*, which was sub-divided into several sections. The final goal was expressed as "the service to the country and humanity". The 'Immediate Object' was "Independence of the Country." As to the "Means: all possible means including armed revolution."

The "Requisites" were: "(i) An organisation consisting of (a) Sacrificing youngmen, (b) Sympathetic people, (ii) Finance, and (iii) Arms, ammuniton and explosives."

Another piece of writing captioned "How to rise?" stated that "revolution in India would come in the following way: (i) Individual demonstration, i.e. murder of high officials; capturing Government money, arms and ammuniton, etc.; destroying

Government institutions and bridges, jail outbreaks, wrecking of trains, etc; (ii) Simultaneous demonstration; (iii) Insurrection including guerilla warfare; (iv) Revolution."

The writer advocated communication and contact with England's enemies so that assistance may be obtained in times of need.

Promode Ranjan Chowdhury and his friend were placed before a Special Tribunal at Alipore on January 2, 1926, on charges of conspiracy to unlawfully make, manufacture and possess arms, in contravention of provisions of the Arms Act, the Explosive Substances Act and the Indian Penal Code.

The Sovabazar house was recognised as an outpost of Dakhineswar, a temporary shelter for men and materials to be despatched to the Dakhineswar house, and men of both the groups had been working with the same purpose.

Judgment was delivered on January 15, 1926, and both the accused were awarded the same sentence, viz., five years' rigorous imprisonment.

Thus closed the first part of the drama when the accused after conviction in the two cases were lodged in the Alipore Central Jail to keep the State safe from the depredations of at least a handful of determined men with whom the freedom of the country was the supreme concern.

The second Act of this thrilling drama now started.

In the course of his duties, Bhupendra Nath Chatterji, Special Superintendent of Police, C. I. D. Intelligence Branch, used to visit the Alipore Central Jail to meet the political prisoners in the State Yard almost regularly after the office hours. On May 28, 1926, the Officer came to the jail gate at 5-20 p.m. and then proceeded to the State Yard which was at the head of a passage running north to south towards the jail gate. On the west side of the passage was the Condemned Cell Yard, where prisoners under sentence of death were detained. To the south of it, on the same side of the passage, was the Hajat Yard where under-trial prisoners were accommodated. On the east side of the passage was the Bomb Yard where the prisoners in the Dakhineswar and the allied cases were detained.

Bhupen reached the State Yard at about 5-30 p.m. where

he stayed for half an hour talking to some detenus on the ground floor.

About half an hour later he left that yard. According to evidence for prosecution the ten accused were in the Bomb Yard when Bhupen coming by the passage reached the place. The Warder of the Bomb Yard was overpowered and thrown down on the floor. He was relieved of the key of the enclosure and four men rushed out while the Warder was held fast to the ground by four others.

The Officer was attacked with the speed of lightning with a crow-bar and the baton snatched away from the Warder. He sustained serious injuries, five on the left side of the head and two on the right hand. There was extensive fracture of the skull. The lethal weapon penetrated the nose and lacerated the brain. The globe of the left eye was burst and the whole of the bone of the orbit broken to pieces penetrated the skull smashing the temple bone. The upper jaw was fractured and the face was badly battered. Bhupen died at 8-30 p.m.

The story has been a bit differently narrated by two active participants of the incident. When Bhupen had been coming back from the State Yard he was keenly watched by the members of the conspiracy. One of them asked the Warder to open the gate of the cell so that he can go out and pick up his *dhoti* which had dropped on the court-yard below from the first floor. No sooner this was done he came out and called '*hullo*' to the Police Officer who had already passed a few steps ahead of the cell occupied by the prisoners towards the main exit. He stopped and turned back. The prisoner rushed at him, caught him by the collar of his European costume and administered a stunning blow on his nose. The Officer looked dazed with its effect.

The Warder was seen coming to the rescue forgetting his duty to blow the whistle for alarm. PROMODE RANJAN came out with a crow-bar, about two feet long and an inch thick, collected secretly before, and raised it to scare away the Warder who disappeared from the scene in no time. Promode like a springing tiger gave Bhupen repeated blows who with the first staggered and fell down with mutilated face. ANANTAHARI, who had snatched away the baton of the Warder, joined in the assault. Bhupen was literally battered having received more blows than were necessary for the

purpose. Every one of the party performed his respective share of duty in respect of the plan as a disciplined soldier with perfect skill and composure.

The alarm was sounded, the bell ringing fiercely and all the participants retired to their cells like quiet innocent boys as if nothing of moment had happened within ten miles of their cells. Promode had his hands besmeared with blood and the crow-bar, the fatal weapon, had been literally dripping red. As the washings of hands and the crow-bar would give a clue to the identity of the assailant, Promode washed both the hands as well as the bar in the *thali* (plate) for food for prisoners and gulped down the whole contents that was more blood than water. It was as if Bhimsen satisfying his thirst for vengeance with Duhshasan's blood. Another took the crow-bar and buried it deep in the edge of the wrestling ground meant for the prisoners so successfully that the first two attempts to discover it proved abortive.

Armed police was rushed in and before the orgy of violence on the prisoners could start, the Superintendent of the jail intervened and the whole force had to retire foaming and fretting over their failure to reach the prisoners with their grudge.

On the charge of murder, a case was started again before the same Special Tribunal on June 15, 1926, against ten persons confined in the Bomb Yard which was concluded on June 18. Judgment was delivered on June 21, 1926, in which Anantahari Mitra, Promode Ranjan Chowdhury and another were condemned to death; others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

An appeal was preferred before the High Court and hearing started on July 26, 1926. Judgment was delivered on August 9, 1926, when the two judges presiding over the Bench agreed and confirmed the sentence of Anantahari but differed over Promode Ranjan, one being in favour of transportation for life. The third man was acquitted. The third judge to whom the case of Promode was referred, confirmed the death sentence on August 23, 1926.

Anantahari Mitra and Promode Ranjan Chowdhury were executed on September 28, 1926, a death which resembled in so many respects that of Kanailal Datta in 1908.

Kakori Train Outrage

(1925-1927)

Of the many revolutionary activities in the United Provinces, the Kakori train outrage comes out pre-eminently to be the most important particularly in respect of sacrifice of three, nay four, valuable lives over one particular incident.

Young men hailing from different districts of the U.P. and also from Bengal came together by a common bond of love of their Motherland to discuss ways and means for driving out the foreigners from the country. RAMPRASAD BISMIL of Sahjehanpur declared that nothing would come out of non-violent struggle and the country must adopt other means for its emancipation.

Almost all the members of the present conspiracy met at Ramprasad's house early in 1924, to chalk out a programme of work and in a subsequent meeting the course of action was decided upon amongst themselves. Each of them assumed a separate name to be used amongst the members of the Society such as, 'Nawab', 'Gangaram', 'Quick-silver', and so on and so forth. The leader, Ramprasad had four such names. And ASHFAQULLA was known as 'Kunwarji' and used to put on Hindu dress on occasions.

The party under Ramprasad in conjunction with those charged in the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case, where Gendalal Dikshit figured prominently, were alleged to have been involved in several actions taking place in Sherganj, Bichpuri, Mainpuri, etc.

On August 9, 1925, a passenger train, was stopped by the pulling of the alarm chain between Kakori and Alamnagar within fourteen miles of Lucknow Junction. The first information report was lodged with the police on the same day at about 8-30 p.m.

It transpired that when the train had left Kakori for Lucknow at quarter past seven at night four men had previously entered the brake van of the moving train and asked the guard to stop it as they had left their luggage behind at the railway station at Kakori. The guard refused to do so and two raiders instantly overawed him with open revolvers and pulled the com-

munication chord. As the train stopped about sixteen men entered the brake van and removed the chests carrying cash from the guard's van. A number of them kept watch over the passengers.

A Gurkha passenger who tried to take up his rifle was shot dead by one of the raiders and another passenger who leaned out of the window was wounded by a revolver shot. A European who was armed with a rifle was wounded on the leg as he was about to alight from the train to attack the strangers.

The raid had been going on when the arrival of the Dehra Mail near the standing train forced the raiders to take to their heels.

The chests that had been removed from the brake van were emptied at a place not very far from the scene of occurrence the next day.

Searches were conducted at every suspected area in the U.P. and other places and the most of the suspects were arrested on September 25, 1925, from various places in the U.P. No attempt was left untried to establish connection with the revolutionaries of Bengal, Singapore and elsewhere.

A case was started with twenty-five accused including RAMPRASAD BISMIL, RAJENDRA NATH LAHIRI and RAUSHAN SINGH in December, 1925. After the preliminary judicial enquiry the case was sent up to the Sessions on April 16, 1926 which started sitting at Lucknow from May 1, 1926, with twenty, five accused having been discharged. Some had been absconding and the trial proceeded *in absentia*. Besides Kakori, the accused were held responsible for Bamrauli Dacoity (December 25, 1924), Bichpuri (Pilibhit dist.) Dacoity (Mar. 9, 1925) and Dwarakapur Dacoity (committed on May 24, 1925).

After a protracted trial which was held up for a long time due to hunger-strike of the accused three youngmen, RAMPRASAD BISMIL, RAUSHAN SINGH and RAJENDRA NATH LAHIRI were condemned to death and others to various terms of imprisonment under Secs. 121-A, 120-B, 396 and 302 of the Indian Penal Code on April 6, 1927. In the meantime ASHFAQULLA was arrested with a few others and a separate case on the same charges was started against him. The trial at the Sessions was started on March 24, 1927. The judgment awarded extreme penalty of

the law for the accused. The prisoners were separated from one another and Ramprasad was lodged in the Gorakhpur Jail, Rajen Lahiri in the Gonda, Raushan Singh in Allahabad and Ashfaqulla in the Fyzabad Jail.

A petition for mercy to the Viceroy was rejected on October 10, 1927, and the prisoners were informed of the date of execution fixed for October 12, 1927.

The execution was to be stayed as the prisoners appealed to the Privy Council which was admitted in the last week of November, 1927. It was rejected on December 12, and the respective jailors were informed about the result of the appeal.

(i) Rajendra Nath Lahiri was executed in the Gonda Jail on December 17, 1927.

(ii) Ashfaqulla and (iii) Ramprasad Bismil on December 19, 1927, in the Fyzabad and the Gorakhpur Jail, respectively.

In the Naini Jail on December 21, 1927, (iv) Roushan Singh, the last of the comrades, lost his life on the scaffold.

Each of the young men showed exemplary courage in the face of death. The statements and communications are worthy of preservation for the future generations who would be called upon to safeguard the freedom of their Motherland.

From the Gonda Jail wrote Rajen Lahiri on December 13, 1927:

"The Superintendent informed this morning that my appeal to the Privy Council had been rejected. My death will be a glorious one and none need be sorry for it. All of you should pray to God so that I may be born again and may devote my life for the good of the Motherland."

Rajen did not forget to offer his hearty thanks to his fellow countrymen who had helped them in all possible ways in their defence.

A brother of Rajendra Nath who had seen him on the day of his execution informed the public that he (Rajen) looked so cheerful

"as if he was simply changing his material body for a fresh and more dignified one. He faced the punishment quite boldly and there was something Divine on his face. He engaged himself in the *bhajan* songs throughout the previous night and was citing hymns from the Gita and Upanishads until it was 6-15 in the morning.

"He with bold steps and smiling face followed the warders and stood erect on his feet on the platform of the gallows and faced the eternity in a cheerful mood."

Ramprasad with all his courage and resourcefulness in the field of action was moved by the sight of his mother who had come to bid adieu to him before execution. It was a case of transferred grief, of the thought that the mother might feel deeply for the loss of her son.

At the sight of her weeping son and mistaking it to be one of fear for execution, she said that she had not expected to see him so moved at a time when he should face death with the greatest joy and utmost courage. She was at once corrected of her mistake and forthwith her countenance changed from one of sorrow to that of pride.

Ramprasad consoled his father by saying that it did not behove a man, and father of Ramprasad at that, to weep when a lady had overcome her feelings of grief at the loss of her dear son.

Roushan Sing, the report goes, "remained notably composed till his end and the last word which escaped his lips was *Bande Mataram*."

ASHFAQULLA showed a remarkably cool courage and love for his Motherland. The lawyer defending him in the Sessions Court has given a picture of his client which holds him in lofty relief even amongst the revolutionaries. He spurned an attempt on the part of the Government to make a statement relating to his association with the comrades and his own part in the Kakori drama and buy his release.

The outcome of the trial was a foregone conclusion. Three had been condemned to death; further evidence had been adduced to prove his guilt and there was nothing to inspire any hope of escape with his neck. In this background Ashfaqulla appeared in the court-room on the day when the judgment was to be delivered in a very jovial mood clad in a light yellow coloured attire. His mien, his stature and his denouement on that occasion displayed the inner strength of his soul.

Ashfaqulla was awarded two capital punishments for his participation in the Kakori and also in Bichpuri outrages; and given long terms of imprisonment for other offences.

Friends and relations were overwhelmed with emotion on the pronouncement of the judgment. On the other hand Ashfaqulla said there was nothing to give oneself up to grief. There was one matter over which he was not feeling happy. The jailor had said that the prisoner had gained considerably in weight; so much so that he had broken all previous records except of one who had exceeded Ashfaqulla's by another six pounds. He assured the jailor that he would not allow his record to be broken. But alas! he would be prevented from securing that exalted position because he would be put in the condemned cell after the delivery of the judgment. Had he been allowed to receive the 'B Class' prisoners' treatment as he had been enjoying as an undertrial, during the remaining few days of his life, he would certainly have been able to beat all records of all times in this respect.

At the last interview with a friend, his brother and nephews who were allowed to see him in the Fyzabad Jail for the last time, he calmly told his sobbing relations that the least sorrow should not mar the solemn occasion of great rejoicing; they should behave in a different way. He felt himself honoured to find him as a representative of his countrymen on whom had devolved the noble task of struggling for the freedom of the Motherland. They ought to be glad to find that one of their near relations, a brother and an uncle, had been sacrificing his life for the country. They ought to remember that there had been such high-souled men like Kanai and Khudiram in the Hindu community and it was an additional privilege for him because most probably he happened to be the first Mahomedan to follow the footsteps of martyrs of undying fame.

It is a great pity that the halo of glory that these young lads had wrapped around them should be bedimmed by their countrymen in a most flagrant way.

In a Wider Field

(1928)

Maulvi BARKATULLA was one of the most active and resourceful members of the party that had been working outside India for her emancipation.

In early youth he went from Bhopal to England to prosecute his studies there. He had enjoyed the air of freedom in that country and came back with a mature plan of action.

He established contact with some of the revolutionaries of Bengal. On its Partition his feelings became sour and he contemplated joining hands with the natives of the Province who had planned to strike at the root of the power that was responsible for the vandalism. He began to work amongst the Muslims and was able to inculcate to some extent the spirit of nationalism amongst those who had persistently refused to co-operate with the sister communities in any political agitation.

He secretly left India for Japan, which was regarded as an emblem of military strength by the coloured races of Asia. He adopted teaching as a profession and brought out a newspaper *Naya Islam* with himself as its Editor.

He was not allowed any rest in Japan as his steps were dogged by the sleuth-hounds of the British secret service. He somehow managed to reach U.S.A. where he found a surging wave of nationalism amongst the Indian residents and the leaders had been asking all nationalists to return to India and join the revolutionaries who had been preparing themselves for the coming upheaval.

He came to know that attempts were being made to influence the Muslim countries in the Middle East and hastening his departure from U.S.A. joined the Indo-German-Turkish Mission in 1915, at Istanbul. Barkatulla reached Kabul with the Mission and the members were able to form an Azad Government in Afghanistan.

Due to the Afghan Government withdrawing its support "the Mission hurriedly left Afghanistan and Barkatulla went over to Germany and was detailed to direct a campaign to win Indian prisoners of war captured by the Germans from the British ranks

from their allegiance." Barkatulla became a member of the Indian National Party in Berlin which was attached to the German General Staff.

On the termination of World War I, Barkatulla made a tour of some of the European countries preaching the cause of India's freedom and reached Russia in 1921. The next year he came back to Germany and published a newspaper, *Al-Islam*, which had a rather brief existence. From Germany he participated in the deliberations of the Anti-Imperialist Conference held in Brussels in 1927, and delivered a well-reasoned speech advocating the cause of the nations held in bondage by the Imperialist powers.

It is reported that Barkatulla died as an exile on January 5, 1928, in Germany not having many friends near the death bed.

Epic Struggle

(1928-1931)

An Unexpected Turn

The measures adopted by the authorities to quell the disorders left Punjab seething with discontent. Sporadic acts of violence had been taking place at various places from time to time when the Simon Commission reached Lahore on October 30, 1928.

The procession to demonstrate against the Commission had been proceeding towards the railway station where it was obstructed by barbed wire fixed to strong wooden posts. In the first row near the barbed wire fencing stood Lala Lajpat Rai and some other leaders.

The procession was perfectly non-violent and the people had been waiting without arms when it was attacked unprovoked at the orders of some high police officials. One of the blows struck Lalaji's umbrella which was badly damaged while he was given a few lathi blows, one of which struck him on his chest. About the assault Lalaji himself stated that the injuries caused by the police attack although not very serious, yet "I think their after-effects has resulted in a great shock which has affected my health." He died of collapse of heart caused by nervous exhaustion on

November 17, 1928. "The injuries received by him on October 30, no doubt hastened his death" reported his physicians.

After Lalaji's sad demise dire reprisal was not very long to come. It was undertaken by a band of young men who had already been working for causing a revolution for the overthrow of the Government.

Bhagat Singh and his comrades numbering about two scores and a half formed a party as *Hindusthan Republican Association* and the *Indian Republic Party*, which were subsequently merged into one organisation as *Hindusthan Socialist Republican Party*.

At a meeting held at Delhi in August 1928, a Central Committee was constituted with the purpose of co-ordinating the activities of different provinces, a separate leader being put in charge of a distinct region.

BHAGAT SINGH and SUKHDEV were placed in charge of Punjab; CHANDRA SEKHAR AZAD, Shiv Verma and another, in charge of U.P. Similar arrangements were made in respect of Bihar and Orissa, Rajputana and other places. Chandra Sekhar Azad assumed charge of the Military Department. Bhagabati Charan became the Chief Lieutenant of Bhagat Singh.

It was decided that the several Officers-in-Charge should be held responsible for any work or action under their respective jurisdictions. For anything to take place outside the province of any particular leader and any effort made for seeking outside assistance, the matter should be referred to the Central Committee, the only body competent to issue final orders.

All arms and ammunition were to be deposited with the Central Committee and were to be issued for use by members of any province wherever and whenever necessary. So also all matters relating to finance were to have been dealt with by the Central Committee.

Saunders' Murder

The Council of the *Hindusthan Socialist Republican Party*, Lahore, met in a secret conclave in Mozang House on December 10, i.e., just a few days after the Punjab National Bank incident, to chalk out a programme of action. The meeting ended with a decision for murdering Mr. Scott, the man responsible for assaulting Lalaji.

On December 11, one of the party was deputed to watch the movements of the said police officer and it was done on three consecutive days. Preparations were made for action on December 14, at 4 p.m.

In the meantime Bhagat Singh had been getting ready for 'the Day' with comrades selected for the purpose. As a part of the programme leaflets printed on pink paper on behalf of the *Hindusthan Socialist Republican Party* were being distributed broadcast amongst all classes of people.

The date for attacking Scott was postponed till December 17. Rajguru, Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar Azad and another assembled together near the office of the Senior Superintendent of Police which was situated on the main road which adjoins the D. A. V. College and the District courts. They had three cycles kept ready to help them in their escape. One was to go on foot.

Rajguru advanced a few steps towards the place from where he could attack his victim. Azad kept himself very close to the enclosure of the D. A. V. College near the entrance.

Saunders, mistaken for Scott, came out of the office of the Superintendent of Police at 4-37 p.m. and was going to ride his motor cycle when RAJGURU darted forward with a revolver in his hand and fired at Saunders hitting him on the head. He fell to the ground and BHAGAT SINGH came running to the place and fired five or six shots on the prostrate body of Saunders. The assailant seemed to be extraordinarily self-possessed as after shooting he turned his back on the scene and walked away nonchalantly with his hands in his pocket.

When the shooting had been going on a European Sergeant came out of the office and chased the assailants along with Channan Singh, Saunders' guard.

All the participants in the shooting proceeded towards the main gate of the D. A. V. College boarding. One of them turned round and fired at the Sergeant which narrowly missed. This did not stop the Sergeant from continuing his pursuit. As it happened, he slipped and fell and broke his arm.

Rajguru and Bhagat Singh also had almost entered the small gate of the D. A. V. College when they noticed Channan Singh advancing very close on their heels. Chandra Sekhar Azad who had been waiting to cover their escape fired at the policeman

mortally hitting him in the abdomen. He continued his chase a few yards more trailing the pathway with dripping blood.

The assailants entered the D. A. V. College by the entrance near the Principal's quarters, passed through a hall to the boarding house, reached the first floor and went to the rear part of the building. They scaled down the wall on the ground, took their cycles and escaped by the back door of the building.

The police in their hunt subsequently found the cycles abandoned at a distance and it came to be known that a car had been waiting somewhere behind the Nabha House in which the culprits made off for the country and all tracks were lost of them.

Then began a frantic search for the assailants. The forests on the bank of the Ravi were combed by the police in the expectation of discovering revolvers or any other articles connected with the outrage that might have been left behind during the flight.

The police in the course of investigation searched several places including the offices of the Servant of India Society, Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College Hostel, the *Daily Pratap*, etc., but nothing incriminating was found. Up till December 10, nothing less than twenty arrests were made of whom there was a number of students.

On the other hand a letter was received by the Editor, *The Tribune* of Lahore, from a person who declared himself as the Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary forces of India. It was stated in the letter that he was still at large, that none of his associates had been touched, that he still possessed a large quantity of ammunition and cartridges and that he was determined to go on with his activities.

On December 21, 1928, a hand-written poster was found on the walls of the Lahore and Shalimar gates purported to be from the same gentleman and offering a reward of Rs. 5,000 for his own arrest in addition to any that might have been offered by the Government.

It was further stated that "his thirst for blood is still unquenched", and he proposed to remain in Lahore for another five days. He added that he had no desire to murder Channan Singh.

Several other posters bearing on the subjects were found

pasted here and there in the course of the next few weeks but the frequency of their appearance made it quite clear that it was done by designing persons more in fun than for anything serious.

Arrests

Arrests of some suspects did give the Punjab police neither satisfaction nor rest. Secret watch and following up of information of a suspicious nature became the rule with them.

On April 9, 1929, the police received information that certain persons had engaged some iron-moulders of Lahore to make a few oval-shaped articles hollow on both sides which were stated to be parts of a gas machine. The curiosity of the local workmen was roused and they mentioned this fact to a constable of acquaintance. Information passed on to the police headquarters who in turn instructed the informant to watch the individuals who had given orders for the articles and follow them to their destination.

SUKHDEV was seen to visit the moulder from time to time and to quietly wend his way to the Kashmere Building. The house appeared to be locked and vacant during the day and opened at night. Strict watch was kept to ascertain when it was visited. It was found that the drains of the house showed signs of deposit of something like sulphur in them. In the meantime after comparison of the cases of bombs, information received from Delhi showed that the bombs thrown in the Assembly Chamber were shaped like those manufactured at Lahore.

Eventually the information led to the raid on April 15, 1929, of room No. 69, Kashmere Building in McLeod Road rented by one Bhagabati Charan at Rs. 13 per mensem about a month before. The room was not occupied for about a fortnight after which period some students were found living there. They used to leave the flat at 10 a.m. and come back in the afternoon. They would sometimes be absent for days. Searches conducted at the place resulted in discovery by the police of 11 bombs, 24 cartridges and two pistols. The tenant, Bhagabati Charan, was absent at the time. Three persons were arrested at the place of whom one was Sukhdev.

On the same date a man was arrested at Bilaspur Railway Station with seven bombs in his possession. On May 13, 1929,

search at Saharanpur discovered five bombs, five revolvers and two cartridges. Two arrests were made at the place. The total number of persons in police custody was more than twenty at the time.

A 'Noisy' Session

While the Meerut Conspiracy Case had been going on and the Lahore Conspiracy Case was in the offing, the Government of India introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly on February 5, 1929, which was characterised by the Leader of the Congress Party as "aimed at Indian nationalism and at the Congress". The Bill was sent to the Select Committee for necessary amendments.

The President of the Assembly, Vithalbai J. Patel, recommended on April 2, 1929, postponement of consideration of the Bill till the Meerut trial had been concluded. He suggested that before he gave a ruling, the Government might consider the advisability of proceeding with the Trades Disputes Bill. But the Home Member made it clear that it would be dangerous to public interests and he was not prepared to accept the advice.

On April 8, 1929, the President at the outset gave his rulings on the Trades Disputes Bill. About the other matter he had just uttered, "Now that the Trades Disputes Bill is out of the way, I now proceed to give my ruling regarding the Public Safety Bill" and had not finished when two bombs exploded in quick succession on the floor of the House followed by two revolver shots.

Naturally, panic overtook and overwhelmed the Members and the visitors who ran helter skelter and created a pandemonium.

It was noticed that one young man in the visitor's gallery pushed his way forward and coming to the railings bent over it and threw the first bomb. Then another followed him with the second.

The impact of the explosion particularly of the second was so great that the floor where the bomb had exploded was torn and two benches were ripped.

The second man drew out a revolver immediately after and fired two random shots. Then he began to throw away certain leaflets in the air purported to be the Manifesto of the *Hindusthan Republican Party*. (Vide Appendix, p. 412).

One of them shouted at the top of his voice, "I have done my duty to the country", and threw away his revolver on his seat. The other followed suit. The sergeants came and they allowed themselves to be arrested without the least resistance.

It transpired that they had entered the Assembly Chamber and took their seats before anybody came there. They must have waited for more than an hour and a half with the bombs wrapped up in paper before they used it.

The names of the two young men as given out by themselves were Bhagat Singh, about 24 years of age, of Punjab, and the other, Batukeswar Datta, about 22, of Bengal but domiciled in Punjab. Bhagat Singh was wanted in connection with another case and was able to evade arrest so far.

In reply to questions Bhagat Singh told the police officers that insults had been heaped upon the nation through the so-called Indian Parliament and it was disgraceful to allow such things to pass without serious protest. They had, therefore, decided to sacrifice their lives to stop the farce and present the bureaucracy in its true colours before the public.

The arrested boys seemed to be absolutely calm and composed as if nothing had happened.

The following notice headed *Loud Voice to Make the Deaf Hear* was pasted on the Lahori Gate on April 15, 1929.

"Police unlawful action in Lahore on the 7th instant has compelled us to take further action in the matter. It has, therefore, been decided by the Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Association Army at Simla that the Officer-in-Charge of the Lahore police will be cut out of the way just like Saunders. Soldiers Roll No. 203 and 182 are, therefore, directed to take immediate action.

By Order
G. Rasul
Personal Assistant
Commander-in-Chief, Republican
Association Army of India."

At the bottom of the notice which was on red paper and typewritten appeared the following:

"Copy forwarded for information of soldiers 203 and 182 and Scott, Senior Superintendent of Police, Lahore, Deputy Commissioner, Lahore and Editor, "Tribune", Lahore."

Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Datta made a statement on

June 6, 1929, before the Magistrate. As to the motive and circumstances relating to the incident they said that

"the attack was not directed towards any individual but against an institution itself. . . We are next to none in our love for humanity and as such far from having any malice against any individual; we hold human life sacred beyond words. We humbly claim to be no more than serious students of history and conditions of our country and human aspirations and we despise hypocrisy."

The protest was against the Central Legislative Assembly not only for its worthlessness but also for its far-reaching power of doing mischief.

"We have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to the world India's humiliation and helplessness and it symbolises the overriding domination of an irresponsible and autocratic rule."

Time and again national demand had found its way to the wastepaper basket; solemn resolutions passed by the House had been trampled under foot on the floor of the so-called Indian Parliament; resolutions regarding the repeal of repressive and arbitrary measures had been treated with sublime contempt while on the contrary Government's measures and proposals rejected as unacceptable by elected members have been restored by a stroke of the pen. It was, therefore, they were constrained to call the institution "a hollow show and mischievous make-believe."

It continued,

"The mentality of public leaders who help to squander public time and money on the so manifestly a stage-managed exhibition of India's helpless subjection was incomprehensible to them. The wholesale arrests of leaders of the labour movement only served to confirm their conviction that the labouring millions of India have nothing to expect from an institution that stood as a menacing monumnet to the strangling powers of exploiters and the serfdom of the helpless labourers."

Quoting the words of an erstwhile Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council to the effect "that the bomb was necessary to awaken England", the accused proceeded:

"Our sole purpose was 'to make the deaf hear' and to give the heedless a timely warning" as they keenly felt that "from under the seeming stillness of the sea of Indian humanity a veritable storm is about to break out. We have only hoisted a danger signal to warn those who are speeding along without heeding the grave dangers ahead."

They had "only marked the end of the era of Utopian non-violence" about "the futility of which the rising generation was fully convinced."

"The expression 'Utopian non-violence' needed some explanation. It was the force when aggressively applied is violence, and is therefore, morally unjustifiable; but when it is used in furtherance of legitimate cause, it has its moral justification. Elimination of force at all costs is Utopian, and the new movement which has arisen in the country and of which we have given a warning, is inspired by ideals which guided guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kemal Pasha and Reza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi, Lafayette and Lenin."

If they had intended to cause serious damage to property and destruction of human life they could easily do so with a bomb of a more devastating nature because they possessed the requisite knowledge for the manufacture of such bombs. They could also throw the bombs in the thickest part of the Assembly and also on Simon who had been sitting in the Chamber and within the range of their attack.

They continued,

"We then deliberately offered ourselves to bear the penalty for what we have done and to let the Imperialist exploiters know that they cannot kill ideas. By crushing two insignificant units the nation cannot be crushed. We wanted to emphasise the historical lesson that *lettres de cachet* and *bastilles* could not crush the revolutionary movement in France. Gallows and Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian revolution. Can Ordinances and Safety Bills sniff out the flame of freedom in India? Conspiracy cases, trumped or discovered, and the incarceration of all young men who cherish the vision of a greater ideal cannot check the march of revolution."

Bhagat Singh was asked in the lower court as to what they meant by the word "Revolution".

His answer was,

"Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife nor is there any place in it for an individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and pistol. By 'revolution' we mean that the present order of things which is based on manifest injustice, must change. Producers or labourers in spite of being a most necessary element of society are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary right and this must stop.

"The capitalist exploiters squander millions on their whims. These terrible inequalities and forced disparity of chances are heading to world chaos. The present order of society is merry-making on the brink of a

vulcano and innocent children of the exploiters no less than millions of the exploited are walking on the edge of dangerous precipice."

To save the situation radical change was, therefore, essentially necessary and the society must be reorganised on a socialistic basis. "Unless this is done and exploitation of man by man and of nations by nations, which goes masquerading as Imperialism, is brought to an end, the sufferings and carnage with which humanity is threatened today cannot be prevented, and all talks of ending wars and ushering an era of universal peace is undisguised hypocrisy." The contemplated revolution would be sovereignty of the proletariat "as a result of which a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery of imperialistic wars."

The accused concluded by saying:

"This is our ideal and with this ideology for our inspiration we have given a fair and loud enough warning. If, however, it goes unheeded and the present system of Government continues to be an impediment in the way of the neutral forces that are welling up, a grim struggle must ensue involving the overthrow of all obstacles and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imperishable birthright of all. The labour is the real sustainer of society. Sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of the workers. For these ideals and for this faith we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content. We await the advent of Revolution. Long Live Revolution!"

The Trial

Preliminary investigations having been finished Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Datta were placed before a Magistrate in the Central Jail to take their trial on May 7, 1929, at Delhi charged under Sec. 307 I.P.C., and Sec. 3 of the Explosive Substances Act and attempt at murder.

As the accused were brought before the Magistrate they shouted "Long Live Revolution!", and "Down with Imperialism!", whereupon both of them were ordered to be handcuffed.

The next day, May 8, they were committed to take their trial at the Sessions.

On June 10, 1929, the Assessors were divided in their opinion.

On June 12, judgment for transportation for life was pronounced by the Judge.

The accused preferred an appeal to the High Court which sat on January 6, 1930. It was dismissed on January 13, 1930.

Triumph of the Spirit

When the Lahore Conspiracy Case was started on July 10, 1930, there had been some accused who had already been on hunger-strike for some days and were in a very weak state of health.

After their conviction Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Datta were subjected to serious physical hardships and humiliating treatment in jail. Their protests went unheeded and they decided to launch on a trial of strength with the Government to raise the status of political prisoners which as they demanded must at least be on the footing of European special class convicts. They contended that they should not be given hard labour, be kept separate from "the worst type of hardened criminals" and that they would be provided with facilities for reading books and other literature while serving out their sentence. Their demand was treated with contempt and because of their utter foolhardiness further humiliations were crowded upon them. They were put on fetters and for the breach of jail discipline, punishments of a more severe nature were devised and applied.

As a last resort they decided to render themselves incapable of hard physical labour and to press their demand home they gave up taking any food whatsoever that might supply nourishment to their body.

On June 23, it leaked out from the prison cell that "for the last nine days" Batukeswar had refused all food and for this offence he was punished with bar-fetters from the beginning. Due to weakness he could neither speak nor stand on his legs.

On July 9, 1929, Bhagat Singh was taken to Lahore from the Mianwali Jail in handcuffs and fetters. This was, it transpired, the 25th day of his hunger-strike.

Batukeswar had to be carried in a stretcher in the Court on July 13, because of his extreme weakness due to refusal of food. The accused in the dock shouted "Long Live Revolution!" and "Down with Imperialism!"

A sympathetic hunger-strike was resorted to by the co-accused and JATIN DAS who reached Lahore on June 16, 1929, was one of them.

After waiting for ten days the jail authorities applied force for making the prisoners take their diet. Each cell was visited by five convict warders accompanied by a doctor. The prisoner was thrown on the ground; the hands, legs and the head were held fast to prevent all chances of movement. In such a state milk was poured through a tube inserted down the nostril to the stomach, clenched teeth preventing the tube being passed through the opening of the mouth.

As it was the determination of the prisoner not to allow any milk reaching the stomach, the resistance to such procedure was naturally very stiff and the corresponding suffering of the prisoner very great.

The method, from the point of view of the jail authorities, succeeded to a certain extent because that kept the person alive. The prisoner then had to adopt means to induce vomiting so that even the small quantity of food that had entered the stomach might be gulped out.

Because of the alarming condition of his health Jatin was allowed bail on two sureties of Rs. 25,000 each, on July 2, and on the very next day the order was cancelled without assigning any reason.

On July 11, 1929, as the prisoners were brought back from the Court, eight Pathans were employed to compel Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar to allow force-feeding. In the unequal struggle both suffered a good deal. Bhagat Singh was mercilessly belaboured and marks of violence were shown to the Court next day. Batukeswar was rendered unconscious.

The methods adopted by the hunger-strikers to carry on the grim fight have been described by Ajoy Ghosh (*Bhagat Singh and his Comrade*) himself a hunger-striker undertrial in the case, in the following manner:

Determined to break us the jail officials removed all water from our cells and placed milk instead in the pitcher. This was the worst ordeal imaginable. After a day, thirst grew unbearable. I would drag myself to the pitcher, hoping every time to find water but drew back at the sight of

milk. It was maddening. If the man who had hit upon this device had been there before me, I would have killed him.

"Outside, the guard sat watching every moment, mute, impassive.

"I could not trust myself much longer. I knew that in a few hours more I was bound to give way and drink the milk. My throat was parched, my tongue swollen.

"I called the guard. As he stood outside the barred door I asked him to give a few drops of water at least. His reply was: 'I can't do it. I have no permission.'

"Fury took possession of me. I snatched the pitcher and hurled it against the door, breaking it to pieces, spilling the milk on the guard. He thought I had gone mad. He was not far from right.

"In the meantime sympathetic hunger-strikes were taking place wherever there were political prisoners. A powerful mass movement had grown up to back our demands The Meerut Conspiracy Case prisoners went on hunger-strike after a few days. The news flashed across the seas. It created a stir in England. World attention was focussed on conditions in Indian prisons."

On July 13, the Government conceded that "special diet may be allowed on medical grounds only." The prisoners refused to yield as the Government had not conceded 'special diet' as their right as political prisoners.

While others had been slowly passing from life to the jaws of death by inches, the condition of Jatin Das took a serious turn on July 24, 1929. His pulse failed twice which was attributed to the exertion of even the feeble resistance he offered to feeding by force. When a tube was being inserted through his nostril and another through his throat, he lost all consciousness. The previous day he had been warned that if he would not submit, worse lessons awaited him. The threat failed to produce any effect on the dying man, and now he was made to feel the consequence.

On July 24, 1929, Jatin Das was removed to the jail hospital. The news of the grave condition of certain prisoners due to mass hunger-strike agitated the minds of the leaders of the country. The All India Congress Committee, then holding its session at Allahabad, noted with concern, on July 26, that the methods adopted by the Government "would shock peoples of a barbarous country."

On the 25th the doctors did not venture to apply the least force for feeding him because it was considered that "artificial feeding was of no good to him owing to the resistance which he

offers." There was slight fever and sign of congestion at the base of the lungs.

On July 26, Jatin's condition deteriorated further. He developed pneumonia with a temperature of 103°.

His condition became critical on July 31, and fits of unconsciousness became very frequent. As medicine was mixed with water, he refused to take any liquid whatsoever.

On August 1, his pulse-beat slowed down to 45. Next day he took a few drops of water only to moisten his tongue. During the night of August 6, he was unconscious at least for four hours at a stretch. On the same day he was given enema which rendered him more weak.

Jatin now crossed the danger point.

On August 23, he passed a restless night; on the 26th, his eye-sight was affected. On the next day it was noticed that his brain was getting anaemic and the left leg losing power of movement. On August 30, he was prevailed upon to take medicine which caused hiccough to start.

In deference to the wishes of the Members of the Punjab Jail Enquiry Committee, which had been set up on the order of the Government issued on August 18, for examination of rules relating to under-trial and convicted prisoners, "the hunger-strikers of the Lahore Conspiracy Case decided to withdraw their strike from 5 p.m. of September 2." It was now too late for Jatin who "marched straight on towards death and freedom."

On September 1, Jatin's left side down from the waist became completely paralysed. He was unable to open his eyes and his voice completely failed.

September 3 dawned with high fever, rapid pulse and signs of sinking in the patient. He became very restless from high fever on September 6.

At about seven in the evening of September 8, Jatin suffered from a collapse of his hand and feet.

On September 10, the prisoner completed the 60th day of fast. His brain became anaemic; his limbs lost all power of locomotion and he was now more dead than alive. On September 11, the Home Member declared in the Assembly that Jatin's condition was critical.

Jatin vomited blood and his palms and feet became cold on September 12, in the morning.

The fateful moment for which Jatin had desired came with slow but steady steps relieving him from pain at 1-5 p.m. on September 13, 1929, when he had completed the 63rd day of his fast. About 10 in the morning he regained sufficient consciousness to recall his friends to his bedside and bade them good-bye in a cheerful spirit.

On September 12, the day before Jatin's demise, a prominent Muslim member declared in the Assembly that "a man who resorts to hunger-strike is moved by his soul."

The last conscious words that Jatin could utter with great difficulty were: "I do not want my obsequies to be performed at Kali Bari in orthodox Bengali fashion. I am not a Bengali; I am an Indian."

About 2-30 p.m. Jatin's body was brought out on a wooden bier from the Borstal Jail. His eyes were sunken deep in their sockets and his cheek-bone heavily protruded out due to great emaciation. His face was ghastly pale.

Indian nationalist newspapers wrote columns of editorials extolling the sacrifice of Jatin and his power of endurance against the pangs of hunger and thirst and the spectre of creeping death that had been spreading its shadow over a period of long sixty-three days without remorse, without respite.

The Tribune wrote on Jatin's demise:

"If ever a man died a hero and martyr to a noble cause, that man is Jatindra Nath Das and the blood of the martyr has in all ages and countries been the seed of higher and nobler life, better social and political order."

Mary, the worthy spouse of Terence McSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, who had sacrificed his life in Ireland under similar circumstances wired:

"Family Terence McSwiney unites patriotic Indian in grief and pride on death of Jatindra Nath Das. Freedom will come."

On September 24, 1929, when the Court trying the case of Jatindra Nath Das and others met, the Crown Counsel paid his tribute to the memory of one for whose death on the gallows he had been striving for through a judicial pronouncement. Said he:

"With the permission of the Court I ask leave on behalf of my colleagues and myself to say a brief word of reverence to the tragic event which has occurred since the last sitting of the Court. I desire on behalf of all to express sincere regret and genuine sorrow which we feel on account of the untimely death of Jatindra Nath Das. There are qualities which compel admiration of all men alike and pre-eminent among them are qualities of courage and constancy in the pursuit of an ideal. Although we do not share the ideals which he followed, we cannot but admire the unwavering fortitude and firmness of purpose he displayed."

Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar abandoned hunger-strike on October 4, 1929, in deference to the resolution of the All India Congress Committee.

After the arrests and some of the suspects still absconding a case was started against the accused composed of two parts that of bomb factory at Kashmere Building and the murder of Saunders and other offences committed before and after the incident.

On June 26, 1929, a challan was filed against six accused including Sukhdev under Sections 302, 120-B, and 109 (abetment). In the absence of one of the accused the case was adjourned till July 10.

Some of the principal accused were:

Sukhdev *alias* Dyal, *alias* Swami, *alias* Villager, son of Ramlal, Lyallpur, arrested on April 15, in Lahore Bomb Factory;

Jatindra Nath Das, son of Bankim Chandra Das of Bhowanipore, Calcutta, arrested on June 14, 1929, in Calcutta and brought to Lahore on June 16, under escort;

Bhagat Singh, son of Kishen Singh, resident of Khawasrian, Lahore, arrested in the Central Legislative Chamber on April 8, 1929, and convicted in the Assembly Bomb Outrage Case;

Raghunath, *alias* "M", *alias* Shivram Rajguru, son of Hari Rajguru of Sadashivpeth, Poona, who was placed before the Court on October 18, 1929, after his arrest at Poona a few days before.

Of the absconding accused two were more prominent; *viz.*, Chandra Sekhar Azad, *alias* Panditji, son of Baijnath Ram *alias* Sitaram, Bhilopore, Benares;

Bhagwati Charan, *alias* B. C. Vohra, son of Rai Bahadur Shiv Charan Das, Lahore.

Bhagat Singh's complicity with the Saunders' murder came to be known through a statement of a person in course of an

investigation relating to the Dusserah bomb explosions, first of which occurred in 1926, and the second in 1928, in Roshnara (Roshani) Gate. It transpired that two ex-students of the Oriental College had been frequenting the boarding house on the first and second floors of the building where the bombs exploded.

Further complicity of Bhagat Singh was established by the fact that his pistol seized in the Assembly house had the same bore as what had been used in the Lahore outrage of December 17, 1928.

It was contended by the Government that the accused along with others at Lahore and at other places in British India at various times and occasions from 1924, till the time of their arrest had been engaged in a conspiracy to wage war against the King, in depriving him of the sovereignty in British India and by criminal force had tried to overawe the Government established by law in India.

The means adopted to achieve their objective were collection of arms, men and munitions, securing of fund for the same purpose by means of forcing or raiding banks and treasuries, the manufacturing of bombs, murder of persons who obstructed the carrying out of the objects of conspiracy, blowing up of trains, production, possession and circulation of seditious and revolutionary literature, rescue of persons convicted of political offences and detained in lawful custody, seduction of educated youths with a view to enlist them in the conspiracy and to obtain help, monetary or otherwise, from persons in foreign countries who might feel interested in accomplishment of revolution in India and by any other methods found necessary for adoption.

The accused were credited with certain overt acts of which the following were specifically mentioned:

An attempt on the life of an Inspector of police, C.I.D., at Benares on January 13, 1928;

Embezzlement of funds of a post office at Burhalganj, district Gopalpur, on June 26, 1928, in furtherance of the object of the party;

Plan for plundering the Punjab National Bank on December 4, 1928;

Murder of Saunders on December 17, 1928;

Throwing of bombs and firing of pistols in the Central Legislative Assembly Chamber on April 8, 1929;

Dacoity at Maulnia on June 7, 1929;

Manufacture of bombs at Lahore, Saharanpur, Bilaspur, Calcutta and Agra;

Unsuccessful attempt at blowing up of the train carrying the members of the Simon Commission from Bombay to Poona by means of dynamite;

Planning for rescue of prisoners convicted in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, etc.

The prisoners entered the court room on July 10, 1929, shouting *Long Live Revolution ! Down with Imperialism !* and at the appearance of Bhagat Singh and Dutta the prisoners renewed their slogan and embraced each other. At the outset one of the accused complained to the Magistrate that a policeman had abused him and if no steps were taken to remove the offender he would be compelled to "to take the law in his own hands".

There was no arrangement for defence of some of the accused and the Crown Counsel submitted a petition on July 19, for engaging lawyers at the cost of the Government. The High Court rejected the petition on July 26, on the ground that the Special Magistrate trying the case was not authorised to appoint counsel on behalf of the hunger-striking prisoners without their consent.

Exasperated by the treatment at the hands of the police and the Magistrate's failure to give them protection the prisoners created a situation which was very difficult for the Magistrate to control.

He ordered that each accused should be handcuffed with a constable at the time of coming to and departure of the accused from the court.

The trial could not proceed smoothly as various difficulties cropped up in its course and there had been occasional breaks due to adjournment from time to time. The accused, at least some of them, could not or wilfully did not attend the court and by August 14, 1929, speculations became rife that section 540-B of the Criminal Procedure was going to be amended providing for an enquiry or trial being held where the accused's absence arises from his voluntary act such as hunger strike. It desired also to empower the Magistrate or a Judge to dispense with the attendance of any accused and proceed with the enquiry in his absence if he is satisfied that the accused by his own conduct rendered himself

incapable of being present in the Court. The finding of the court as a result of such enquiry in the absence of the accused in such circumstances could not be held illegal but the accused would have the right to be represented by a counsel at a later stage.

On September 8, 1929, the Code of Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 1929, was introduced in the Legislative Assembly by the Home Member.

On the issue of the Bill an adjournment motion was moved by the Congress Opposition in the Legislative Assembly on September 14, to censure the Government policy regarding the treatment of undertrials in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. In the teeth of opposition of the Treasury Benches the motion was carried by 55 votes to 47.

The Government received a rude shock and instead of forcing it through the Assembly outright sent the Bill for circulation, the object being "to create mutual trust and remove suspicion", with the threat that "if emergency arose before the next meeting of the Assembly, the Government would reserve the right to have emergency power to prevent delaying tactics."

The trial proceeded in a most perfunctory manner. On October 21, the witness, an approver was seen sinking in the box hit by a shoe thrown at him by an accused. The Magistrate ordered that the accused should be in handcuffs while in the Court. On the next day the prisoners refused to come out of the police van for attending the court room while both the hands were in handcuffs. They were bodily lifted from the van and placed in the dock.

On October 23, the accused complained of severe torture by the police and sought the protection of the Magistrate. While they were brought out from the barracks it was suggested that they be taken to the court with handcuffs on both hands which they protested. They were then sent back and were again called out after an hour when they saw about 300 policemen and warders ready for applying force.

The accused refused for the second time to be handcuffed when they were subjected to inhuman assault, one of the methods applied being penetration of fingers into the rectum and kicking at the testicles. The assault together with a liberal use of canes

continued for more than an hour when the prisoners kept themselves absolutely non-violent.

The accused let the Court know that they would go undefended from the next day, October 24, 1929.

On May 1930, the Government issued an ordinance terminating the preliminary trial of the accused and authorising the Chief Justice of Punjab to constitute a Tribunal of three judges for finishing the trial expeditiously. The judges so selected were to be invested with powers to deal with wilful obstruction to administration of justice.

The Tribunal dispensed with the presence of the accused on May 17, 1930.

Charges were framed against fourteen accused under sections 120-B, 121-A, 122, 123, and 302 I.P.C. and sections 4, 5, and 6 of the Explosive Substances Act on July 11, 1930.

The long drawn trial came to an end on October 7, 1930, when judgment was delivered by the Tribunal.

(i) BHAGAT SINGH was found guilty under sections 121 and 302 I.P.C. and Sec. 4-B of the Explosive Substances Act;

(ii) SHIVRAM RAJGURU, *alias* 'M' under sections 121 and 302 I.P.C.

(iii) SUKHDEV under sections 121 and 302 read with sections 109 and 120-B I.P.C. and Sec. 4-B of the Explosive Substances Act and all the three were sentenced to death.

Eight others were sentenced to transportation for life.

On the pronouncement of the judgment Bhagat Singh said, "There was more pleasure in being hanged than linger in jail and file appeals."

An appeal was preferred to the Privy Council and it was rejected on February 11, 1931.

On March 3, 1931, the officials of the Central Jail called on the relations of the condemned prisoners and asked them to interview the accused.

Great hopes were raised in the public mind when it became known that Mahatma Gandhi had taken up the matter with the Viceroy seriously and had been trying to mitigate the severity of the sentence.

Without giving any hint to Mahatmaji the Viceroy rejected the petition and everything was now made ready for the final stage.

The father of Bhagat Singh received a communication on March 18, 1931, at Lahore which stated,

"I am directed to inform you that your interview with the condemned prisoner Bhagat Singh has been fixed for the 23rd March at 11 a.m. You should arrange to bring all your blood relations with you."

Similar notices were received by the relations of the other two prisoners.

On Monday, March 23, 1931, all the three prisoners were executed in the evening at quarter to seven in the Lahore Central Jail.

The cremation was performed by the agents of the Government on March 24.

The following notice was issued by the District Magistrate and was found pasted at different places of the city in the early hours of the morning of March 24:

"The public are hereby informed that the dead bodies of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev who were hanged yesterday evening (March 23) were taken out of the jail to the bank of the Sutlej where they were cremated according to Sikh and Hindu rites and their remains were also thrown into the water."

A letter by Sukhdev to his brother from the prison was intercepted by the police which contained the plan and motive of action. An interesting study, the letter was couched in the following language:

Plan of Action

"First of all we thought that one man should be sent with a pistol and after killing Mr. Scott, should there and then give himself up. Then in a statement he should have given out that revenge for national insult so long as revolutionaries existed could be taken in that way. It was, however, thought better to send three men, as man-power was believed to be deficient in the people. In this too, the object of making good our escape was not predominating; it was not so much wished. Our idea was that after the murder if the police followed us we should face them. He who survived and was arrested should make his statement. With this in view, we ran away and got over the roof of the D. A. V. College Hostel at the time of action. It was so arranged that Bhagat Singh, who could recognise Mr. Scott, was to fire the first shot. Rajguru was to stand at a little distance and protect Bhagat Singh, and if anyone attacked Bhagat Singh, then Rajguru was to face the opponent. After this both Bhagat Singh and Rajguru were to run away, and as while running away they could not

return back to shoot those who chased them, Panditji was to stand behind them for their protection.

"At the same time we were determined to pay more attention to kill him rather than to save our lives. We did not like that the person aimed at should die in hospital. For this reason even after Rajguru had fired the shot Bhagat Singh did not cease firing till he was satisfied that he (victim) was dead. To run after murder was not our plot. We wished to enlighten the public that it was a political murder and its perpetrators were revolutionaries and not associates of Malangi. We, therefore, affixed our posters after that and sent some for publication. Alas, neither our leaders nor the Press rendered any assistance at that stage, and in order to deceive the Government they deceived their countrymen. We desired that they should write in a roundabout way that it was a political murder and was the result of the Government's policy which was responsible for such action. But they knowing all this and in spite of my repeatedly saying this, did not dare to say so. It was a good thing that we were arrested and everything came to light to the people.

"Dear brother, I consider my arrest as good luck only for this reason. After clearing the nature of this action I was to dwell on policy. I want to show that our idea was that our actions should fulfil the desires of the public and should be in response to those grievances against the Government so that they might attract public sympathy and support. With this view we wanted to infuse revolutionary ideals and tactics in the public and the expression of such ideas looks more glorified from the mouth of one who stands on the gallows for the cause."

APPENDIX

The pamphlet headed *Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army* and signed by one Balraj, Commander-in-Chief ran thus :

'It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear' with these immortal words uttered at a similar occasion by a valiant French anarchist martyr, do we strongly justify this action of ours. Without repeating the humiliating history of the past ten years of the working of the Reforms and without mentioning the insults hurled down upon the head of the Indian nation through this House, the so-called Indian Parliament, we want to point out that while the people are expecting some more crumbs of reforms from the Simon Commission and are even quarrelling over the distribution of expected bones, the Government are thrusting upon us new repressive measures like the Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills while reserving the Press Bill for the next session. Indiscriminate arrests of labour leaders working in the open field clearly indicate whither the wind blows.

In these extremely provocative circumstances the *Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association* in all seriousness and realising its full responsibility have decided and ordered its Army to do this particular action so that a stop be put to this humiliating force and to let the alien bureaucratic exploiters do what they wish but to make them come before the public eye in their mailed form.

Let the representatives of the people return to their constituencies and prepare the masses for the coming revolution and let the Government know while protesting against the Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills and the callous murder of Lala Lajpat Rai on behalf of the helpless Indian masses, we want to emphasise that you can kill individuals but you cannot kill ideas. Great empires crumbled but all the ideas survived. The Bourbons and the Czars fell while revolutions marched triumphantly ahead.

We are sorry to admit that we who attach so great sanctity to human life, we who dream of a very glorious future when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty have been forced to shed human blood. But sacrifice of individuals at the altar of great revolution that will bring freedom to all rendering exploitation of man by man impossible is inevitable. Long live Revolution !

Trusted Lieutenant

(1930)

Known in the Revolutionary Socialist Republican Party as the trusted lieutenant of Bhagat Singh, BHAGWATI CHARAN (Vohra), of Lahore, played a very important role in the risky affairs of Punjab that led to execution of Bhagat Singh and his two comrades, Sukhdev and Rajguru.

It was Bhagwati Charan who rented room No. 69 of the Kashmere Building on March 15, 1929, at Rs. 13 per mensem, for the use of the party as its 'arsenal'. During the search, on April 15, Bhagwati Charan was absent, and every effort of the police to get him as an accused in the Lahore Conspiracy (Saunders' murder) Case miserably failed. He was declared a 'proclaimed offender' and an absconding accused.

His house was visited on May 10, 1929, where a list of all his movable property was made by the police and his wife was asked to send her husband to the Police Station on some urgent business.

On February 9, 1931, through one of the approvers (in the Lahore Conspiracy Case) the police came to know that while experimenting Bhagwati Charan was severely wounded by the explosion of a bomb in a jungle on the bank of the Ravi which blew off both of his hands. It happened in January, 1930.

As an effect he died instantaneously. No medical aid was possible in the circumstances.

His friend present on the occasion disposed of his body in the best manner he could and India lost one of her devoted sons who silently laid down his life in the cause of revolution to be relegated to oblivion.

While the Lahore Conspiracy Case had been dragging on its weary length, a conference was held in February 1930, amongst the free comrades of the accused to plan an attack on the Railway Clearance Accounts Office (Lahore) for funds and to rescue Bhagat Singh and the other undertrials.

* Durga Debi, wife of Bhagwati Charan, contributed Rs. 3,000 to the fund after disposing of all her ornaments and other belongings of value.

As the Government vigilance had been greatly augmented, no action could be undertaken for execution of the plan.

Overzealous Officer

(1929)

A meeting was held in connection with the boycott of foreign cloth at Barisal Town Hall on March 10, 1929, and a Sub-Inspector of Police, Jyotish Chandra Ray, attended it as a part of his duty. When the meeting terminated at 6-30 p.m. Jyotish started for the Thana by Fakirbari Road. When he was near the southern side of Police Club tank he was suddenly stabbed from the back. It was a serious injury and the victim succumbed to it.

A mere boy of fourteen of Kirtipasha under Jhalakati P.S., reading in Class IX of the Banipith School was arrested and placed on trial for the murder of the Police Officer.

The case for the Crown was that it was a deliberate and political crime and "no personal motive" for the murder could be attributed to the assailant. The Judge remarked,

"What impelled the accused to commit the crime is his conception of patriotism. . . . It is a political crime planned and carried out with great ingenuity and skill."

And further,

"I accept the evidence that Jyotish was being shadowed. I deduce from the extremely workmanlike nature of the wound that the crime had been rehearsed and that the accused had very probably perfected himself in the use of a dagger as a weapon of assassination and the crime would not have been so expeditiously and competently performed without very careful previous preparation. Had it been a case of murder from private enmity or grudge I shall have considered myself bound to mitigate the extreme penalty but it appears to be clearly a crime aimed at the very foundation of constituted authority and I think that in these circumstances it is not for me to take upon myself the decision that clemency should be shown to the accused."

The boy was sentenced to death on April 22, 1929. On an appeal to the High Court, his sentence was reduced, on July 26, 1929, to one of transportation for life.

Explosion's Toll

(1930)

Suddenly the lights went out enveloping the place in darkness when a function had been in progress in a College at Amritsar. The assemblage was startled by the sound of an explosion. When lighting was restored a student of the institution, PRATAP SINGH, was found dead lying in a pool of blood.

It was guessed that the bomb was meant for the Principal of the College who had been helping the police by acting as their secret agent.

A number of persons were arrested in this connection and placed on trial at Amritsar. On July 29, 1930, UJAGAR SINGH, one of the accused was condemned to death by the Sessions Judge.

"Sweetness in the Desert Air"

(1930)

DEBENDRABIJAY SEN GUPTA, better known as 'Bolu' in the circle of his friends and relations, in Nalchira, Barisal, stepped into dangerous political arena in his early teens. At a time when India had been struggling for her emancipation with the weapon of non-violence and the Civil Disobedience Movement had taken its grip on the minds of the people, Bolu adopted a different course with his preference for the cult of stiletto and the bomb.

In the last week of May 1930, in a dilapidated hut, he was engaged in making bombs in the sub-divisional town of Bhola, when one of these exploded in his hands and killed him outright on the spot. He belonged to a group of young men whose selfless sacrifice is known to only a few whose remembrance is the only record of an event that took the toll of a valuable life in its bloom.

Sparked off

(1930-1931)

Having expressed his determination to violate the Salt Laws, Gandhiji was arrested just after midnight i.e. about 1 a.m. on March 5, 1930, at his camp at Karadi and taken to Yervada Jail.

The whole country was ablaze and it took a particularly sinister turn at Sholapur. On May 8, the mob ran amuck and serious cases of simultaneous rioting were reported from several parts of the city. The police came out in a large force and resorted to firing. At least 25 rioters were killed and nearly 100 injured. Three policemen also lost their lives.

There was a veritable conflagration consuming six police chowkies and the Sessions Court building. The bodies of the dead policemen were thrown into the fire and burnt to ashes.

The situation did not improve up to May 12, the mob still having the upper hand in the disturbed areas. On May 12, Martial Law was proclaimed; machine guns and pickets were posted at strategic points; barricades were erected at each picket post for stopping all traffic.

A large number of people were arrested as a result of vigorous round-up conducted indiscriminately at all places. Curfew was clapped on the city between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. which was kept in force up to May 22. It took some weeks before the rigour of the Martial Law measures were relaxed.

There was no premeditated plan in this outbreak of mob violence. It could seldom be called a secret act of the revolutionaries. It just sparked off a flame that engulfed the mass of the people in its terrible rage.

Trial was started against a number of persons out of whom four persons, *viz.*,

(i) MALAPPA DHANSETTI, (ii) JAGANNATH B. SHINDE, (iii) SRIKISHEN SARDA, and (iv) ABDUL RASUL KURBAN HUSEIN, were condemned to death by the Special Sessions Judge.

The accused preferred an appeal to the High Court. The Judges disagreed in respect of punishment meted out to three, excepting Dhansetti about whom both upheld the judgment of the Lower Court.

On July 14, 1930, the appeal of Dhansetti was rejected and

the case of the other three condemned prisoners was referred to a third Judge, who finally upheld on August 2, the verdict of the Special Sessions.

The four prisoners were executed on January 12, 1931, in Yervada Jail, and they joined the galaxy of those who had previously been brutally killed by police and military bullets during the earlier stages of riot.

Forgotten Hero

(1930)

Like so many others of his way of thinking without the knowledge of devastating effects of explosives and working without the requisite caution, WAZIRCHAND, a member of the *Naujuan Bharat Sabha*, Punjab, was involved in a serious accident when a bomb burst in the course of manufacture in his hands on May 26, 1930. The explosion blew away both his hands and rendered him completely unconscious. The sound of the explosion drew men from around who found him lying in a pool of blood almost on the point of dying.

He was removed to hospital where proper police guard was placed to prevent his escape, but eluding all vigilance he passed away on May 27, 1930, early in the morning.

None to Escape

(1930-1934)

There was no mistake this time about the identity of Tegart, the Police Chief of Calcutta, as on January 12, 1924, when through mistake an innocent European gentleman lost his life. Luck had not yet abandoned the Official and he escaped miraculously unhurt, when an attempt was made on his life on August 25, 1930.

At 11 a.m. Tegart had been proceeding from Kyd Street to the police headquarters at Lall Bazar keeping close to the tram-track on the left side of Dalhousie Square East. He had passed along the way a few yards towards the north of the Paper

Currency Office when a big explosion took place very close to the left followed by another on the opposite side of Tegart's car.

People began running round the south-east corner of Dalhousie Square in the direction of Hare Street. The first bomb-thrower ran along with the throng keeping to the footpath opposite the Foreign Delivery Offices and almost reached the front of the Dalhousie Institute some fifty yards from the corner. He was found thoroughly exhausted, and' barely had he placed a waterproof on the railings of the Square he fell unconscious on the pavement at the foot of the boundary wall. His undergarment was found soaked with blood which soon flooded the place around the wounded man. He was put under arrest and removed to the Lall Bazar police station where he died. On his person were found one .450 bore revolver and two bombs.

During the course of events which took a little more than thirty seconds another Bengali youngman was found running chased by a traffic constable alongside the south of the Square. He jumped into a waiting taxi where he was held by a telegraph-office employee. He aimed his revolver at his captor and secured his release. He jumped out of the taxi and made a dash along Wellesley Place followed by another constable. He entered Government Place where he was overpowered and taken to the Hare Street police station. He had in his possession a loaded .320 bore six-chambered revolver, a misfired cartridge and four spent cartridges, a loaded bomb with aluminium shell, a cigar and some money.

In the course of investigation it transpired that the name of the dead man was ANUJA CHARAN SEN GUPTA of Senhati, Khulna. He was sometime Editor of a now defunct periodical, the *Hindu Sangha*, and living with his brother at 11/1/1, Kerbala Tank Lane.

The arrested man was DINESH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR, a student of the University Law College. He hailed from Bashirhat, 24-Parganas. He was a resident of 7, Ram Mohan Ray Road, Calcutta.

The Surgeon holding the *post mortem* on Anuja deposed before the City Coroner on September 2, 1930, that the deceased had eight separate injuries with splinters embedded in each of them. His death was due to excessive loss of blood.

Dinesh was placed on his trial on September 11, 1930,

charged with the offence of (i) conspiracy to kill Tegart with Anuja Charan Sen Gupta, (ii) attempt in furtherance of a common intention to kill Tegart, (iii) for abetting maliciously and causing explosion, (iv) possession of explosives likely to endanger life, and (v) having in possession a loaded bomb. On each of the three counts, *viz.*, (i), (ii) and (iv) he was sentenced on September 18, 1930, to transportation for life and for (v) to twenty years' rigorous imprisonment. All the sentences were to run concurrently.

Dinesh somehow escaped with his life. He was transferred to Midnapore Jail as a 'C' Class prisoner on October 17, 1930, to serve out his sentence there.

Between the midnight of February 7 and early morning of February 8, 1932, Dinesh with four other long-term prisoners were found missing from their respective cells. There was a frantic search for their apprehension without any result.

Dinesh hereinafter appeared in two daring adventures, first at Chandernagore on March 9, 1933, and again at Cornwallis Street, Calcutta, on May 22, 1933.

Big Game Shooting

(1930)

The espionage system of the revolutionaries had gained a degree of perfection at the time and full use was made of it. A report reached Dacca that the Inspector-General of Police, F. J. Lowman, would visit the city on August 29, 1930, and the machinery was set in motion to use this opportunity and take full advantage of it.

The Inspector General, with Hodson, the Superintendent of Police, Dacca, had visited the Superintendent of the River Police, Naraiangunge, who had a stroke of apoplexy and was lying in the Mitford Hospital. While he was talking to the Superintendent in the compound of the hospital at 9-15 a.m., the assailant came from behind walking and started firing at both Hodson and Lowman from a distance of about fifty feet.

The assailant displayed remarkable swiftness in firing as

also in marksmanship as none of the bullets missed the targets. Hodson sustained three and Lowman two bullet wounds. One of the bullets that hit Lowman entered his body through the left groin and became lodged in his spine.

A contractor chased the assailant and was able to hold him by the hand but the latter wrenched himself free and escaped with two other associates through the Medical School compound leaving his revolver and a pair of slippers behind.

The daring young man carried two revolvers with him because with the one that he had still in his possession he kept their pursuers at bay by occasional firing. It was not unlikely that the friend watching his way of escape also helped him in affording protection from attack.

Lowman was operated upon without any effect. He died on August 31, 1930, in the morning at 9-15 a.m.

Dismayed by their failure the police wreaked their vengeance on the inmates of the medical messes. Fifty-one boarders had had to be admitted into the Mitford Hospital as a result of manhandling by the police.

Random Shots

(1930)

Violence became rampant particularly in Punjab and Bengal and anybody engaged in surveillance, arrest or prosecution in connection with revolutionary activities became, in turn, targets for attacks.

A high police official, a Khan Bahadur to boot, received recognition for his services as head of the prosecuting agency in connection with legal proceedings relating to Martial Law (1919), Babbar Akali (1923), Lahore Conspiracy (1930) and Dusserah Bomb (1930). He had been driving along the bank of a canal in the direction of the Mall, Lahore Cantonment side, on October 4, 1930, at 11 a.m. with his police *orderly* when he was suddenly attacked by unknown assailants several shots being fired at the car. The shots missed him but his *orderly* received a bullet that remained lodged in his body. He was operated upon and after a long struggle succumbed to his injuries on October 10, 1930.

A reward of Rs. 10,000 was offered for the arrest of or information relating to the culprits but with no result.

Fought to the Last

(1930)

A strong police party had been waiting outside the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Cawnpore, on December 1, 1930, preparatory to searching the college premises when one of the policemen noticed a person passing that way whom he recognised as SALIGRAM SHUKLA, 'wanted' under the Prevention of Intimidation Ordinance in force at that time.

Shukla was at once pounced upon and was told that he was under arrest. Shukla tried hard to get himself freed and assistance at once rushed to prevent his escape. The man pulled out a revolver and fired three shots which hit three separate policemen of whom Prem Ballabh was seriously wounded. He died subsequently.

The whole police force with two European officers then grappled with one man who showed no signs of surrender. One of the European Sergeants hit Shukla on the head with the butt-end of his pistol. Shukla fell to the ground still retaining the pistol in his hand. The second European Officer gave Shukla a second hard blow on head with a truncheon and Shukla almost lost his consciousness.

Taking him to be dead the policemen now started examining the conditions of the injured, one of whom was on the point of collapse. Shukla regained his consciousness and sufficient strength to take to his heels. He was twice shot at by a Sergeant and almost instantaneously died from the effects of the second bullet.

In the Citadel of Power

(1930-1931)

It was mid-day, 12-30 p.m. on December 8, 1930, when the august seat of the Government of Bengal, the Writers' Buildings, had been humming with activity of 'hundreds of the highest officials and their assistants of all ranks, three young men, dressed in European costume with mufflers round their necks, reached the first floor of the building by the western staircase. Perhaps because of their dress nobody took any serious notice of them.

The three persons were, as their names transpired in the course of investigation, (i) SUDIIR GUPTA *alias* BADAL, (ii) BENOY BASU and (iii) DINESH GUPTA *alias* NASU. They sought for an interview with the *sahib*, Col. N. S. Simpson, the Inspector-General of Prison, and his *orderly* asked them to fill up the customary slip and wait till they were sent for by the Officer. Without doing anything of the sort, they brushed aside the *orderly*, dashed inside the room where Simpson was deeply engaged in dealing with office files.

Before the visitors' intention could be realised or Simpson could take any measure for self-protection, the intruders drew out their revolvers and fired five or six shots almost all at once and Col. Simpson was seen falling down from his chair. They rushed out of the room and ran towards the east part of the building by the broad corridor facing the Dalhousie Square on the south.

The Secretary, Department of Agriculture, threw a chair at the assailants who in return was shot at. It was apparent that both the parties failed in their purpose. They came before the room of the Finance Member and asked the *orderly* whether the *sahib* was inside the room. The *orderly* realising the situation told them that the Member was out and there was nobody inside. One of the three young men fired some shots at the room, the bullet passing through the glass-panes of the swing-door.

On hearing the report of gun-shots, the Inspector-General of Police came out with a revolver in his hand and fired at the men from behind. The shot missed its mark. A sergeant took the revolver from the hand of the Police Chief and fired at the

running men but the bullets went wide. The Assistant Inspector-General of Police came with another revolver and fired with no better result.

The assailants now entered the Passport Office where they loaded their revolvers. An intending foreign passenger and the office assistant were scared away by the men in possession of firearms and slipped out of it in no time.

The Judicial Secretary came to the door of his room and peeped outside. He was forthwith shot at and a bullet entered his thigh. The officer rushed out limping and bleeding profusely and took shelter in the next room.

Sudhir, Benoy and Dinesh were now in the last room. One of them peeped through the door and fired at the police who had now been guarding the room. The fire was returned. Lall Bazar Police Headquarters were informed and the top-ranking officers came gasping to the place of occurrence. As the firing from inside the room had ceased, a constable was asked to look inside the room and give a faithful report of the situation there.

Two out of the valiant three were seen lying on the floor and the third sitting on a chair reclining his head on a table in his front. He seemed to be dying if not already dead. There were two revolvers and a number of cartridges on the table and some white powder strewn about him, a quantity of which he might have swallowed.

The second man who was lying on the floor had a bullet wound to the left of his neck. One six-chambered revolver with fired and misfired cartridges was found lying between his two legs.

The third man had wounds on both temples. He was still conscious and gave out his name as Benoy Bose. The name of the first man as given by Benoy as Supati Ray who was subsequently identified as Sudhir Gupta. The second man, though stated to be Biren Ghosh, was really Dinesh Gupta.

In the pocket of Benoy was found a bull-dog pattern revolver with fired and live cartridges. On the floor of the room and also in the pocket of Sudhir were found three tri-coloured flags which represented the National Flag as accepted by the Indian National Congress at the time.

Lots of cartridges and spent up bullets were seen scattered

in the room as well as in the corridor which were picked up by individual officers and men.

Benoy and Dinesh were removed to the Medical College Hospitals. On December 9, they were remanded to jail (hospital) custody until December 15.

In the meantime Benoy got worse on December 10, the brain matter still oozing out. On the next day his condition still further deteriorated and at night it reached a stage of crisis. When conscious he refused to take any medicine and interfered with the bandage around his head as best as he could. On December 13, 1930, Benoy breathed his last at about 6-30 a.m. His dead body was allowed to be taken to Nimtolla Ghat for cremation accompanied by a few relatives and a larger number of policemen.

Benoy made a dying declaration to the effect that he had shot Lowman which caused the latter's death.

Dinesh was operated upon on December 12, and a bullet was extracted from the region of his temple. He made slow progress though at times relapsing into a state of danger from occasional internal haemorrhage.

Dinesh was discharged from the Medical College Hospitals and handed over to police custody on December 31, 1930.

The composition of a Special Tribunal was Gazetted on January 17, 1931. The case opened on January 20, with charges under Sections 302, 307, 120 I.P.C. and 19-F of the Arms Act.

It was proved that Simpson received two shots from his revolver. Judgment was delivered on February 2, 1931, at 5-30 p.m. and he was awarded the highest penalty of the law. He received the verdict with philosophic resignation.

His case was referred to the High Court for confirmation. It was heard on March 17 and 18, and Their Lordships delivered the judgment on March 27, 1931, confirming the sentence passed by the Tribunal.

During the period between the date of judgment delivered by the Special Tribunal and his execution Dinesh showed a remarkable spirit of his faith in God worthy of the best *yogi* with the least attachment to life and all that is dear to human existence.

On February 9, 1931, he wrote to his brother that there was not the least doubt that he had received a "thrilling experience"

in life and the manner of his death would also be "a novelty to me."

He gained in weight and wrote to his another brother, "You are a doctor. Can you believe that I have gained 12 lbs. since" (the pronouncement of the judgment). On his expressing doubt, he was assured by the jail doctor that the weighing machine was perfectly correct.

The fate that awaited Dinesh or Nasu, his nickname, naturally perturbed the minds of his mother, brothers and sisters-in-law. In reply to their importunities, Nasu wrote on March 29, 1931, that it was really impossible for him to prescribe the means by which they could attain peace of mind because he did not possess any knowledge himself about the problem. But he added,

"Because we entertain a terrible fear for death we are thereby vanquished by it. If we can conquer this fear then death would be a mere trifle with us. Instead of being afraid of death we must welcome it in an attitude of equanimity and fearlessness."

Continued he :

"We are Hindus; if we get unnerved at the very thought, then we fail at the first step. We know that we do never die; what dies is the ephemeral body. Soul is deathless. I am He, the Soul; and the Soul is God. When a man realises this sense then he can say.... I am ageless, deathless and eternal."

It might be contended by those who had been addressed that it was a mere truism and might put a rejoinder, 'But what is the path to reach this stage?'

The reply was :

"The only way is the complete surrender of self to God. There is no other means than that. However much we take His name through incantations, penance and outward adornment on the face by sandal paste (*tilak, phonta*) or otherwise, we do not really love Him. Who has developed real devotion to Him, death to him is a hollow sound (without substance). Him really loved Nemaï of Bengal, Jesus Christ, the love incarnate, and all those young lads who had embraced death with a smiling cheer."

Divine Dispensation should not be doubted and

"one and all has access to the gateway of His judgment-seat and unceasingly the process of trial is going on there. Please have unflinching faith in His judgment. Try to receive with perfect ease His decrees on your heads bent low with devotion (with the utmost humility)."

To his brother Nasu wrote on April 8, 1931, (in his own language)

"Death may not be an adventure to me, but I take it as the blessing of God. Hindu philosophy says that God's blessing does not always come as worldly happiness, but it also manifests itself in the form of danger and death."

At the thought of his mother Nasu could scarcely restrain himself. In the same letter he wrote (in English) :

"To die, for me, no terror holds
Yet one fear presses on my mind
Much I fear that over my corpse
The scalding tears of mother shall flow.

"I pray to you all, not to lament over my dead body. We must win over death,—we won't let it win us."

He would not like strains of sorrow or sadness at his death. He would cherish

"Memories of life and laughter
Memories of earthly glee
As I go to the hereafter
All my lullaby shall be."

To the same brother was his note dated May 1, 1931 :

"I am the son of God. He is my supreme and ultimate aim. He is the Truth and I want to be one with Him in everlasting love."

Dinesh reiterates his views on death in his letter written on June 22, 1931,

"I am not grieved in the least to die. I do agree that life is sweet but sometimes death is sweeter. . . . I want to sleep, deep sleep, sleep that soothes the heart from the endless miseries and misfortunes of this world. Death is my friend, my greatest benefactor. Death will release me from bondage, death will make me free. My liberty is in death, my life eternal is in death.

"When I die, I want no tears. If anyone loves me and is really sorry for me, let him not cry aloud. My soul shall not be satisfied with tears, with salty water of helpless beings."

Dinesh was fast asleep when he was roused to get ready for the final journey. He performed his morning duties in the most normal way, took his bath and informed the guards that he was ready. With unfaltering tread he ascended the steps leading to

the gallows, loudly shouting *Bande Mataram* till the noose had completely choked his voice at 3-45 a.m. on July 7, 1931.

Dinesh as the true son of mother India did as he should. The surgeons performed their duty by bringing him back from the jaws of death. The British Government in India vindicated the Majesty of the Law by sending him to the gallows. And Independence of India took a long stride towards the goal by his supreme sacrifice.

It became subsequently known that the three friends were responsible for the attack on Lowman at Dacca. All of them came to Calcutta and reached Baranagore. Stayed for a few nights in the house of Badal's uncle under the loving care of the aunt.

People began to whisper in the locality and it was unsafe to stay there any longer. Badal shifted to the collieries and worked underground to evade the police. The other two were living nearby and all the three maintained contact as far as possible.

They came to Calcutta and with the help of the local friends matured the plan of assault. On the day of the incident Badal, immaculately dressed as a European, met the uncle at the factory to bid good-bye and was next heard to have killed himself in the Writers' Buildings on December 8, 1930.

In the Seat of Learning

(1930-1931)

The Convocation of the Punjab University had just concluded between 1-15 and 1-20 p.m. on December 23, 1930, and the Vice-Chancellor requested the Chancellor to declare the function closed. When it was done the procession started strictly maintaining the order of precedence.

A young man from Mardan, P.S. Waladher, N.W.F.P., had entered the Hall without the necessary pass some time before the visitors had started dribbling in. He was seen sitting all the time in the visitors' gallery dressed in European costume.

When the University Chancellor, Geoffrey de Montmorency, the Governor of the Province, had gone a few paces forward, HARIKISHEN, the unknown intruder, stood up in his seat with

a revolver in his hand and fired two or three shots in quick succession from the left and jumped towards the main entrance firing another shot. Brandishing the revolver all the time of his advance Harikishen reached a pillar near the porch. He was chased by a Police Sub-Inspector and a few others and eventually overpowered.

Three persons were wounded by the shots including the Governor himself. A Sub-Inspector guard, Channan Sigh, on duty at the entrance was seriously injured with one bullet wound on the upper part of the right side of his neck, and near the angle of the left half of the lower jaw. He was removed to the Mayo Hospital where he expired at 6-15 p.m. on the same day. Death was due to shock, haemorrhage and interference with respiration.

After the preliminary investigation which was started on January 2, the accused was committed to the Sessions on January 5, 1931.

Harikishen made a statement before the trial court in the course of which he said, "As non-violent methods to win nation's freedom were frustrated by repression and thousands of my countrymen, and even women and children, were jailed, beaten and insulted", his belief changed from non-violence to violence. His conviction was further accentuated by the speech of Churchill, which led him to believe that Englishmen of his type would never let the slavery of India end. He was, therefore, determined to do an action which would create international sensation in order that the world could understand the situation in India. He held the Governor to be responsible for severe repression.

He purchased the revolver for Rs. 95. Being in possession of the weapon he decided to take action on the Convocation day as that would be in the presence of not only a very large but a distinguished gathering.

Harikishen was charged with murder of S.I. Channan Singh, and attempt at murder, and was sentenced to death.

On June 6, 1931, Harikishen's brother was informed that the last interview was to take place on the same day.

Harikishen was executed on June 9, 1931 at 6 a.m. in Mianwali Jail.

Precarious Plight

(1930)

There were several men who had been able to evade arrest and save themselves of the trouble of an accused in any of the conspiracy cases that kept the Lahore young men on the run for months and years at a stretch.

Coming from a modest middle class family of Kaneha in Rawalpindi district, BISHESWAR NATH, a mere lad of twenty, was 'wanted' by the police for a long time.

Ultimately the police were able to secure some clue to his movements and on November 4, 1930, visited Dharampura, a village in Lahore Cantonment area. After sufficient precautions against chances of escape, the police forced their entrance into the house where two revolutionaries had been staying for the previous few weeks.

Both the 'wanted' men came out and began firing at the search party which was promptly returned. A shot from one of the constables wounded Bisheswar Nath in the back, the bullet passing through his navel. He was operated upon in Mayo Hospital. The bullet was extracted from his body, the operation proved of no avail and the patient died at 11 a.m. on November 5, 1930.