
TERRORIST AND REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS

The left wing of the Congress eventually got divided as a result of the agitational outburst and governmental repression. The government disliked the growing popularity of the militant nationalism and used the growing schism within the Congress to crush agitational politics. It passed the Seditious Meeting Act (1907) to curb public meetings and demonstrations, enacted the Newspapers Incitement to Offence Act (1908) to choke the voice of the critical press, and later placed in the statute book, a special form of trial for the terrorist offences under the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1908). The disintegrated Extremists eventually divided into two groups; (i) the nationalist extremists, who remained satisfied with the programmes of Swadeshi and boycott; and (ii) the terrorists and revolutionaries, who were inspired by the knowledge of the revolutionary movements in the West for freedom. The terrorist and revolutionary movements and a summarized account of their activities are being given in the following sections.

TERRORIST MOVEMENTS

The terrorist movement in India started after many Indian leaders including **Lala Lajpat Rai** and **Sardar Ajit Singh** were deported to Mandalay in 1907, without a trial. This agitated young leaders such as **Barindra Kumar Ghosh** and **Bhupendra Nath Dutt** in Kolkata and they plotted to blow up the train in which the Lt. Governor of Bengal Presidency, **Sir A. Frazer**, was travelling. Later, the terrorist movement gained popularity and the programme of political assassination and armed decoity with a view to secure money for their cause gathered momentum. The terrorists argued that the

unmitigated evil that was the British rule could be eliminated from India only by violence and no amount of arguments and moral persuasion was useful. The main centres of their activities were Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT**

The revolutionaries believed in ousting the British from India by means of a mass uprising. They were against the slow and steady approach of the Congress extremists and they also disapproved of the assassinations and destruction of public property by the terrorists. They tried to convince the Indian troops to rebel and tried to get help from foreign countries hostile to Britain. They were active in gathering support for themselves in China, Japan, France, Germany, North America and even Britain. The important revolutionary movements were as follows:

THE GADAR MOVEMENT

In 1907, Lala Hardyal came under the influence of the revolutionaries working in Oxford and started a weekly paper called *Gadar*. His subsequent associations with more leaders culminated into the formation of the **Gadar Party** in 1913, in North America. The Gadar movement planned to (a) temper the loyalty of the Indian troops, (b) assassinate the British officials, (c) court foreign enemies to Britain and (d) form secret societies and propagate seditious literature. The Gadar movement's anti-British sentiment was intensified because of the **Komagata Maru episode**. To challenge the

discriminatory immigration law of Canada, Gadar activists hired a Japanese ship called *Komagata Maru* and took 500 passengers from India to Canada. The passengers who were mainly Sikh were led by **Baba Gurdip Singh** and had the full support of Lala Hardyal. When the ship reached Vancouver on 22 May 1914, it was refused permission to berth; the ship waited in vain for more than 2 months before returning to Kolkata on 26 September 1914. The police rounded up the passengers despite stiff resistance. The death toll that day reached 22, with many wounded. Most of the captured passengers were sent to jail. The Gadar movement got a fillip because of this incident.

★ Hindustan Republican Association(HSRA)Re-organised

On 9 and 10 September 1928, many of the major revolutionaries of northern India gathered secretly at Feroz Shah Kotla, set-up a new collective leadership, elected Chandrashekhar Azad as their creed, inserting the word 'Socialist' into their name. The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association was rapidly moving from the phase of individual actions to one of building a revolutionary movement. Although their major action after the reorganisation was the assassination of the Assistant Superintendent of Police, John P. Saunders, who killed Lala Lajpat Rai, the motives behind the action were significant. For one, the action was taken because Lala Lajpat Rai's death had evoked enormous popular resentment. Secondly, the assassination was carried out as the HSRA's popularity and mass membership were growing.

The All-India Mutiny that Failed(1915)

The revolutionaries took their ideas to the army and the peasants, small mutinies in Ferozpur, Lahore and Rawalpindi garrisons cautioned the British officers of a possible revolt of greater magnitude. The activists had planned the All-India Revolt on 21 February 1915. However, the British got wind of the plans and were able to curb the revolt.

Other Revolutionary Events

- Murder of W.C.Rand and Lt.Ayerst by Chapekar brothers at poona in 1897.
- Formation of the **India House in London** (1905) by shyamji Krishna Verma and V.D.Savarkar.
- Establishment of the **Indian House in New York** by **Barkatullah and S.L.Joshi**.
- Attempted murder of **Lt.Governor Fuller** of East Bengal by **Barindra Kumar Ghosh** and **Bhupendranath Dutta** in 1906.
- The **Kennedy murder** in 1908, in which two English ladies were killed when **Khundi Ram Bose** attempted to kill Magistrate Kingsford of Muzaffarabad who escaped unhurt.
- **Madan Lal Dhingra** murdered Curzon-Willie, an official in the British India Office at London.
- Attempted assassination of Lord Hardinge when he was approaching Delhi in 1912. **Rash Bihari Bose** and **Sachin Chandra Sanyal** missed their target.

- Formation of the **Berlin Committee in Germany** (1914) by **Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Dr. Avinash Chandra Bhattacharya** and other prominent activists who formed the Anushilan and Yugantar groups in India.
- 'Bagha Jatin'. **Jatin Mukherji** carried out the **Plan of Bengal** in 1915. This aimed at disrupting the rail and communication network in Bengal and seizing Fort William. The plan failed because of the lack of coordination and the death of 'Bagha Jatin' in 1915.
- Formation of **Indian Independence Committee** in 1915 under the **Zimmerman Plan** organised by the German official at Berlin. The committee included **Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Lala Har Dayal** and **Bhupendranath Dutta**.
- Appointment of the **Provisional Government of Free India** with **Raja Mahendra Pratap** as the president and **Barkatullah** as the prime minister, with support from Germany, Afghanistan and the Sultan of Turkey. However, the Czar of Russia did not approve of the government because of the defeat of Germany in the World War.
- In 1915, revolutionaries looted a train which carried government cash at a place called **Kakori** (between Lucknow and Shahjahanpur). The involved activists were arrested and sentenced to death by the British. Among them were **Bhupendra Sanyal, S.N. Biswas, Ashfaqullah Khan and Thakur Singh**.
- **Chandrashekar Azad** joined hands with **Bhagat Singh** and formed the **Hindustan Socialist Republican**

- Party** in 1928. It had two faces-the public face headed by Bhagat Singh, and a secret face, called Hindustan Socialist Republic Army, headed by Azad. It was the first organisation which envisioned free India to be secular. Its activists took note of the changing political structure of the nation.
- **Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru** avenged the death of **Lala Lajpat Rai** by killing **General Saunders** in 1928.
 - Bombing of the central Legislative Assembly by **Bhagat Singh** and his associates in 1929.
 - Attempted bombing of the train in which **Lord Irwin** and his family was travelling in 1929 at Delhi.
 - Issuing of an independence proclamation in the name of **Indian Republic Army** under the leadership of **Surya Sen** in 1930, when revolutionaries captured the **Chittagong Armoury**. **Surya Sen** was arrested in 1933, and executed.
 - Execution of **Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev** on 23 March 1931, and the death of **Chandrashekar Azad** in a shooting episode in Allahabad 1931.
 - Assassination of the **magistrate of Tippera** in Bengal, by the school going **Shanti and Suniti** in 1932.
 - Formation of the **Indian Independence League** by **Ras Bihari Bose** in 1942, in Japan.
 - Formation of the **All India Central Revolutionary committee** in Russia by **M. N. Roy** and other activists.
 - **Other Prominent Revolutionaries who Operated outside India**-P.M. Bapat; **Madam Bhikaji Cama**, a parsee

lady who was connected with the Paris Indian Society established by S.R. Rana under the inspiration of **Shyamji Krishna Verma**, who unfurled the first tricolour flag at the International Socialist Congress (Germany), designed by Hem Chand Das in 1907: Sardar Sohan Singh, M.P.T.Archarya: Gyan Chand Verma; Obeidullah sindhi, the translator of V.D. Savarkar's book, Indian war of Independence in Tamil; V.V.S.Iyer and Harish Chandra.

★ Rise of Bhagat Singh

Bhagat Singh's group gained enormous popularity, not only in Punjab but throughout North India. It is no coincidence that, in the 1929 Congress, held in Lahore-the centre of Bhagat Singh's activities-Jawaharlal Nehru described himself as 'a socialist and a republican'; words that echoed exactly the same of Bhagat Singh's organisation, HSRA was responsible for a number of other major 'terrorist' actions, including an attempt to blow up Viceroy Irwin's train near Delhi in 1929, and a whole series of similar actions in Punjab and UP towns in 1930 [26 being recorded in Punjab that year alone]. However, their single most important action was the throwing of bombs into the Legislative Assembly by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt on 8 April 1929. The bombs themselves were not intended to injure anyone (as indeed they did not), they were for demonstrative effect.

REASONS FOR FAILURE

The revolutionaries organised rebellions against the British government and became stronger and more determined once they started getting support from foreign nations hostile to the British. Despite gaining popularity and a dedicated following, both the terrorist and the revolutionary movements could not achieve their objectives of freeing India from the British. This was because (i) there was no central, all-India level organization which could control the activities in an organised manner; (ii) these movements appealed to the youngsters who had faced the hostilities of the British rule, but the mass following in the rural belt was unavailable; (iii) Germany, which promised arms and funds to be used against Britain could not deliver; (iv) the US entry and its subsequent dominance in the world war demoralised Germany and the allies to be of help to the Indian cause; (v) Montagu's package of self-governance for the Indians took the fizz out of the revolutionary activists; (vi) the congress party and other upper middle class politicians and leaders always disapproved of the ways of these movements; and (vii) Gandhi's entry into the political scene of India marked a revolution in the form of satyagraha, which contributed to the decline of the revolutionary and terrorist activities.

★ The Moderate Approach

The early nationalists that if their demands were presented to the government through constitutional methods, their grievances would be redressed. so, instead of resorting to aggressive methods, they passed resolutions or sent petitions of appeals. Delegations were sometimes sent to England to put forward their demands to the British Parliament. They worked

within the framework of law.

TABLE 4.6 Revolutionary Organisations

Organisation	Founder(s)	Year	Place
Mitra Mela	V.D.Savarkar	1899	Maharashtra
Abhinav Bharat	G.D.Savarkar	1904	Bengal
Bharat Mata Society	J.M.Chatterjee	1904	Bengal
Anushillan Samiti	Pulin Bihari Das	1906	Dhaka
Anushillan Samiti	Pramatha Nath Mishra, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Jatindra Nath Banerjee	1902	Kolkata
Ghadar Party (Hindu Association of America)	Lala Hardyal, Sohan Singh Bhakha	1913	San Francisco
Hinduistan Republic Association	Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Yogesh Chandra Chatterjee	1924	
Indian Republican Army	Surya Sen	-	Bengal
Hinduistan Republic Association	Chandra Shekar, Bhagat Singh	1928	Delhi
Indian Independence League	Ras Bihari Bose	1942	Japan

Bharat Mata Association	Nilkant Brahmachari, Vanchi Ayyer	-	Chennai
Atomonnati Smiti	Bipin Bihari Gangly		Bengal

★ **Mass Rejection of Prayer-Petition**

Politics

After Curzon's proposal for the partition, Bengal became known {December 1903}. Congress carried out protests and petitions were carried out for more than 1 ½ years, with absolutely no effect on the British. On 19 July 1905, Curzon went ahead with his partition plan. Within days, spontaneous protests were organised in a large number of mofussil areas, where the pledge for the boycott of British goods was taken. In Kolkata, the students organised meetings where the Swadeshi call was taken up. By August, even the Congress leaders such as Surendranath Banerjee were forced to take up the boycott call. On 7 August 1905, in a public meeting at the Kolkata Town Hall, the boycott resolution was passed. The response in Bengal was overwhelming. By September 1905, the sale of British clothes in some districts fell to 6 per cent from the original levels of 20 per cent. Public burning of foreign clothes and the setting up of village samitis took place spontaneously. One of these samitis, the **Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of Barisal**, headed by **Aswini Kumar Dutt**, attained remarkable popularity for its social and humanitarian work among the Muslim peasantry.

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