

*Rajnikant Puranik*

# Revealing Facts

about

# India's, Freedom Struggle

**Notable Personalities &  
Interesting Timelines**



**Revealing Facts  
about  
India'S Freedom Struggle  
Notable Personalities &  
Interesting Timelines  
(Comprehensive & Concise)**

by  
**Rajnikant Puranik**

*Categories:* Non-fiction, History

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## Preface

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This book attempts to present a comprehensive view of all the main political parties, groups, and personalities associated with the Indian Freedom Movement right since the late nineteenth century. It also traces all the relevant timelines.

The chapter ‘Notable Personalities’ presents a brief sketch of all those who contributed to the Indian Freedom Movement grouped into various categories like Revolutionary Groups, Revolutionaries, Gandhians, and Non-Gandhians.

Particular of the prominent Muslim leaders, Britishers, and Governor Generals are also included.

The chapter ‘Relevant International Timelines’ includes prominent international timelines relevant from the Indian angle.

The mega chapter ‘Interesting Indian Timelines’ chronologically covers all timelines, events, and developments relevant to the Freedom Movement right since 1600 CE.

The last chapter ‘What Really Led to Freedom & Partition’ summarises the REAL reasons behind the Freedom, Partition, and Pakistan.

Ambitious coverage of this book would have required over a thousand pages to do full justice to the topics. However, this project (book) is restricted to presenting a comprehensive yet compressed view of the relevant factors, events and personalities. It is a summarised work deliberately limited to as few pages as possible.

—Rajnikant Puranik

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*To the fond memory of my late parents*  
Shrimati Shakuntala and  
Shri Laxminarayan Puranik

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*Thanks to*  
Devbala Puranik, Manasi and Manini

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## Notable Personalities

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DoB, DoD of Notable Personalities

(in chronological order of date of birth)

<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Date of Death</i>	<i>Name</i>
22 May 1772	27 Sep 1833	Raja Rammohan Roy
17 Oct 1817	27 Mar 1898	Syed Ahmad Khan
12 Feb 1824	30 Oct 1883	Swami Dayanand Saraswati
4 Sep 1825	30 Jun 1917	Dadabhai Naoroji
27 Jun 1838	8 Apr 1894	Bankim Chandra Chatterjee
4 Nov 1845	17 Feb 1883	Vasudev Balwant Phadke
22 Feb 1856	23 Dec 1926	Swami Shraddhanand
23 Jul 1856	1 Aug 1920	Bal Gangadhar Tilak
4 Oct 1857	30 Mar 1930	Shyamji Krishna Varma
7 Nov 1858	20 May 1932	Bipin Chandra Pal
6 May 1861	6 Feb 1931	Motilal Nehru
7 May 1861	7 Aug 1941	Rabindranath Tagore
24 Sep 1861	13 Aug 1936	Bhikaji Rustom Cama
12 Jan 1863	4 Jul 1902	Swami Vivekananda
1864	1950	Baba Ram Chandra
28 Jan 1865	17 Nov 1928	Lala Lajpat Rai
9 May 1866	19 Feb 1915	Gopal Krishna Gokhale
2 Oct 1869	30 Jan 1948	Mohandas Gandhi
5 Nov 1870	16 Jun 1925	Chittaranjan Das
1870	1898	Damodar Hari Chapekar
1873	1899	Balkrishna Hari Chapekar
1879	1899	Vasudeo Hari Chapekar
15 Aug 1872	5 Dec 1950	Sri Aurobindo
1873	22 Oct 1933	Vithalbhai Patel
31 Oct 1875	15 Dec 1950	Sardar Patel

<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Date of Death</i>	<i>Name</i>
15 Nov 1875	9 Jun 1900	Birsa Munda
4 Nov 1876	8 Dec 1947	Bhai Parmanand
25 Dec 1876	11 Sep 1948	Muhammad Ali Jinnah
24 Jan 1877	17 Aug 1949	Pulin Behari Das
2 Nov 1877	11 Jul 1957	Aga Khan III
9 Nov 1877	21 Apr 1938	Muhammad Iqbal
1877	1936	Fazli Husain
10 Dec 1878	25 Dec 1972	C Rajgopalachari (Rajaji)
10 Dec 1878	4 Jan 1931	Muhammad Ali
7 Dec 1879	10 Sep 1915	Bagha Jatin
8 Feb 1883	17 Aug 1909	Madan Lal Dhingra
28 May 1883	26 Feb 1966	Vinayak Damodar Savarkar
7 Nov 1883	22 Jan 1967	Pandurang Khankhoje
15 Jun 1884	22 Dec 1958	Tarakanth Das
14 Oct 1884	4 Mar 1939	Lala Har Dayal
3 Dec 1884	28 Feb 1963	Dr Rajendra Prasad
25 May 1886	21 Jan 1945	Rash Behari Bose
11 Nov 1888	22 Feb 1958	Abul Kalam Azad
14 Nov 1889	27 May 1964	Jawaharlal Nehru
3 Dec 1889	11 Aug 1908	Khudiram Bose
6 Jun 1890	5 Aug 1950	Gopinath Bordoloi
1891	19 Apr 1910	Anant Laxman Kanhere
14 Apr 1891	6 Dec 1956	Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar
15 Dec 1891	1 Oct 1979	Chander Singh Garhwali
5 Jun 1892	25 Dec 1942	Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan
1893	7 Feb 1942	Sachindra Nath Sanyal
6 Feb 1893	1 Sep 1985	Zafrullah Khan

<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>Date of Death</i>	<i>Name</i>
30 Sep 1893	31 Dec 1965	VP Menon
22 Mar 1894	12 Jan 1934	Surya Sen
23 Jan 1897	?	Subhas Chandra Bose
11 Jun 1897	19 Dec 1927	Ram Prasad Bismil
26 Dec 1899	31 Jul 1940	Udham Singh
6 Jul 1901	23 Jun 1953	Shyama Prasad Mukherjee
4 Jul 1904	28 May 1930	Bhagawati Charan Vohra
27 Oct 1904	13 Sep 1929	Jatin Das
15 May 1907	23 Mar 1931	Sukhdev Thapar
28 Sep 1907	23 Mar 1931	Bhagat Singh
24 Aug 1908	23 Mar 1931	Shivram Rajguru
18 Nov 1910	20 Jul 1965	Batukeshwar Dutt

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## Political Parties & Groups

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### Indian National Congress (INC)

The Indian National Congress (INC) was founded by members of the Theosophical Society on 28 December 1885. Scotsman Allan Octavian Hume, a retired ICS officer and a notable ornithologist, was instrumental in its formation—in fact, an Indian would not have been permitted to form such an organisation.

Its first session was held between 28-31 December 1885 at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay, and was attended by 72 delegates representing various provinces, and comprising, inter alia, 54 Hindus and 2 Muslims. Woomesh Chandra Banerjee presided over it. Hume was elected as the first general secretary.

*‘Safety Valve Theory’*: The purpose behind the formation of the Congress was to provide a safety valve to the Indian nationalists to vent their grievances and frustration, and avoid another situation like the First Indian War of Independence of 1857. *In other words, the Congress was meant to prolong, and not curtail, the British rule.* Creation of INC was actually a part of the British government policy, secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy, for safeguarding the British Raj from the rising anti-British forces and from popular unrest.

Of the first 25 sessions of the Congress, 5 were presided by Europeans. As late as 1914, 1915 and 1916 the Congress sessions were briefly attended respectively by Madras Governor Lord Pentland, Bombay Governor Lord Willingdon, and United Provinces Governor Sir James Meston.

It was only later that the initial patronage of the Congress by the British turned into hostility and suspicion.

Owing to the dominance of Hindus in it, many Muslim community leaders like Syed Ahmed Khan viewed the Congress negatively.

### All India Muslim League (AIML)

All India Muslim League (AIML) was founded at a conference of 3000 delegates in Dhaka in December 1906. It was fuelled by the Bengal partition of 1905. AIML was a product of the divide-and-rule policy of the British.

The name 'All-India Muslim League' was proposed by its co-founder Sir Aga Khan III. Political formations to counter the growing nationalism and the Congress were being actively encouraged by the British Raj. Aga Khan had pleaded with the British Raj to consider Muslims as a separate nation.

The formation of the Muslim League in 1906 and the putting forth of its demands to the Raj like "separate and privileged representation in any electoral system that might be set up" were actually encouraged, facilitated, and stage-managed by Viceroy Lord Minto and the British officials. Upon success of their efforts in ensuring that the Muslim League was formed, a British official sent this effusive message to Viceroy Minto: "*I must send your excellency a line to say that a very, very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship [on the part of the British Raj] that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than pulling back of 62 million of people (Muslims) from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition (Congress).*"

Expressing his loyalty to the British, the AIML's first President Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk Mustaq Hussain had stated at its opening session: "...the political rights of a subject race thrive best in the soil of loyalty, and consequently the Mussalmans should prove themselves loyal to their Government before they can ask for any of their rights..."

AIML was almost moribund during the 1920s and early 1930s. It was revived by Jinnah in 1934. Only after AIML's (Jinnah's) overtures were rebuffed by the Congress (Nehru, in particular) following the 1936-37 elections (please see detailed elsewhere in this book) that the AIML adopted a vigorous and militant anti-Congress line that culminated in its Lahore Resolution of 26 March 1940 indirectly hinting about Pakistan.

Pakistan became a reality not so much by the efforts of Jinnah or the Muslim League (Even the crease of the suites of Jinnah and other Muslim League leaders never got crumpled in any agitation.) as by the machinations of the British, particularly Churchill and other like-minded politicians, as it was in the vested interests of the British and the West to have Pakistan to protect their oil-interests in the Middle-East, and to have a useful ally in their cold-war.

Triggered by the formation of the AIML (pl. see above) in 1906, and the subsequent Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 that granted Muslims a separate electorate, Arya Samaj leaders led by Lala Lajpat Rai founded the Punjab Hindu Sabha in 1909. Its first session in Lahore in October 1909 was presided by Madan Mohan Malaviya. While criticizing the Indian National Congress (INC) for failing to defend Hindu interests, it declared its aim as safeguarding the interests of the entire Hindu community, and for Hindu reforms. Gradually, more such Hindu Sabhas were established—in United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal, Central Provinces, and Bombay Presidency.

Gradually an all-India umbrella organisation was formed by 1915. Gandhi and Swami Shradhanand attended the Sarvadeshak (All India) Hindu Sabha held at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar in April 1915. Among the Hindu Mahasabha's prominent leaders were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (who also founded the Benaras Hindu University), Lala Lajpat Rai, BS Moonje, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, etc. Hedgewar left the Mahasabha to found the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925.

After the resignation of the Congress ministries in 1939 (pl. see details under 'Timelines' in this book), the Hindu Mahasabha formed ministries in coalition with several Muslim parties in Sindh, NWFP and Bengal. The Hindu Mahasabha, then under the presidentship of VD Savarkar, openly opposed the call for the Quit India Movement and boycotted it (for details, please see 'Savarkar' under 'Notable Personalities'). Nathuram Godse and his fellow conspirators involved in the murder of Gandhi were members of the Hindu Mahasabha—they were particularly offended by Gandhi's fast for forcing India to give away 55 crore rupees to Pakistan at a time when Pakistan was waging war against India in J&K. The Hindu Mahasabha got marginalised after the murder of Gandhi. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee left it to form the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the forerunner to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Hindu Mahasabha regarded India as a Hindu Rashtra, the term Hindu including all religions that sprouted in undivided India, like Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It promoted Hindutva. VD Savarkar advocated abolishing the entire caste system. .

The Swaraj Party was formed on 9 January 1923 by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Vithalbai Patel, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Subhas Chandra Bose, Satyamurti, Srinivasa Iyengar and others who were unhappy with Gandhi's withdrawal of the 'Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement' (KNCM) on 12 February 1922 on the unconvincing excuse of the Chauri-Chaura incident, and for the stand of the Gandhi-faction against the "council entry".

As a logical next step to the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms 1918 and the GoI Act 1919, elections were to be held in 1923. Gandhi had, however, called for boycott of legislatures, courts, schools, and foreign-made cloth under the KNCM. Although Gandhi had himself suspended the KNCM, he and his faction in the Congress still insisted on boycott of the legislatures. CR Das and the Swarajists differed from Gandhi on this. CR Das, in his presidential address at the Gaya Congress of the INC in December 1922, proposed that the Congress should accept the Council entry programme and carry the political struggle into the Legislatures. A sensible suggestion, but it was rejected by a motion of "No Council Entry" by Gandhi's faction. Das submitted his resignation.

Many in the Congress, including Gandhi, had rejected the government's proposal for participation of Indians in the provincial and central legislative councils, as the same, on account of its unelected members allied to the British, were considered too un-democratic, and were simply rubber stamps of the Viceroy. However, the Swarajists were practical, realistic, and pragmatic, and felt that whatever little could be achieved through the councils-entry must be attempted.

Notably, Gandhi's opposition to the Swarajists was a reversal of his earlier stand—he had written in 'Young India' of 31 December 1919: "The Reforms Act [GoI Act 1919] coupled with the Proclamation is an earnest intention of the British people to do justice to India and it ought to remove suspicion on that score... Our duty therefore is not to subject the Reforms to carping criticism, but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success." Gandhi, not seldom, changed or reversed his stand, either without offering any explanations, or by offering some convoluted rationale.

It is significant that over a decade later, following the GoI Act 1935, Gandhi had agreed to participate in elections to enter legislatures. In a way,

Gandhi and the Gandhian faction did in 1936-37 what the Swarajists had proposed and done over a decade ago. Gandhi thus delayed a move towards self-government by more than 13 years.

So as to avoid a split in the Congress, like it had happened with Naram Dal vs. Garam Dal in 1907, the Swarajists remained within the Congress, but acted in a way they thought fit. Swarajists fought the elections, and gained a considerable following. Out of the Swarajists elected to the councils, Vithalbhai Patel became the president of the Central Legislative Assembly.

The Party became weak upon the death of Chittaranjan Das in 1925, and Motilal Nehru's return to the Congress in 1926, following Gandhi's efforts to bring back the Swarajists.

### The Unionist Party

The Unionist Party represented the interests of Punjab's feudal classes, landlords, and landed gentry, and was pro-British. It was secular in the sense that it represented the interests of the upper feudal classes of all three major religions of Punjab: Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh. Sir Fazli Husain, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Chaudhry Sir Shahab-ud-Din, and Sir Chhotu Ram were its co-founders. The Unionists dominated the Punjab Provincial Legislature all through: from 1920s till the Partition. Its leaders served as Prime Ministers of Punjab.

Unionist leader Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was Punjab's Premier from 1937 to 1942, in alliance with the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal—despite opposition by the Jinnah's Muslim League.

Sir Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana took over from Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan after the latter's death in 1942. Although Jinnah's Muslim League pressured him to add 'Muslim' to the party's name, he refused, not wanting to alienate his Hindu and Sikh supporters. However, in the run up to the partition the Unionists integrated with the Muslim League.

If the Congress leadership had worked with the local Muslim leadership in Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and Bengal, and reassured them of their position, they could have beaten Jinnah, and avoided Partition and Pakistan. The Unionist Party of Sikandar Hyat Khan and Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana that ruled Punjab was a Muslim-Hindu-Sikh coalition. The Krishak Proja Party headed by Fazlul Huq, a nationalist Muslim, dominated

Bengal. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah had formed a Hindu-Muslim coalition in Sind, independent of the Muslim League. NWFP was controlled by the Khan brothers, who were close to the Congress. If the Congress had intelligently coordinated its efforts with these parties, it could have sidelined Jinnah and his Muslim League. But, Gandhi and the Congress leadership lacked that tact, vision, and strategic thinking.

That the provincial Muslim leadership thought differently from Jinnah and the Muslim League would be obvious from the following illustrative example:

The Chief Minister of Punjab Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana of the Unionist Party, who had arrested many Muslim Leaguers for riots and for spreading communal virus in 1946, suggesting to Bhim Sen Sachar, his Finance Minister and leader of the Congress Legislative Party, that Hindus and Sikhs must start a counter-agitation to teach the Muslim Leaguers a lesson, so that the government has enough grounds and gets an opportunity for coming down heavily on the Muslim League goons. Expectedly, Bhim Sen Sachar, wedded to the Gandhian non-violence, expressed his inability in the matter.

Pendrel Moon was told by Sikandar Hyat Khan of the Unionist Party as long back as in 1937 that “Pakistan would mean a massacre.”

Please read Fazli’s opinion in the matter under ‘Fazli Hussain’ (‘Notable Personalities’) below .

## Revolutionary Groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Founder/s</i>
1899	Mitra Mela	VD Savarkar
1902	Anushilan Samiti	BK Ghosh, PN Mitra, PB Das, etc.
1903	Abhinav Bharat	VD Savarkar
1905	India House	Shyamji Krishna Varma
1913	Ghadar Party	Lala Hardayal, SohanSingh, <b>Rash Behari Bose</b> , and others.
1924	Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) (evolved into HSRA)	SN Sanyal, NM Sen, Pratul Ganguly, CS Azad, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Bismil, Roshan Singh, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri, etc.
1930	Indian Republican Army (IRA)	Surya Sen
1942	Indian Independence League (IIL)	Rash Behari Bose
1943	Indian National Army (IRA)	Rash Behari Bose, Netaji Subhas Bose

### Abhinav Bharat Society

VD Savarkar, while still a student of the Fergusson College at Pune, founded at Nasik a society called the ‘Mitra Mela’. It transformed into the Abhinav Bharat Society (Young India Society), a secret society, founded jointly by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and his brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar in 1903. As its members it had several hundred revolutionaries and political activists with branches across India. Its operations spread to London, when Savarkar went there for higher studies. 27 members of the Society were convicted in the Nasik Conspiracy Case 1909 (please see details under “Interesting Timelines” in this book). Ganesh Savarkar, elder brother of VD Savarkar, was sentenced to Andaman Cellular Jail (Kaalapani).

### Anushilan Samiti

Anushilan Samiti, an organisation that existed in Bengal during the first three decades of the twentieth century, propounded revolutionary violence for ending the British Raj in India. Its two arms were the Dhaka Anushilan Samiti centred in Dhaka, and the Jugantar Group centred at Calcutta. The Samiti was inspired by the thoughts, speeches, and writings of Swami

Vivekananda, and influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Anandmath'.

It was established on 24 March 1902 in Calcutta headed by Barindra Kumar Ghosh, younger brother of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. A number of nationalists were associated with it at various times, notably Pramathanath Mitra, Aurobindo Ghosh (Sri Aurobindo), Bhupendra Natha Datta (brother of Swami Vivekananda), Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, Surendranath Tagore, Pulin Bihari Das, Sarala Devi, Rash Behari Bose, Jatindranath Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin), Sachindranath Sanyal, Jatin Das, and Bipin Chandra Pal.

In 1905, the Samiti published 'Bhavani Mandir' (Temple of Goddess Bhavani) that incorporated a detailed plan of establishing a religious sanctuary in a secluded spot as the centre of revolutionary activities. Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal began a Bengali nationalist weekly 'Jugantar' (New Era) and its English counterpart 'Bande Mataram' in March 1906 that openly preached armed rebellion to create the necessary revolutionary mentality among Indians. It exhorted its readers to win over the Indian soldiers to the revolutionary societies and secure arms from foreign powers. In 1907 they published 'Vartaman Rananiti' advocating military training, and laid down strategies and tactics of guerrilla warfare.

Emotional appeals were made to the members through Hindu spirituality and religion. Books of Swami Vivekananda became an inspiration. The Gita was used for administering the vows to members. The expansion of the Samiti was promoted through formation of 'akhadas' (gymnasiums) across Bengal.

Alarmed by the revolutionary activities of the Samiti, the British took a series of measures to crush it. The Special Branch of the Calcutta Police was constituted to deal with them. Their activities, and that of the Ghadar Party, led to the passage of the Defence of India Act 1915. After WW-I, the draconian Rowlatt Acts were passed to deal with them.

### Ghadar Party

Ghadar means "revolt" or rebellion". For securing Indian independence the Ghadar Party was founded in 1913 in the US and Canada by a total of 32 patriots: Lala Har Dayal, Sohan Singh, Kartar Singh, PS Khankhoje, Tarak Nath Das, Bhai Parmanand, Rash Behari Bose, and others. It had

many members, and many were inspired by it, including Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Udham Singh, etc. Many of its members were students at the University of California at Berkeley. Lala Har Dayal was then a professor at the university. The party had active members in other countries including Africa, China, Indo-China, Japan, Malaya, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The party had a weekly newspaper “The Ghadar” whose first issue was published from San Francisco on 1 November 1913. The paper carried a caption on its masthead: “Angrezi Raj Ka Dushman” (an enemy of the British rule). It called for: “Wanted brave soldiers to stir up rebellion in India.” Its slogan was: “Pay—death; Price—martyrdom; Pension—liberty; Field of battle—India.”

Please check further details under “Interesting Timelines/ 1915: Ghadar Mutiny”.

#### Hindustan Republican Association (HRA/HSRA)

Hindustan Republican Association/Army (HRA), on the lines of Irish Republican Army (IRA) was formed in the wake of utter disappointment and dissatisfaction at Gandhi’s unilateral withdrawal of the ‘Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement’ (KNCM) on a flimsy pretext. Many revolutionaries had enthusiastically participated in Gandhi’s KNCM of 1920-22. However, its sudden withdrawal by Gandhi on the untenable excuse of the Chauri Chaura incident disillusioned all, including the revolutionaries. Enthused by the Russian Revolution of 1917, and bloody coups and rebellions elsewhere that demonstrated the power and encouraging results of armed insurrection and violence, those earlier associated with or appreciative of the earlier works of the Abhinav Bharat, Anushilan Samiti and the Ghadar Party decided to establish Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) in 1924 at village Bholachang in East Bengal, whose objective was to establish a “Federated Republic of the United States of India” through an organized armed revolution.

HRA was founded by Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Narendra Mohan Sen, Pratul Ganguly, and others. The idea soon attracted many young revolutionaries, and they joined HRA, notably Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukhdev, Ram Prasad Bismil, Roshan Singh, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri, and many others. HRA was later renamed HSRA

(Hindustan Socialist Republican Army/Association) in 1928. Sachindranath Sanyal's book "Bandi Jiwan" served as a textbook for the revolutionaries.

They carried out the Kakori Train Robbery of 9 August 1925. They assassinated Saunders in Lahore in 1928 in retaliation of the deadly lathi-charge on Lala Lajpat Rai. In 1929 they threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly. Again in 1929 the HSRA bombed the special train of Viceroy Lord Irwin (but, he escaped unhurt). They carried out bombings across Punjab in 1930.

The various members of HRA/HSRA were Sachindra Nath Sanyal (Kakori case—sentenced to life in Andaman Cellular Jail), Chandrashekhar Azad (Kakori & Saunders—shot himself in a shoot-out with police in 1931), Ram Prasad Bismil (Mainpuri conspiracy 1918 and Kakori—hanged in 1927), Ashfaqulla Khan (Kakori—hanged in 1927), Rajendra Nath Lahiri (Kakori—hanged in 1927), Thakur Roshan Singh (Kakori—hanged in 1927), Shachindra Nath Bakshi (Kakori conspiracy—sentenced to life—released in 1937—joined Congress, but left to join Jan Sangh, after independence), Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya (Kakori—sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment), Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee (Kakori conspiracy—sentenced to life—became an MP post-independence), Pranvesh Chatterjee (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 4 years), Vishnu Sharan Dubish (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years—became MP), Manmath Nath Gupta (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 14 years—became a journalist and a writer—died in 2000), Govind Charan Kar (Kakori—sentenced to life), Prem Krishna Khanna (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 5 years—became an MP), Ram Krishna Khatri (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years), Banwari Lal (was an approver in the Kakori case; yet sentenced to 2 years), Mukundi Lal (Mainpuri case 1918 and Kakori conspiracy—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years in Mainpuri, and for life in Kakori—died in 1972), Ram Nath Pandey (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 3 years), Bhupendra Nath Sanyal (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 5 years), Raj Kumar Sinha (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years), Ram Dulare Trivedi (Kakori—sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 4 years).



India House was established by Shyamji Krishna Varma in London in 1905 to provide accommodation to Indian students. It was a large Victorian Mansion inaugurated on 1 July 1905. It provided accommodation for up to thirty students. Varma also offered scholarship to Indian students on the condition that they would not accept any paid or honorary office of the British Raj upon return to India. India House soon became a hub for Indian nationalist activities.

India House also served as the headquarters for several organisations, including the Indian Home Rule Society (IHRS) formed in February 1905 by Shyamji Krishna Varma along with Bhikaji Cama, SR Rana, Lala Lajpat Rai and others. The Paris Indian Society was launched in 1905 as a branch of the IHRS by Bhikaji Cama and others. Prominent nationalists associated with the India House were Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Bhikaji Cama, Lala Har Dayal, VVS Aiyar, MPT Acharya, VN Chatterjee, PM Bapat, and Madan Lal Dhingra (who assassinated Wyllie in 1909).

Following in the foot-steps of Shyamji Krishna Varma organisations similar to India House sprouted in the US and Japan, thanks to the efforts of the Indian students and academics there. An 'India House' was founded in Manhattan in New York in January 1908. After Shyamji Krishna Varma left London, the India House found a new leader in Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who had come as a student to London in 1906 on scholarship from Krishna Varma. In London, Savarkar founded the Free India Society (FIS), and a branch of his Abhinav Bharat Society (ABS). The principal objectives of ABS were propaganda in Europe and North America in favour of nationalist revolution, raising of funds, and arranging of logistics.

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## Revolutionaries

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(in alphabetical order)

### Anant Laxman Kanhere

*Born:* 1891 in Khed, district Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

*Martyred:* 19 April 1910 (Aged 18), Thane (Hanged).



Kanhere was educated at Nizamabad and Aurangabad. While still a teen, he wrote a novel 'Mitra Prem'. He came into contact with the members of the revolutionary organization Abhinav Bharat Society of the Savarkar Brothers, and became an active member.

He shot dead the District Magistrate of Nasik AMT Jackson on 21 December 1909, for which he was hanged. His body was not handed over to his relatives, but was burnt by the prison officials. His ashes were thrown into sea. For details on Kanhere and the case, please check "Interesting Timelines/ 1909: Nasik Conspiracy Case". A Marathi movie titled "1909" was made in 2014 on Anant Kanhere.

### Batukeshwar Dutt



*Born:* 18 Nov 1910 in Burdwan , Bengal.

*Died:* 20 July 1965 at AIIMS, New Delhi.

BK Dutt had exploded bombs, along with Bhagat Singh, in the Central Legislative Assembly in New Delhi on 8 April 1929. He was awarded life imprisonment, and was deported to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans (Kaalapani).

Dutt contracted tuberculosis either during his time in the Cellular Jail, or after his release. Despite that, he participated in Quit India, and was again jailed for four years in Motihari Jail in Champaran district of Bihar.

He died on 20 July 1965 after a long illness, and was cremated in Hussainiwala near Firozpur in Punjab where the bodies of his colleagues Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev were also cremated many years before. Independent India under the Nehru Dynasty accorded him and his family no help or recognition!

### Bhagat Singh

*Born:* 28 September 1907 at Khatkar Kalan, Punjab.

*Martyred:* 23 March 1931. Hanged at Lahore jail.



Bhagat Singh's nationalism, his sacrifices for the motherland, and his martyrdom at a young age of 23 made him a folk hero of the Indian independence movement. He actually became more popular than Gandhi.

Bhagat Singh's family was also politically active. His father and uncles were members of the Ghadar Party (please see details above). His grandfather Arjun Singh was a follower of Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Arya Samaj Movement, which also influenced Bhagat Singh. He studied at an Arya Samaji institution: the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School. Bhagat Singh regarded the co-founders of the Ghadar Party Kartar Singh Sarabha and Bhai Parmanand as his heroes.

When 12, he visited the Jallianwala Bagh hours after the massacre in 1919, and it left an indelible impression upon him. At 14, he was among the villagers who welcomed those protesting the killing of a large number of unarmed people at Gurudwara Nankana Sahib on 20 February 1921.

Like many other patriots, Bhagat Singh was thoroughly disillusioned with Gandhi after he called off the Non-Cooperation Movement on the very flimsy excuse of Chauri Chaura in 1922 (please see details elsewhere in this book). Bhagat Singh began advocating violence to overthrow the British

Raj. He became a prominent member of HRA and HSRA (please see details above).

Bhagat Singh, like VD Savarkar before him, was inspired by the Young Italy movement of Giuseppe Mazzini, and founded the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in March 1926. In 1927 he ran away from home to Kanpur to avoid an arranged marriage, leaving a letter behind, which, inter alia, read: “My life has been dedicated to the noblest cause, that of the freedom of the country. Therefore, there is no rest or worldly desire that can lure me now.”

The death of Lala Lajpat Rai in the brutal police lathi-charge was avenged by Shahid Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, Jai Gopal and Sukhdev by killing Assistant Superintendent of Police JP Saunders in Lahore on 17 December 1928. All the three managed to escape. Please see details on Lahore Conspiracy Case, Assembly Bombing, and the memorable hunger strike of the group under the “Interesting Indian Timelines”.

On 23 March 1931, Shahid Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were executed by the British. It is worth noting that despite requests to make saving of Shahid Bhagat Singh and others a condition in the on-going negotiations between Gandhi and Viceroy Irwin, the Gandhi–Irwin Pact signed on 5 March 1931 remained silent on the matter, and Gandhi, Nehru (he was President of the Congress then) and the Congress did effectively little to save the braves.

While in prison, Bhagat Singh and group had written to Viceroy Lord Irwin asking to be treated as prisoners of war, and in view of the same, to be executed by a firing squad, and not by hanging. Bhagat Singh's friend Prannath Mehta visited him in the jail on 20 March 1931 three days before his execution with a draft letter for clemency—but, Bhagat Singh declined to sign it.

### Bhagawati Charan Vohra



*Born:* 4 July 1904 in Lahore in a Gujarati family.  
*Died:* 28 May 1930 in Lahore while testing a bomb.

Vohra was associated with the revolutionary organisation Hindustan Republican Association. He was married to Durgawati Devi, popularly known as Bhabhi, who was also a revolutionary. Vohra graduated from the National College, Lahore, and joined the group of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev.

He was involved in the murder of ASP JP Saunders on 17 Dec 1928 to avenge beating Lala Lajpat Rai to death, and the throwing of bombs in Central Assembly Hall on 8 April 1929 by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt. The bomb blast under the Delhi-Agra train of Viceroy Lord Irwin was planned and executed by Vohra on 23 December 1929. Mahatma Gandhi condemned the latter act in his piece 'The Cult of Bomb', to which the articulate Vohra responded with an article 'The Philosophy of Bomb': "... Let nobody toy with nation's freedom which is her very life, by making psychological experiments in non-violence and such other novelties. Our slavery is our shame. When shall we have courage and wisdom enough to be able to shake ourselves free of it? What is our great heritage of civilisation and culture worth if we have not enough self-respect left in us to prevent from bowing to their flag and king? There is no crime that Britain has not committed in India. Deliberate misrule has reduced us to paupers, has bled us white. As a race and people we stand dishonoured and outraged. Do people still expect us to forget and to forgive? We shall have our revenge—a people's righteous revenge on the tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for compromise and peace. We ask not for mercy and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end—to Victory or Death."

Vohra died on 28 May 1930 while testing a bomb on the banks of river Ravi in Lahore.

### Bhai Parmanand

*Born:* 4 November 1876, Punjab.

*Died:* 8 December 1947, Delhi.



Parmanand was an Arya Samajist who toured many nations, including South Africa, Guyana, Caribbean islands, and the US; lectured

there on the Indian civilisation, and mobilised opinion for India's freedom. He co-founded the Ghadar Party. He was arrested in connection with the First Lahore Conspiracy Case, and was sentenced to death in 1915, which was later commuted, and he was jailed, with hard labour, in the Andamans (Kaalapani). In protest against cruel treatment of political prisoners, Parmanand went on a hunger strike for two months. He was released in 1920, under a general amnesty by the King-Emperor George V.

Following the 1905 partition of Bengal, he had demanded: “...the territory beyond Sindh should be united with North-West Frontier Province into a great Musulman Kingdom. The Hindus of the region should be expelled, while at the same time the Musulmans in the rest of the country should go and settle in this territory”.

His son Dr Bhai Mahavir (1922-2016) was a prominent member of the RSS, Jan Sangh, and BJP, and served two terms as a member of the Rajya Sabha. He was governor of MP during 1998-2003. He was MA, LLB, and Ph.D. in Economics, and had authored many books.

### Bhikaiji Rustom Cama

*Aka Madam Cama*

*Born: 24 Sep 1861 in Mumbai in a Parsi family.*

*Died: 13 August 1936 in Mumbai.*



Cama actively helped fight famine and bubonic plague that hit the Mumbai Presidency in 1896, resulting in she herself contracting plague —she was shifted to London to regain her health.

She came into contact with the revolutionary Shyamji Krishna Varma in London, and through him, she met Dadabhai Naoroji, and became his private secretary. Cama supported the founding of Varma's Indian Home Rule Society in London in February 1905. She was told she couldn't return to India unless she gave up her nationalist activities. She refused, and moved to Paris, where she co-founded Paris Indian Society. Cama wrote, published, and distributed revolutionary literature, and weeklies that included ‘Bande Mataram’, in response to the ban on the poem ‘Vande Mataram’; and Madan's Talwar (reference to the execution of the

revolutionary Madan Lal Dhingra), which were smuggled into India through the French colony of Pondicherry.

When Veer Savarkar had escaped from his ship docked in Marseille harbour in France, and reached the shore swimming, he had expected Madam Cama (who knew French) to rescue him; but unfortunately one of them reached late, and the French police caught him. The British Government seized Cama's inheritance when France refused Cama's extradition request. Cama reportedly declined Lenin's offer of residence in the Soviet Union. When France and Britain became allies in WW-I, Cama began facing difficult times in France. She suffered a stroke in 1935, and petitioned the British to allow her to return to her country. The British acquiesced to the request on the condition that she would renounce seditious activities. She arrived in Mumbai in November 1935, and expired nine months later.

Cama was a suffragette, and had spoken thus in Cairo in Egypt in 1910: “I see here the representatives of only half the population of Egypt. May I ask where is the other half? Sons of Egypt, where are the daughters of Egypt? Where are your mothers and sisters? Your wives and daughters?”

Bhikaiji Cama bequeathed most of her personal assets to the Avabai Petit Orphanage for girls. ICGS Bikhaiji Cama, an Indian Coast Guard fast patrol vessel, is named after her. Madam Cama Road in Nariman Point, Mumbai is also named after her.

### Birsa Munda

*Born:* 15 Nov 1875, Ulihatu, Khunti district, Jharkhand.

*Died:* 9 June 1900, Ranchi Jail, aged 25.



Belonging to the Munda tribe, Birsa Munda was a freedom fighter against the British, a folk hero, and also a religious leader. For the sake of education he was forced to convert to Christianity by the German Mission School. Later, he came into contact with a Vaishnav monk, and learnt in detail about Hinduism. He also studied the scriptures Mahabharata and Ramayana. He then turned against the missionaries, and persuaded his

people to reconvert to Hinduism. On account of his religious exhortations, he came to be called 'Birsa Bhagwan'. A version of Hindu faith that he propagated came to be known as 'Birsait'. Most members of Munda and Oraon tribes became 'Birsaities'. He initiated many reforms in his tribal society, including shunning of witch craft, giving up of alcohol, and so on.

Birsa started a movement called 'Ulgulan' ('The Great Tumult'), and created a guerrilla army to fight the British against exploitation, discrimination, and land-grabbing. For his spirited fight to save lands he came to be known as 'Dharti Abba' (father of the earth).

He was arrested on 3 March 1900 in a forest while he was sleeping along with his tribal guerrilla army. About 460 tribals were arrested. Birsa was kept in Ranchi jail where he reportedly died of cholera on 9 June 1900, though it was alleged he was poisoned by the British.

To have achieved so much in a short life of less than 25 years was a landmark. He is commemorated in the names of many institutions: Birsa Institute of Technology, Sindri; Birsa Munda Airport, Ranchi; Birsa Agricultural University; Birsa Munda Athletics Stadium; and so on. He is also commemorated in a large number of folk songs. President KR Narayanan had stated: "I am happy to associate myself with the unveiling of the statue of Shri Birsa Munda, a legendary figure in the history of our struggle for freedom. He is well known as an early advocate and exponent of tribal rights and as an indomitable fighter against foreign rule and oppression. One of the lesser-known aspects of our fight against British rule is that tribal uprisings constituted an important part of the defiance of the colonial regime. Birsa Munda is an outstanding representative of one such movement in late 19th century in Chotanagpur region, who initiated a unique phase of our freedom struggle..."

### Chapekar Brothers



Damodar Hari Chapekar: 1870-1898

Balkrishna Hari Chapekar: 1873-1899

Vasudeo Hari Chapekar: 1879-1899

Chapekars belonged to Chapa, then a hamlet near Chinchwad village in Pune, Maharashtra. They were Chitpavan Brahmins from Konkan, like Tilak, Gokhale, Karve, Ranade, Savarkar, Agarkar, and Vasudev Balwant Phadke. Their father Haripant was engaged in the priestly profession, singing kirtans, and narrating stories from scriptures.

They organized “Chapekar Club” for physical and military training, that also served as “the society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu Religion”. They took active part in Ganapati and Shivaji mahotsavs, and sang songs praising the daring of Shivaji, exhorting the audience to sacrifice for the national freedom. They were helped, inspired and encouraged by Tilak.

To deal with the bubonic plague that hit Pune in late 1896, and became a raging problem by February 1897, the British, under the command of the Plague Commissioner WC Rand—rather than dealing with the issue empathetically, intelligently, scientifically and properly—began to use insensitive, oppressive, insulting, highhanded and inhuman methods that included forced entry into private houses, pocketing valuables, ill-treatment of public, forced stripping and examination of occupants (including women, in public), removal and destruction of personal possessions, desecration of family worship places, and so on. Genuine complaints of the public were ignored contemptuously. Rather than dealing with the plague, the operation became more a campaign to harass, insult and humiliate Indians, and throw them out of their homes, burning their meagre and only possessions.

To avenge the oppression, the three Chapekar brothers, with two young accomplices, shot dead Rand and his military escort Lt Ayerst on 22 June 1897 in Pune when they were returning after celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the coronation of Queen Victoria. Later, they also eliminated two informants, and attempted to kill a corrupt, callous police officer, Rama Pandu. A reward of 20,000 rupees was announced by the British Government for the person giving information on the whereabouts of the assassins. The Anglo-Indian press, and particularly The Times of India, wrote insinuating articles alleging that Lokmanya Tilak’s speeches had incited the killers.

Damodar Hari, the eldest brother, was arrested in Mumbai, and was brought to Yerwada jail in Pune. Incidentally, at that time, Tilak was in the same jail, in another ward. Damodar met Tilak, who gave him a copy of

Bhagavad Gita. Damodar Hari was hanged on 18 April 1898, clutching a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. His last rites were arranged by Tilak.

Balkrishna Hari evaded arrest, and could be caught only in December 1898 from the jungles in Nizam's territory. Dravid brothers, who had been members of the Chapekar Club, had betrayed him for the lure of cash reward.

Vasudeo Hari, the youngest brother, along with two accomplices, Mahadev Vinayak Ranade and Khando Vishnu Sathe, then shot the Dravid brothers near their house in Sadashiv Peth in Pune on 8 February 1899. They also attempted to kill the corrupt police chief constable Rama Pandu on 9 February 1899. All were apprehended.

Vasudev Hari was hanged on 8 May 1899, Mahadeva Vinayak Ranade on 10 May 1899, and Balkrishna Hari on 12 May 1899. Tilak arranged the last rites of all the three. Remaining accomplice Sathe, a juvenile and just a schoolboy then, was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years.

The award winning Marathi film '22 June 1897', and the Hindi film 'Chapekar Brothers' (2016) depicts the life story of the patriots.

Wrote Lala Lajpat Rai, the lion of Punjab: "...Chapekar brothers were in fact the founders of the revolutionary movement in India."

### Jatin Das

*Martyred carrying out the longest hunger strike of 63 days.*

*Born: 27 October 1904, Kolkata.*

*Martyred: 13 September 1929, Lahore.*



Jatindra Nath Das (Jatin) joined the revolutionary group Anushilan Samiti at a young age. He also participated in Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement in 1921-23. While doing graduation at Vidyasagar College in Kolkata, Jatin was arrested in November 1925 for political activities, and was imprisoned at the Mymensingh Central Jail, where he went on a hunger strike to protest the ill-treatment to the political prisoners. He broke his fast after the Jail Superintendent apologised.

After release, he joined revolutionaries. Sachindra Nath Sanyal taught him bomb-making, and he did that job for Bhagat Singh and others. Jatin was martyred on 13 September 1929 in Lahore jail after a 63-day hunger strike. Please read details on “Jatin's Famous Fast & Martyrdom” under the chapter "Interesting Timelines".

### Jatindranath Mukherjee aka *Bagha Jatin*

*Born:* 7 December 1879 in Kushtia, Nadia, Bengal

*Martyred:* 10 September 1915 in Balasore.



Bagha Jatin was a committed revolutionary who was deeply influenced by Swami Vivekananda, and who found in Yogendra Vidyabhushan (a popular author of biographies of Mazzini and Garibaldi) his mentor. Since his early years, Jatin was widely known for his physical strength and courage. Jatin studied at the Calcutta Central College (now Khudiram Bose College).

*Why ‘Bagha Jatin’?* Upon learning of the dangerous presence of a Royal Bengal tiger in the jungle near his native village Koya in March 1906, Jatin, while reconnoitring for the animal in the jungle, suddenly came across it face to face. Jatin, rather than running away, fought with it bare handed. Though mortally wounded, he struck the tiger with a Khukuri (Gorkha dagger) he was carrying, and killed the beast. Seriously wounded and poisoned by tiger's nails, Jatin was treated by surgeon Lt-Colonel Suresh Prasad Sarbadhikari, and recovered. Dr Sarbadhikari published an article in the English press on Jatin’s exemplary heroism. Jatin was awarded a silver shield with the scene of him killing the tiger engraved on it by the Bengal government. After the incident, the title ‘Bagha’, that is ‘Tiger’, got associated with his name, and he came to be called ‘Bagha Jatin’.

Jatin was brave and courageous, and didn't flinch from taking positions, and fighting for a right cause. In 1907 Jatin went to Darjeeling on a special mission for 3 years. Jatin opened a branch of the Anushilan Samiti there, and named it the Bandhab Samiti. In April 1908, he had a run-in with three

English military officers at Siliguri railway station for their objectionable behaviour. He thrashed them all single-handedly. Knowing their position, they decided against slapping a case against him.

Jatin was the co-founder of the revolutionary organisation Anushilan Samiti. Along with Barindra Ghosh, Jatin had set up a bomb factory near Deoghar. He was the main leader of the Yugantar party (Jugantar Group) associated with the Anushilan Samiti that was the central association of revolutionaries in Bengal. In the Howrah-Sibpur conspiracy case, Jatin was arrested in 1910 along with 46 others, the major charge being “conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor” and “tampering with the loyalty of the Indian soldiers” (the plan to incite mutiny). The case, however, failed for want of sufficient evidence—that was thanks to the intelligent and secretive way Jatin operated.

Jatin and group had an encounter with the police in September 1915 in Odisha. After a gunfight lasting over an hour, Jatin was fatally injured, and died in Balasore hospital on 10 September 1915. Charles Tegart, the Intelligence Chief and Police Commissioner of Bengal, paid rich tribute to Jatin saying : "Though I had to do my duty, I have a great admiration for him. He died in an open fight." Tegart was reported to have remarked that if Jatin were an Englishman, then the English people would have built his statue next to Nelson's at Trafalgar Square; and described Bengali revolutionaries as “the most selfless political worker in India”. Earlier, Jatin had declared: “Amra morbo, jagat jagbe!”—“We shall die to awaken the nation!”

### Khudiram Bose

*Born:* 3 December 1889 in Midnapore, Bengal.

*Martyred:* 11 August 1908 at Kolkata (hanged).



When revolutionary Khudiram Bose was hanged he was only 18 years, 8 months and 8 days old! Khudiram belonged to Midnapore, and was inspired by Sri Aurobindo. At 16, Bose planted bombs near police

stations and targeted government officials. He was arrested later on charges of conducting a series of bomb attacks.

On his hanging, Amrit Bazar Patrika reported: “Khudiram's execution took place at 6 a.m. this morning. He walked to the gallows firmly and cheerfully and even smiled when the cap was drawn over his head.” Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote a poem to honour him.

Please check details under “30 April 1908: Khudiram Bose & Chaki throw Bombs” and “11 August 1908: Khudiram Bose Hanged” under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines”.

### Lala Har Dayal

*Born:* 14 October 1884 in Delhi.

*Died:* 4 March 1939 in Philadelphia, US.



At an early age Lala Har Dayal was influenced by Arya Samaj. He became a revolutionary, and was associated with Shyamji Krishna Varma, Veer Savarkar, and others.

He did his schooling at the Cambridge Mission School. He graduated in Sanskrit from St Stephen's College, Delhi, and did his Masters in Sanskrit from Punjab University. On an Oxford University scholarship for his higher studies in Sanskrit in 1905 he went to the UK. He was, however, put under police surveillance for his views and activities in the UK. Saying “To Hell with the ICS” he returned to India. But, in India too the police were after him for his articles in leading papers. Lala Lajpat Rai advised him to go abroad, and mobilise patriotic opinion there.

He moved to Paris in 1909 and became editor of the ‘Vande Mataram’ periodical there. At the instance of the Arya Samaj Missionary Bhai Parmanand, Har Dayal proceeded to the US in 1911 to propagate India’s ancient Aryan culture.

In 1913 he formed the Ghadar Party to organize a rebellion against the British. In March 1914 he was arrested in the US. Released on bail, he fled to Switzerland and then to Berlin, from where he tried to foment an anti-British uprising. After the German defeat in WW-I, Har Dayal settled in Stockholm as a professor of Indian philosophy. He moved to the US in the

late 1920s and became a professor of Sanskrit at the University of California, Berkeley. He lived for a decade in Sweden; and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in 1930 from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

He published his book “Hints For Self Culture” in 1932; and went on a lecture-tour in the US, Europe, and India. The other books written by him include “Our Educational Problem”, “Thoughts on Education”, “Social Conquest of Hindu Race”, “Forty Four Months in Germany and Turkey”, “Glimpses of World Religions”, and “Bodhisatva Doctrines”.

He died in Philadelphia on 4 March 1939.

### Madan Lal Dhingra

*Born:* 8 February 1883 at Amritsar, Punjab.

*Martyred:* 17 August 1909. Hanged in London.



Revolutionary Madan Lal Dhingra shot dead Curzon Wylie at London on the evening of 1 July 1909, when after attending the annual ‘At Home’ function hosted by the Indian National Association at the Imperial Institute, Wylie was leaving the hall with his wife. Wylie was Political Aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State of India, and was head of the Secret Police. Dhingra fired five shots, four of which hit their target. Dhingra attempted suicide, but failed. He was overpowered and arrested by the police.

Dhingra was then studying engineering in London. He was associated with the India House, and was mentored by VD Savarkar.

Dhingra’s father, who was the Chief Medical Officer in Amritsar, rather than feeling proud to be the father of a patriot, disowned him, and even published the fact of his disowning as an advertisement in a newspaper. In sharp contrast, Winston Churchill, despite being an unabashed imperialist, called Dhingra’s statement in the court as “the finest ever made in the name of patriotism.”

Gandhi, on the other hand, condemned Dhingra’s act! Under the garb of non-violence, Gandhi always condemned violence, however justified,

against the British enslavers and perpetrators of violence, as also against the Muslim jihadis, rapists and rioters—however, Gandhi generally soft-pedalled or rationalised violence by the colonisers and Muslim communalists.

Dhingra's action also inspired the Irish.

### Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje



*Born:* 7 November 1883 in Wardha, Maharashtra.

*Died:* 22 January 1967 at Nagpur, Maharashtra

PS Khankhoje was a scholar, an agricultural scientist, a historian, and a revolutionary. He was inspired by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Khankhoje and his friends in Japan established a secret Indian 'Kranti Sena' in 1907. They learnt use of weapons and explosives. Recalled Khankhoje of those times in Japan: "They [his Japanese and Chinese friends in Japan] jokingly used to say that if all Indians get together, they could overthrow the British by simply blowing them away! It soon dawned on us that there was a need to enlighten the Indian masses and prepare them for a real revolution. We needed to explain the concepts of brotherhood, equality and social justice as the very basis of a modern democracy. We needed to develop national pride. We needed...to involve people in all walks of life in India... I had learnt many things in Japan, including how to make soap! I bitterly felt I had become a jack of all trades. In my mind's eye I remembered the tribes I had met in Chattisgarh and my useless attempts at revolution. I was bitter and disillusioned at my failure. It seemed I could not help to bring independence to my country in the way I'd planned. I resolved then, to learn other ways to serve my nation..."

He founded the Indian Independence League in Portland, Oregon in 1908 along with Pandit Kanshi Ram. Later, he co-founded the 'Pacific Coast Hindustan Association'. He also co-founded the Ghadar Party in the US in 1913 along with Lala Har Dayal. During WW-I, he was intricately involved in the 'Hindu-German Conspiracy'. He took active part in Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia, Baluchistan in spreading Ghadarite propaganda

among the Indian troops hoping to incite mutiny. In the cause of Indian freedom, he visited the Soviet Union in the company of noted Indian communists Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, MPT Acharya, and MN Roy. He met Lenin at Moscow in 1921. Alarmed by his activities, the British tagged him as a “highly dangerous individual”, and banned his return to India.

Khankhoje had graduated from the Washington State University in 1913. He later moved to Mexico in the 1920s, where he became professor of Botany and Crop Breeding in the National School of Agriculture. He started several Free Schools of Agriculture for the Mexican farmers, successfully experimented with varieties of corn, and *pioneered Mexico's 'Green Revolution'*. The great Mexican artist Diego Rivera painted a mural in the Ministry of Education depicting Khankhoje distributing bread to the nations of the world.

He returned to India after 1947. “I Shall Never Ask Pardon” (Penguin India, 2008) is an interesting biography about him written by his daughter Savitri Sawhney.

### Pulin Behari Das

*Born:* 24 January 1877, Faridpur Sadar, Bangladesh.

*Died:* 17 August 1949, Kolkata.



Pulin was the founder-president of the Dhaka Anushilan Samiti. He loved fencing and lathi khela, and had opened an akhada (gymnasium). In September 1906, Bipin Chandra Pal and Pramatha Nath Mitra addressing a meeting, while on a tour of East Bengal in 1906, asked those who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the country to step forward. Pulin promptly did so. Mitra later asked him to organize the Dhaka chapter of the Anushilan Samiti. Pulin did so in October 1906, with 80 youngsters as members. Pulin was a gifted organizer, and the East Bengal Anushilan Samiti soon had over 500 branches.

Pulin also established the National School in Dhaka. Its main aim was to raise a revolutionary force. The students were initially trained in lathis, swords and daggers; and later taught to handle pistols and revolvers.

Pulin plotted elimination of the District Magistrate of Dhaka, Basil Allen, on 23 December 1907, but he managed to narrowly escape. Next day a Muslim gang of over 400 attacked him and his associates at his residence; but the brave Pulin managed to stave them off.

Pulin organized the sensational Barrah Dacoity in 1908 to fund buying of arms. He was later arrested along with several others, and jailed. Released from jail in 1910, he began to regroup his team. But, he was re-arrested for sedition in July 1910 along with 46 other revolutionaries—the case came to be known as the ‘Dhaka Conspiracy Case’. Pulin was handed a life-term and sent to the Andaman Cellular Jail (Kala Pani), where he had for company revolutionaries like Veer Savarkar, Hem Chandra Das, and Barindra Kumar Ghosh. Pulin was released in 1918 upon reduction of his term. He tried to re-organize. In 1920, he established ‘Bharat Sevak Sangh’. In 1928, he formed the ‘Bangiya Byayam Samiti’ at Mechhuabazar in Calcutta. He remained a severe critic of Gandhi and his methods.

### Ram Prasad Bismil

*Born:* 11 June 1897, Shahjahanpur, UP.

*Martyred:* 19 December 1927, Gorakhpur, UP.



Bismil participated both in the ‘Mainpuri Conspiracy’ of 1918, and the ‘Kakori Conspiracy’ of 1925 (please see details under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines”).

He was an Arya Samaji inspired by the Satyarth Prakash of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. He was also in touch with Lala Har Dayal through his Arya Samaji guru Swami Somdev.

He founded a revolutionary organisation called Matrivedi (Altar of Motherland) in 1918, and later co-founded Hindustan Republican Association (HRA), another revolutionary organisation.

His group of young students supported the Garam Dal of Tilak at the Lucknow Congress, and published “America Ki Swatantrata Ka Itihas” in Hindi, which was banned by the British.

He was also a poet who wrote in Hindi and Urdu using the pen names Ram, Agyat and Bismil. He was the author of the famous poem “*Sarfaroshi ki Tamanna ab Hamare Dil Me Hai*”.

He wrote and published a number of collections which were generally banned by the British. His autobiography “Kakori ke Shaheed” was published after his death by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in 1928.

“Amar Shaheed Ram Prasad Bismil Smarak” was established in Shahjahanpur in 1994. 11km from Shahjahanpur a railway station is named “Pt Ram Prasad Bismil railway station” . “Amar Shaheed Pt. Ram Prasad Bismil Udyan” was set up in Rampur Jagir village where Bismil had lived underground after the Mainpuri conspiracy case.

### Sachindra Nath Sanyal

*Born:* 1893 in Benaras.

*Martyred:* 7 February 1942 at Gorakhpur jail.



Sanyal, hailing from a family of Pandits of Varanasi, and Rash Behari Bose made an unsuccessful attempt in 1915 to organise a mutiny, along with many others (Ghadar conspiracy) in the Indian army against the British Raj. Sanyal was sent to the dreaded Cellular Jail in Port Blair in the Andamans (Kala Pani), where he wrote his famous book ‘Bandi Jeevan’ (A Life of Captivity)—it became the bible for revolutionaries.

Sanyal was briefly released, but when he continued to engage in the anti-British activities, he was sent back to the Cellular Jail, and his ancestral family home in Varanasi was confiscated. He was sentenced for the Kakori conspiracy case and was tried and sentenced to life for the same.

*Sanyal has the unique distinction of having been sent twice to the Cellular Jail in Port Blair (Kala Pani).* He contracted TB in jail, probably deliberately infected, and was sent to Gorakhpur Jail for his final months.

He was the founder of Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) and Hindustan Republic Army meant to carry out armed resistance against the British. HRA later became HSRA. He mentored revolutionaries like Chandrashekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh. Several of his brothers and cousins were also active participants in the country's freedom struggle.

Sanyal held firm Hindu beliefs, although some of his followers were Marxists. Gandhi and Sanyal engaged in a famous debate during 1920–24 that was published in *Young India*.

*Sanyal is among the unsung heroes whose names should be written in gold in the history of the Indian freedom struggle.*

Economist, urban theorist, and bestselling writer (must-read books: ‘The Incredible History of India's Geography’; ‘Land of the Seven Rivers: A Brief History of India's Geography’; ‘The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History’) Sanjeev Sanyal is the grand-nephew of Sachindra Nath Sanyal.

### Shivram Rajguru

*Born:* 24 August 1908 at Khed, Maharashtra.

*Martyred:* 23 March 1931. Hanged at Lahore jail.



Rajguru was a member of the HSRA (Hindustan Socialist Republican Association), who believed in forcibly throwing out the British. They considered Gandhi's nonviolent civil disobedience techniques ineffective.

Please check “1928–31 : Lahore Conspiracy Case, etc.” under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines” for Rajguru's role in killing Saunders. Rajguru, along with Bhagat Singh and others, was hanged on 23 March 1931.

Rajguru's birthplace of Khed has since been renamed as Rajgurunagar. A shopping complex at Hisar in Haryana was named as Rajguru Market in 1953.

### Shyamji Krishna Varma

*Born:* 4 October 1857 in Mandvi, Gujarat.

*Died:* 30 March 1930 in Geneva, Switzerland.

After pursuing a brief legal career, Shyamji served as the Divan of a number of Princely States. He became a disciple of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and was soon conducting lectures on Vedic philosophy and religion. He was a renowned scholar in Sanskrit and other Indian languages.



Monier Williams, an Oxford professor of Sanskrit, took him as his assistant.

Shyamji played a pioneering role in the international spread of the freedom movement. He brought out a monthly periodical, 'The Indian Sociologist' (TIS) in London. TIS was critical of the moderate loyalist approach and its appeal to British liberalism, exemplified by the leaders like GK Gokhale. Shyamji's activities alarmed the British government, and he was disbarred from Inner Temple for writing anti-British articles in TIS. Shyamji Krishna Varma founded the 'India House' in London in 1905 as a hostel for Indian students, since most faced racist discrimination when seeking accommodation. India House soon became a hub of Indian nationalists and revolutionaries.

Facing prosecution in London, Shyamji Krishna Varma shifted to Paris. The British government tried to have him extradited from France, but without success, as he gained support from many top French politicians. He helped gain support for the Indian independence from Europe. He had also tried his best for the release of Veer Savarkar. Upon the British-French bonhomie in the wake of the WW-I, with things likely to get difficult for him in France, he shifted to Geneva.

He expired in a hospital in Geneva, Switzerland. Tributes were paid to him by Bhagat Singh and other inmates in Lahore Jail. He had made

prepaid arrangements with the local government of Geneva and St Georges cemetery to preserve his and his wife's ashes at the cemetery for 100 years and to send their urns to India whenever it became independent during that period. Nehru and his Dynasty never bothered about the same, and only on 22 August 2003 were the urns of ashes of Shyamaji and his wife Bhanumati were brought to India by the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

### Sri Aurobindo

*Born:* 15 August 1872 at Kolkata.

*Martyred:* 5 December 1950 at Puducherry.



Sri Aurobindo, born Aurobindo Ghose, was taken with his two elder brothers to England for education in 1879, at the age of seven, and lived there for fourteen years. He studied at King's College, Cambridge. He passed the ICS, but did not continue in the service.

Upon return from England he joined the state services of Maharaja of Baroda in 1893, and later worked as the Professor of English and, finally, the Vice-Principal in the Baroda College. Leaving Baroda in 1906, he went to Calcutta as Principal of the Bengal National College.

He got involved in nationalistic and revolutionary activities. In the Surat session of the Congress in 1907, he teamed up with Bal Gangadhar Tilak (“extremists” or “garam dal”) against the moderates (“naram dal”) led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

He was editor of the newly-founded daily paper, *Bande Mataram*, between 1907 and 1908. Aurobindo was arrested in May 1908 in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case, and was acquitted in May 1909 after a year of isolated incarceration. In the jail, he had spiritual experiences. He claimed he had been “visited” by Swami Vivekananda in Alipore jail. He started two periodicals—*Karmayogin* in English and *Dharma* in Bengali—after release from jail.

With the British police still after him for his seditious articles, Aurobindo first moved to Chandernagore (under France), and then to Pondicherry, then a French colony.

Aurobindo developed a method of spiritual practice called Integral Yoga at Pondicherry. He co-founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1926 in Pondicherry with Mirra Alfassa, aka 'The Mother', his spiritual collaborator.

Among his main literary works are 'The Life Divine', 'Synthesis of Yoga', 'Essays on the Gita', 'The Isha Upanishad', 'Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol', an epic poem, and translations and commentaries on the Vedas, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

### Sukhdev Thapar

*Born:* 15 May 1907 at Ludhiana, Punjab.

*Martyred:* 23 March 1931. Hanged at Lahore jail.

# n

Sukhdev was a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). He was actively involved in organising revolutionary cells in Punjab and North India.

He was involved in the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 18 December 1928 with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru as accomplices. He was hanged along with Bhagat Singh and Rajguru on 23 March 1931, and their bodies were secretly cremated on the banks of the Satluj river.

### Surya Sen

Aka "Master Da"—having been a school teacher.

*Born:* 22 March 1894 at Noapara in Chittagong.

*Martyred:* 12 January 1934 (hanged).



Surya Sen led a group of 65 revolutionaries of the 'Indian Republican Army' (IRA), Chittagong Branch, in the famous 'Chittagong Armoury Raid' on 18 April 1930. Their purpose was to loot arms from the

armoury, and to destroy the communication system. Although they succeeded in looting the arms, they couldn't lay their hands on the ammunition. Hoisting the Indian National Flag on the armoury, they escaped to nearby Jalalabad hills in Chittagong.

In the subsequent fight with the British troops in the hills, while many revolutionaries died, Sen and several others escaped.

Sen avoided capture for about three years by moving from place to place, but was finally compromised in February 1933 by Netra Sen, in whose house he had taken his last temporary shelter. Netra Sen was later executed by a revolutionary before he could receive his reward of ten thousand rupees from the British—the revolutionary beheaded him while Netra Sen was being served food by his wife. When the police arrived to investigate, this is what Netra Sen's wife told them about her husband's murder in front of her: "I saw with my own eyes but my heart will not permit me to tell you his name. I am sorry. I feel miserable that I was the wife of such a treacherous man, such an undivine man as Netra Sen. My husband betrayed the great son of Chittagong. My husband betrayed the great son of Mother India. My husband cast a slur on the face of India. Therefore, I cannot take the name of the person who took his life. He has definitely done the right thing. You can do anything with me. You can punish me, you can even kill me, but I shall never tell the name of the person who killed my husband. Our 'Masterda' will be hanged, I know, but his name will forever be synonymous with India's immortal freedom cry. Everyone loves him. I too love him and adore him, for he is the greatest son in the firmament of Chittagong. 'Surya' means 'sun' and he is truly our son."

A plot to rescue Surya Sen from the Chittagong Jail worked out by Tarakeshwar Dastidar, president of the Chittagong branch of the Jugantar party, was unfortunately unearthed, and Dastidar, along with other plotters like Kalpana Dutta, was arrested. Dastidar was hanged along with Surya Sen. Kalpana Dutta was given a life sentence.

Before Sen was hanged, he was brutally tortured by the British: they broke all his teeth with a hammer, and pulled out all his nails. They broke all his limbs and joints. He was dragged to the gallows unconscious. Rather than giving a proper funeral, the prison authorities callously put his dead body in a metallic cage, and dumped it into the Bay of Bengal. His last

letter to his friends dated 11 January 1934 stated: "...Death is knocking at my door. My mind is flying away towards eternity ...At such a pleasant, at such a grave, at such a solemn moment, what shall I leave behind you? Only one thing, that is my dream, a golden dream-the dream of Free India..."

Bangladesh has designated the gallows at Chittagong Central Jail as a memorial to Sen. A hostel at the University of Dhaka has been named after him. A station on the Kolkata Metro system is named 'Masterda Surya Sen Metro Station'. Siliguri has 'Surya Sen Park' with a bust of Surya Sen in the middle.

Two movies, '*Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey*' (2010) by Ashutosh Gowariker, and '*Chittagong*' (2012) by Bedabrata Pain, have been made on Surya Sen. The Government of India released a commemoration stamp in his memory in 1977.

### Taraknath Das

*Born:* 15 June 1884 in 24 Parganas, Bengal

*Died:* 22 December 1958 at New York City



Tarak was a brilliant student. While attending college in Calcutta, he was recruited into an anti-British secret society. By 1905 he had given up his studies and was wandering around India disguised, spreading the revolutionary message. Wanted by police, he fled to Japan in 1905 disguised as a sadhu. Upon the British request for his extradition, Das fled to the US in search of asylum, and arrived in Seattle in July 1906. He later joined the University of California, Berkeley.

With Tilak's emissary Panduranga Khankojee, Tarak founded the Indian Independence League in the US. Radicals like Tarak mobilised the Indian community in the US. Tarak joined the Norwich University, a high-class engineering and military establishment, in Northfield, Vermont in 1908, in order to receive military training. However, he was rusticated for his anti-

British activities that included editing 'Free Hindustan'. By the end of 1909, he returned to Seattle.

In 1914, he became a Research Fellow at the University of California at Berkeley in 1914. He did his PhD from the University of Washington in Political Science.

Tarak co-founded the Ghadar Party. Upon becoming a citizen of the US, and thus out of reach of the British government, he travelled to Germany on the eve of WW-I to secure funds for an armed insurrection in India. Later, while preparing for a mission to leave for Moscow with Rash Behari Bose and Herambalal Gupta, he received summons to appear in the Hindu German Conspiracy Trial. He was accused as "the most dangerous criminal", and was sentenced to 22 months in Leavenworth federal prison on 30 April 1918. After his release, Tarak toured Europe, and upon his return to the US, was appointed the professor of political science at the Columbia University and a Fellow of the Georgetown University.

He established Taraknath Das Foundation in 1935 to promote educational activities. Even now it funds the Indian students in the US.

### Udham Singh

*Born:* 26 December 1899, Sangrur, Punjab.

*Martyred:* 31 July 1940. Hanged in London.



Shahid Udhan Singh's father was a railway crossing watchman in the village of Upalli. Upon his father's death, he was taken in by the Central Khalsa Orphanage Putlighar in Amritsar. He did matriculation in 1918.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 13 April 1919 deeply shook him. He was present there. He defied the curfew to retrieve the body of the husband of one Rattan Devi following the slaughter, and was wounded. The scars left on him could only have been healed through revenge.

He travelled abroad to Africa, Europe and the US, and got involved with the Ghadar Party, and began organizing overseas Indians in overthrowing the colonial rule. On a call from Shahid Bhagat Singh, he returned to India

in 1927 with 25 associates, carrying arms and ammunition. He was arrested for possession of unlicensed arms. After release from prison in 1931 he was constantly tracked by the British intelligence. He somehow made his way to Kashmir, and escaped to Germany, from where he reached London.

He avenged Jallianwala Bagh Massacre by shooting Sir Michael Francis O'Dwyer in Caxton Hall in London on 13 March 1940. O'Dwyer was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab between 1912 and 1919, and was in the saddle at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He had backed General Reginald Dyer for the butchery. In a telegram sent to Dyer, O'Dwyer wrote: "Your action is correct. Lieutenant Governor approves."

On 31 July 1940, he was hanged at Pentonville Prison in Barnsbury, London and buried within the prison grounds. Udham Singh stated his motivation for killing thus: "I did it because I had a grudge against him. He deserved it. He was the real culprit. He wanted to crush the spirit of my people, so I have crushed him. For full 21 years, I have been trying to wreak vengeance. I am happy that I have done the job. I am not scared of death. I am dying for my country. I have seen my people starving in India under the British rule. I have protested against this, it was my duty. What greater honour could be bestowed on me than death for the sake of my motherland?"

Gandhi-Nehru's Condemnable Condemnation:

Sadly, but expectedly, Gandhi condemned the killing by Udham Singh, saying, "...the outrage has caused me deep pain. I regard it as an act of insanity... I hope this will not be allowed to affect political judgement..." Notably, while awaiting a trial in Brixton Prison, Udham Singh went on a hunger strike for 42 days. Please recall Jatin Das's earlier fast of 63 days in 1929. Compare these with the longest fast of Gandhi that lasted only 21 days. No wonder Gandhi didn't like the revolutionaries—beating him hollow in his favourite weapon of fasting.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in The National Herald: "...assassination is regretted but it is earnestly hoped that it will not have far-reaching repercussions on political future of India." However, the politician Nehru conveniently reversed his statement in 1962: "I salute Shaheed-i-Azam Udham Singh with reverence who had kissed the noose so that we may be free."

A district Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand was named after him in October 1995 by the then Mayawati government.

### Vasudev Balwant Phadke

*Born:* 4 November 1845 at Panvel in Raigad, Maharashtra.

*Martyred:* 17 February 1883. Martyred fasting.



Historian RC Majumdar described Phadke as “the father of militant nationalism in India”. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was highly inspired by Phadke’s brave patriotic fight, and Bankim’s novel ‘Anand Math’ reflected his daring acts. Phadke was a Chitpavan Brahmin, and was amongst the early graduates of Bombay University in 1862. He worked as a clerk in the Military Finance Office of the British-India government. He was influenced by Mahadev Govind Ranade’s (another Chitpavan Brahmin, and a distinguished scholar and reformer who had later co-founded the Indian National Congress) lectures on drain of wealth from India. Krantiveer Lahuji Vastad Salve, a prominent social figure in Pune, was his initial mentor. Phadke’s speeches at Pune were well-received: people thronged to listen to him.

Phadke created four groups: a group that organized meetings of school boys at secret locations; a group comprising roving bands that went round the city in the morning singing patriotic songs; a group comprising an evening choir that went round singing songs satirizing the British rule; and finally a group engaged in plotting revolutionary activities.

Severe famine, and apathy of the British propelled Phadke to organise about 300 men into an insurgent group whose aim was to liberate India. Phadke and group planned building an army. For funds, they decided to break into government treasuries. What was remarkable was that Phadke's band included many youths from the lower castes like Ramoshis and Dhangars, and also Koli tribals. He wrote in his diary: “I wished to ruin the British. From morning to night, whether bathing, eating or sleeping, I was brooding about this and hardly slept in doing so. I learnt to fire at targets,

ride a horse, wield a sword and exercise at the gym. I had a great love for arms and always kept two guns and swords.”

To provide famine relief, in their first attack they looted government treasury. To save himself, Phadke took shelter in various villages with his sympathisers who were mostly from the lower classes. Phadke and his group carried out many raids on government treasuries and departments in areas near Shirur and Khed talukas in Pune for the sake of famine relief, aided by the villagers.

Phadke dared even to directly engage the British army in Ghanur village. Alarmed, the British offered a bounty for his capture. Undeterred, Phadke, in turn, offered a bounty for the capture of the Governor of Bombay, and announced a reward for the killing of each European. He also issued threats to the government. Unfortunately, someone betrayed Phadke: he was captured in a temple after a fierce fight at Kaladgi on 20 July 1879 while on his way to Pandharpur. He was put to trial in Pune. Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi, aka Sarvajanic Kaka, defended his case. He was charged with waging war against the British Government. Realising he was too dangerous an individual to be allowed to remain in India, the British transported him for life to a prison in Aden. He was fettered and placed in solitary confinement. He, however, managed to escape by taking the door off from its hinges on 13 February 1883. But, the escape was short lived. He was recaptured. Phadke went on a hunger strike to death to protest his ill-treatment; and on 17 February 1883 he was martyred while on hunger strike.

Phadke was the co-founder of Maharashtra Education Society that currently runs about 51 educational institutes.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

*Aka Veer Savarkar*

Born: 28 May 1883 at Bhagur, Nasik, Maharashtra.

*Died: 26 February 1966 at Mumbai.*



Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, aka Swatantryaveer Savarkar, a Chitpavan Brahmin, was a freedom fighter, poet, writer, playwright, forceful orator, rationalist, atheist, and reformer, who vigorously advocated end of Hindu caste-system, and strongly disapproved of orthodox Hindu beliefs and practices. He built the Patit Pavan Mandir in Ratnagiri, open to the all, including Dalits. A section of orthodox Brahmins of Maharashtra opposed his reform; but he earned praise and respect from Dr BR Ambedkar.

Savarkar became a revolutionary while still a student. He founded Abhinav Bharat Society (1903) and the Free India Society. He also brought out publications espousing the cause of complete independence of India by revolutionary means.

In 1906, Savarkar left for London for higher studies. In London, he was associated with the India House set up by the revolutionary Shyamji Krishna Varma. He wrote there ‘Mazzini Charitra’, a translation of the Italian revolutionary Mazzini's writings, with a 25-page introduction on Mazzini's techniques of secret societies and guerrilla warfare. Published in Maharashtra in June 1907, its first edition of 2000 copies was sold out within a month.

His famous book ‘1857—First War of Independence’ published in 1909 had so much rattled the British that they had put a ban on it, confiscating all its copies within six months of its release.

Arrested in 1910 for his revolutionary activities, he made a daring attempt to escape while being transported from Marseilles, France. With constable waiting outside, Savarkar entered the toilet, broke the window, wriggled out somehow, and jumped into the ocean from a sailing ship to swim his way to Marseilles port. His friends (including Madam Bhikaiji Cama) were supposed to pick him up there, but they were late by a few minutes, and the French Police caught him and returned him to the British cops—chained and under stricter watch.

He was sentenced to two life terms of imprisonment totalling fifty years! He was imprisoned in the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

(Kaalapani), and treated cruelly and inhumanly. He must have been the first poet in the world to have been deprived of pen and paper in a jail. He improvised and used thorns and nails to compose his writings on prison walls.

Notably, VD Savarkar's elder brother, Babarao (Ganesh Damodar) Savarkar, was also a revolutionary who was lodged in the Cellular Jail in Kaalapani. His younger brother too was a revolutionary. It was a family of brave patriots and revolutionaries.

Shahid Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Chandrashekhar Azad were admirers of the Savarkar family, and drew inspiration from them. Revolutionary Madanlal Dhingra who shot Sir Wyllie in London in 1909 was a keen follower of Savarkar.

Savarkar was elected president of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, and served in that post till 1943.

Please read Savarkar's role in making India militarily strong under "WW-II as a Military Training Opportunity for Indians" under the chapter "Relevant International Timelines" in this book.

Savarkar was years ahead of Gandhi-Nehru on many counts. Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress gave a call for complete independence for India very late at the end of 1929, what Savarkar had called for way back in 1900! Bonfire of foreign clothes on which the Gandhians claim copyright was performed much earlier by Savarkar in 1905, later copied by Gandhi. Upon creation of Pakistan, Savarkar had rightly predicted: "Till a nation based on religious fanaticism exists beside India she won't ever be able to live in peace."

Hindu Mahasabha activists protested Gandhi holding talks with Jinnah in 1944, denouncing it as appeasement. Savarkar considered Gandhi a naive leader and a sissy. He stated that although Gandhi "babbled compassion and forgiveness", he "has a very narrow and immature head".

In the 1930s and later, when the Muslims of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) began migrating to Brahmaputra valley in Assam for livelihood, pooh-poohing the grave warnings from sane quarters, Nehru made an irresponsible statement: "Nature abhors vacuum, meaning where there is open space how can one prevent people from settling there?" Savarkar responded with his masterly prediction: "Nature also abhors poisonous gas. The migration of such large numbers of Muslims in Assam

threatened not just the local culture but would also prove to be a national security problem for India on its north-east frontier.”

Savarkar, in a statement on 19 December 1947, heartily supported an independent Jewish state; and demanded restoration to the Jews their entire historical holy land and Fatherland of Palestine. Terming it as an appeasement to Muslims by Nehru, he expressed regret at India's vote against the creation of the Jewish state at the UN.

Noting China's invasion of Tibet in 1950, and Nehru's weak-kneed policy, Savarkar had predicted in 1954 itself: “After what China has done to Tibet, kowtowing to the Chinese would whet its appetite. I won't be surprised if China feels emboldened to swallow Indian land tempted by India's weak-kneed approach.”

Savarkar and other prisoners in Kaalapani were subjected to brutally inhuman treatment. However, the sacrifices of Savarkar and others were not recognised. Savarkar's case is unique, shocking, and painful for all patriots, and well-meaning people. He suffered the most and brutally in the British jails (Kaalapani). As if that was not enough, independent India under Nehru again threw him into jail by framing a false case, and defamed him! What did Savarkar get for all his sacrifices? Humiliation! It was doubly humiliating because the humiliation was inflicted not by the British, but by Independent India—that too by framing false charges against him. What could be worse? Top Gandhian leaders who suffered the least in the British jails leveraged all their “sacrifices” to grab power and pelf post-independence, but people like Savarkar who gave their all (and who were far more erudite, wise and capable) were humiliated, defamed, ignored and forgotten.

Savarkar became a fierce critic of the Indian National Congress. No wonder an all-out attempt was made to falsely implicate him in the Gandhi Murder Case. Manohar Malgaonkar, after extensive research, published ‘The Men who Killed Gandhi’ in 1977. He does not point to any guilt on Savarkar's part. Here is an extract from the author's introduction in the book:

“...Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's secret assurance to Mr. L.B. Bhopatkar, that his client, Mr V.D. Savarkar had been implicated as a murder-suspect on the flimsiest grounds. Then again, certain other pertinent details such as the

‘doctoring’ of a confession by a magistrate whose duty it was only to record what was said only came out in later years...”

Malgaokar's book also states:

“...Why were the police so anxious to implicate Savarkar? Was it merely that, having failed in their proper function to arrest Nathuram before he killed Gandhi, they were making a bid to save face by raising the bogey of some sensational plot which involved a big leader who providentially happened to be in bad odour with the government of the day? Or was that government itself, or some powerful group in it, using the police agency to destroy a rival political organization or at least to destroy a fiercely uncompromising opposition stalwart?

“Or, again, was the whole thing a manifestation of some form of phobia peculiar to India, religious, racial, linguistic, or provincial, that made Savarkar a natural target for the venom of some section of society?

“...Savarkar being made an accused in the Gandhi-murder trial may well have been an act of political vendetta. Of course, Badge [approver who implicated Savarkar], on his track record is a slippery character and not to be relied upon, but he was most insistent to me that he had been forced to tell lies, and that his pardon and future stipend by the police department in Bombay depended upon his backing the official version of the case and, in particular that, he never saw Savarkar talking to Apte, and never heard him telling them: ‘Yeshaswi houn ya.’

“...[Dr BR Ambedkar confided to Bhopatkar, Savarkar's lawyer:] ‘There is no real charge against your client; quite worthless evidence has been concocted. Several members of the cabinet were strongly against it, but to no avail. Even Sardar Patel could not go against these orders. But, take it from me, there just is no case. You will win.’...”

It seems Nehru leveraged the emotions against the assassination of Gandhi to fix Savarkar, and ensured that no one came in the way—not even senior cabinet colleagues: they must have been wary lest they be accused or defamed of trying to protect an accomplice in the assassination of Gandhi.

Malgaokar's further wrote:

“...He [Savarkar] was sixty-four years old, and had been ailing for a year or more. He was detained on 6 February 1948, and remained in prison for the whole of the year which the investigation and the trial took. He was adjudged ‘not guilty’ on 10 February 1949. The man who had undergone

twenty-six years of imprisonment or detention under the British for his part in India's struggle for freedom was thus slung back into jail for another year the moment that freedom came..."

It has been reported that in the wake of the assassination of Gandhi, and the rumours that got floated, a mob went on a rampage against Savarkar in Mumbai. Yet, the state government then under the Congress made no arrangements to ensure security for Savarkar (who was bed-ridden) and his kin. His family members and friends had to somehow defend his house using sticks when the mob attacked it. In the process, his younger brother Dr Narayanrao Savarkar (also a freedom fighter) was seriously injured, and later succumbed to his injuries.

Nehru tried to destroy Savarkar who was opposed to him. Although the court acquitted Savarkar, he was so defamed that he could not rise again. After his acquittal, Savarkar was arrested by the government for making 'militant Hindu nationalist speeches', and was released after agreeing to give up political activities—what then was the difference between the British India and Nehru's Independent India! Nehru had forbidden the Congress members to participate in any public function honouring Savarkar; and had refused to share the stage with him during the centenary celebrations of India's First War of Independence (which was called so for the first time by none other than Savarkar in his book that was banned by the British).

Savarkar was a multi-talented personality, who had also coined the terms that have been in common usage since: 'Chitrapat', 'Doordarshan', 'Nirdeshak', 'Sampadak', 'Mahapaur', 'Parshad', etc.

Savarkar renounced medicines, food and water with effect from 1 February 1966, terming it as atmaarpan (fast until death). He died on 26 February 1966. Not a single minister from the Maharashtra or Central Cabinet showed up at the cremation ground to pay homage to Savarkar. The Speaker of the Parliament turned down a request that it pay homage to Savarkar.

After the death of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, as PM, approved payment of monthly pension to Savarkar, like it was done for other freedom fighters. In 1970, Indira Gandhi's government issued a postal stamp in honour of Veer Savarkar. The commemorative blue plaque on India House, London fixed by the Historic Building and Monuments Commission for

England reads ‘Vinayak Damodar Savarkar 1883-1966 Indian patriot and philosopher lived here’. The airport at Port Blair, the capital of Andaman & Nicobar, has since been named as Veer Savarkar International Airport. It was in February 2003 when the NDA government was in power that the portrait of Swatantryaveer Savarkar was put up in the Central Hall of Parliament—Congress Party MPs boycotted the function, without ever offering a public explanation for their disgraceful behaviour.

There has been a demand that Savarkar should be conferred the Bharat Ratna posthumously.

#### Others

The above is NOT a complete list. There were many, many more. The government must establish an imposing “Hall of Fame” for the freedom fighters, in which prominent place must be accorded to the real freedom fighters, that is, the revolutionaries, Netaji Subhas Bose, INA, and the participants in the army/naval mutinies.

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## Personalities that Inspired Revolutionaries

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### Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

*Born:* 27 June 1838, 24-Paraganas, Bengal.

*Died:* 8 April 1894 in Kolkata.



Bankim Chandra Chatterjee graduated from the Presidency College, Calcutta; and served as a deputy magistrate and deputy collector from 1858 until his retirement in 1891.

He penned many literary works notably *Durgeshnandini* in 1865, *Kapalkundala* in 1866, *Mrinalini* in 1869, *Vishabriksha* in 1873, *Indira* in 1873, *Jugalanguriya* in 1874, *Kamalakanter d aptar* in 1875, *Radharani* in 1876, *Chandrasekhar* in 1877, *Rajani* in 1877, *Krishnakanter Uil (Will)* in 1878, *Rajsimha* in 1882, *Anandmath* in 1882, *Devi Chaudhurani* in 1884, *Kamalakanta* in 1885, *Sitaram* in 1887, and so on. His works were widely translated in many languages.

However, his *Anandmath* inspired revolutionaries the most. It depicts an army of Sanyasis (ascetics) fighting the British; and calls for self-rule, after uprooting the colonial rule—please read about revolutionary ‘Vasudev Balwant Phadke’ above, on whose acts it was partly based. It included the song *Vande Mataram* composed by him earlier in 1875. It was set to music by Rabindranath Tagore. It was the anthem of Indian nationalists, and has since been the *National Song of India*.

### Giuseppe Mazzini

*Born:* 22 June 1805 in Genoa, Italy.

*Died:* 10 March 1872 in Pisa, Italy.



Mazzini is an important personality as he inspired many Indian revolutionaries, including Veer Savarkar, Lala Har Dayal, Bhagat Singh.

His father was a professor. Admitted to the university at a young age of 14, Giuseppe Mazzini graduated in law in 1826. His first essay was “On Dante's Patriotic Love”. The local authorities came down heavily on the newspapers he wrote for. Mazzini became a member of a secret political organisation Carbonari in Tuscany in 1827. He was arrested and interned at Savona. Released from prison in 1831, he was confined to a small hamlet. He preferred exile, and moved to Geneva.

Mazzini founded ‘La giovine Italia’—Young Italy—a secret political society with a view to unify several states and kingdoms of the peninsula into a single Italian republic. Young Italy had about 60,000 adherents by 1833, with branches in many centres. Many military officers in Tuscany, Abruzzi, Sicily, Piedmont, and Liguria became favourable. Mazzini attempted an insurrection in 1833; but the Savoy government came to know of the plot, and arrested many revolutionaries. The repression was ruthless, and many were executed. Mazzini was tried in absentia and sentenced to death.

Undaunted, Mazzini led the second uprising the following year. The plan was to spread revolution through a group of Italian exiles who were to enter Piedmont from Switzerland, while Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had since joined Young Italy, was to lead a group from Genoa. The government troops, however, crushed the renewed attempt.

In 1834, Mazzini and his group, with members from various European countries, founded “Young Europe” at Berne. The grandiose idea had two-fold concept. (1)National Liberty: Revolutions for national liberties from oppressive regimes, like the individual liberties were enlarged through the French Revolution of 1789. (2)“Young Europe”: Federation of such liberated nations on the basis of commonality of interests (this ultimately happened with the EC—European Community).

After being arrested and exiled from Switzerland in May 1834, Mazzini moved to Paris, where he was again imprisoned in July 1834, from where

he was later released on the condition that he would move to England. Mazzini and his Italian colleagues moved to London in January 1837.

“Young Italy” and “Young Europe” movements of Mazzini led to sprouting of the “Young Germany”, “Young Poland”, and “Young Switzerland”, and later, the “Young Turks” (that ultimately led to foundation of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, deposing the Khalifa/Caliphate) democratic movements in the 1840s.

In 1843, Mazzini precipitated an uprising in Bologna in Italy, but without much success. In 1847, he wrote an open letter to Pope Pius IX on the unification of Italy, but it evoked no response from the Pope. In 1848, Mazzini launched the Associazione Nazionale Italiana, a new political association, in Paris. Milan’s population rebelled against the Austrian garrison in 1848, and taking advantage, Mazzini established a provisional government there. However, it didn’t have much success. Mazzini then joined Garibaldi's irregular forces, and moved to Switzerland with him.

A republic was declared in Rome on 9 February 1849. Pope Pius IX had been forced to flee earlier in November 1848. As a part of the triumvirate that included Carlo Armellini and Aurelio Saffi, Mazzini headed the new republic on 29 March 1849. However, following the calling of the French assistance by the Pope in the face of the inadequate defence of the new republic whose troops were led by Garibaldi, Mazzini moved to Marseille in July 1849, and then to Switzerland. Mazzini continued with his political activities along with Garibaldi. He expired in Pisa in 1872.

### Swami Dayanand Saraswati

*Born:* 12 February 1824 in Tankara, Rajkot, Gujarat.

*Died:* 30 October 1883 in Ajmer.



Early in his life, Dayanand learnt Sanskrit and studied Vedas and other religious texts. Although he belonged to an affluent family, Dayanand spent 25 long years between 1845 and 1869 as a wandering ascetic in spiritual pursuits in forests and the retreats in the Himalayas.

Apart from Hinduism, Dayanand wrote critical analyses of Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. He founded the Arya Samaj, and enunciated the Ten Universal Principles as a code for Universalism. Dayanand's concept of dharma is stated in the Satyarth Prakash.

Arya Samaj allows and encourages converts to Hinduism. It discourages dogma, ritualism, and symbolism. It encourages scepticism in beliefs that run contrary to common sense and logic. It exhorts people to follow the Vedic way of life, and to give up superstitions, and unnecessary rituals. His “back to the Vedas” message influenced thinkers the world over. He called for social reforms; protection of cows; adoption of Hindi as the national language for national integration; equal rights and respect to women; and women’s education. The Arya Samaj claimed that idol worship, animal sacrifice, pilgrimages, priest craft, offerings to gods, caste-system, child marriages, meat eating, discrimination against women, and so on were contrary to the spirit of Hinduism.

There were numerous unsuccessful attempts on Dayanand’s life. He was poisoned on a few occasions, but, reportedly, thanks to his regular practice of Hatha Yoga, he survived such attempts. Once there was an attempt to even drown him in a river. Unfortunately, following a murder attempt (milk containing ground glass pieces) on 29 September 1883, Dayanand died at Ajmer on 30 October 1883. Dayanand was the first Indian to give the call for Swaraj: he called for “Indians for India” in 1876. He hugely influenced the freedom movement of India inspiring a host of freedom fighters, who took clues from him, like Shyamji Krishna Varma, Madam Cama, Veer Savarkar, Lala Hardayal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Subhas Chandra Bose, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ram Prasad Bismil, Bhagat Singh, Swami Shradhdhanand, and Mahatma Hansraj.

### Swami Vivekananda

*Born:* 12 January 1863 in Kolkata, Bengal.

*Died:* 4 July 1902 in Belur.



Swami Vivekananda, born Narendranath Datta, was a precocious boy, who excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. He was

brilliant student and an avid reader of social sciences, philosophy, religion, history, arts and literature; and had studied the works of Hume, Kant, Spinoza, Hegel, Comte, Schopenhauer, Mill and Darwin. He studied Sanskrit, Bengali literature, and Hindu scriptures in depth. He graduated in 1884.

He was influenced by Brahmo Samaj. He met Ramakrishna in 1881, and became his disciple in 1884. Upon the death of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda established at Baranagar the Ramakrishna Math that served as the monastery of the monastic order of Ramakrishna.

Narendranath Datta took the name “Swami Vivekananda” in December 1886 when he and eight other disciples took formal monastic vows. 1888 onwards Vivekananda became a wandering monk travelling the length and breadth of India, visiting centres of learning and familiarising himself with diverse religious practices and social norms.

Vivekananda visited many cities of Japan, China and Canada in 1893, finally landing in Chicago in the US on 30 July 1893 to attend the Parliament of Religions that was to be held there in September 1893. Later, he moved around on the lecture tours in the US and the UK. His talks were very well received, and his fame spread far and wide. He met Margaret Elizabeth Noble, an Irish woman, in November 1895: she came to be known as Sister Nivedita.

Jamshedji Tata was inspired by Vivekananda to establish the Indian Institute of Science.

He popularised Vedas, Upanishads, Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta philosophy, and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras; established Vedanta Centres in India and in the West; and made the global audience appreciate Hinduism as a major religion. He established Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 for social services. Both Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission have their headquarters at Belur Math in Howrah. Rajaji had commented: “Vivekananda saved Hinduism, saved India.”

Rabindranath Tagore had commented to French Nobel laureate Romain Rolland: “If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative.”

Wrote Romain Rolland on Vivekananda: “His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Händel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through

the pages of books, at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!"

Vivekananda hugely promoted nationalistic and patriotic fervour. Said CF Andrews: "The Swami's intrepid patriotism gave a new colour to the national movement throughout India. More than any other single individual of that period Vivekananda had made his contribution to the new awakening of India."

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## Bose(s) & INA

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### Rash Behari Bose

Born: 25 May 1886 in Subaldaha in Burdwan, Bengal.

*Died:* 21 January 1945 in Japan.



Rash Behari Bose initially studied at Chandernagore (in Bengal), then under the French. He was inspired by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Ananda Math and other books), Navin Sen (Plasir Yudha), Swami Vivekananda, Surendranath Banerjea, and others. His teacher Charu Chand in Chandernagore inspired him towards the revolutionary path.

He was the key organiser of the Ghadar Revolution of 1915, and was later the founder of the Indian National Army (INA) in 1942 that was taken over by Netaji Subhas.

Rash Behari and colleagues planned assassination of Viceroy Lord Hardinge (Delhi Conspiracy Case), and made preparations for it for over a year. Basant Kumar Bishwas, a committed revolutionary lad of 16, who looked like a girl, played a key part in the actual execution: dressed as a girl he had to throw bomb from the terrace of a building in Chandni Chowk on to the Viceroyal procession, aiming Hardinge. If he failed, Rash Behari and Awadh Behari were to complete the task. Practice for the purpose was done over a long period at Dehradun where Rash Behari was employed as a head clerk at the Forest Research Institute. Rash Behari and his “girl-friend” Basant Kumar Bishwas reached Chandni Chowk on 11 December 1912. The plan was executed on 12 December 1912. In a last minute change of plan, it was Awadh Behari who executed the plan, seriously injuring (but not killing) Hardinge.

Awadh Behari was later caught and hanged, but Rash Behari managed to escape: he returned to Dehra Dun from Delhi the same night, and joined his office the next day as if nothing had happened. Not only that, he organised a

meeting of “loyal” citizens of Dehradun to condemn the dastardly attack on the Viceroy.

Rash Behari was indeed too smart for the British Police. On a number of occasions he had outsmarted the police. So much so that there were even rumours that he had occult powers.

Germans being opposed to the British in WW-I (like in WW-II later), the revolutionaries like Rash Behari sought help from Germans to get arms —this was called “Hindu-German Conspiracy”. During WW-I Rash Behari became a leading figure of the Ghadar Revolution that attempted to trigger a mutiny in the Indian Army in 1915. Upon failure of the Ghadar Revolution, Rash Behari managed to escape British intelligence, and reached Japan. Between 1915–1918, he changed residences and identities numerous times, as the British kept pressing the Japanese government for his extradition. In 1918, he married Aizō (Tosiko) Sōma, daughter of the owners of Nakamura bakery in Tokyo, who were Pan-Asian supporters. He became a Japanese citizen in 1923. Bose persuaded the Japanese authorities to stand by the Indian nationalists, and to officially support the Indian independence struggle abroad.

At a conference, Bose established the Indian Independence League (IIL) in Tokyo in March 1942, and passed a resolution to raise an army for the Indian independence. At the second conference of the League at Bangkok on 22 June 1942, a resolution was adopted to invite Subhas Chandra Bose to take command of the IIL as its president.

The Indian POWs captured by the Japanese on the Malaya and Burma fronts were encouraged to join the IIL, and become part of the Indian National Army (INA), also called 'Azad Hind Fauj', formed on 1 Sep 1942 as the military wing of Rash Behari's IIL.

Rash Behari knew many Indian languages and dialects. The Japanese government honoured him with the highest title given to a foreigner—the Second Order of Merit of the Rising Sun. Free India under the Nehru Dynasty, and the Indian Leftist-Marxist “historians”, ignored him. Only in 2013 were his ashes brought from Japan by the mayor of Chandannagore and immersed in the Hooghly river.

This is what Dr Bhagawan Singh Gyani, President of the Ghadar Party, had said of Rashbehari Bose: “Revolutionary individuals are rare and of the following categories: (1) There are those who rebel against conditions and

environments—personal, social, economic and natural. They complain, whine and grumble and even occasionally protest, refusing to go along with the established order. Under pressure, however, they will compromise, give up the struggle, submit and follow the crowd. (2) There are revolutionaries who are made of sterner stuff. They are ready and willing to suffer and sacrifice whether for an ideal, for the country or a deep conviction. They seldom, if ever, are discouraged and usually work alone or in small circles. (3) There are revolutionaries who are sages in their perceptions and scientific in their attitude and genius in organising. They construct a clear pattern of a new nation, they possess a unique capacity for fashioning a social order, step by step, as they go along. They work together, coordinate their plans and benefit from each other's association. They learn in the light of their own mistakes and particularly by the mistakes of others, and they do not hesitate to alter or modify their plans if by so doing they may realise their objective with dignity, efficiency and ease. They possess a volatile personality, adaptable to any condition and always move ahead in spite of obstacles. Our Shri Rash Behari Basu belonged to this (the third) category of revolutionists.”

### Subhas Chandra Bose

*Aka Netaji.*

*Born: 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, Odisha.*

*Died: Still a mystery.*



Subhas was a brilliant student. He was expelled from the Presidency College for assaulting Professor Oaten for the latter's anti-India comments. He passed his BA in Philosophy in 1918 from the Scottish Church College at the University of Calcutta. He left for England for higher studies in 1919. He stood fourth in the order of merit in the ICS examination, and was selected, but resigned from his civil service job on 23 April 1921 and returned to India, as he was disinclined to serve an alien British government. That was in sharp contrast to Nehru. Motilal Nehru desperately wanted Jawaharlal Nehru to clear the ICS examination, and join

ICS, which he considered as the greatest service. However, Jawaharlal's mentors in England advised Motilal that Jawaharlal was incapable of clearing the exam. Jawaharlal did his graduation in lower second division.

Bose started his political career in Bengal with Chittaranjan Das as his mentor. In 1923, Bose was elected the President of All India Youth Congress, and also the Secretary of Bengal State Congress. He was also editor of the newspaper 'Forward'. He worked as the CEO of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation under Das who was elected as mayor.

Bose was arrested in 1925 for his nationalistic activities, and sent to a prison in Mandalay (in Burma)—where he unfortunately contracted tuberculosis. After release from prison in 1927, Bose became general secretary of the Congress. Bose was again arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was elected the Mayor of Calcutta in 1930. Bose travelled widely in Europe during the mid-1930s, and met many top leaders in various countries. He wrote his book 'The Indian Struggle', which the British banned in India. During his visit to Germany in 1934, he met and married an Austrian Emilie Schenkl. Their daughter is Anita Bose Pfaff.

Bose became the Congress President in 1938, and again won election in 1939, despite Gandhi's strong opposition. Gandhi, 'The Apostle of Truth' and a man of 'High Morals', was so rattled, he used all means, fair and foul, to first defeat Bose, and when that failed, rather than accepting the defeat gracefully, manoeuvred to oust Bose from Presidentship. Bose stood for unqualified Swaraj, including the use of force against the British. That brought him into conflict with pacifist Gandhi wedded to harmless non-violence that suited the British Raj.

Bose organised the All India Forward Bloc as a faction within the Indian National Congress on 22 June 1939.

Bose advocated a campaign of mass civil disobedience to protest Viceroy Linlithgow's decision to declare war (WW-II) on India's behalf without consulting the Congress. Failing to persuade Gandhi or the Congress, he organised mass protests in Calcutta, and was arrested in July 1940. Released after a 7-day hunger strike, his house was put under CID-surveillance. However, in a daredevil act, Bose managed to escape on 19 January 1941 along with his nephew Sisir Bose. Remaining incognito, he reached Germany via Afghanistan, Russia and Italy. The feat required

tremendous guts, intelligence, cunning, and risk-taking ability. Over Radio Berlin, Indians heard Bose for the first time after about a year in March 1942 confirming his taking of help from the Axis Powers for Indian independence.

In 1943, Bose travelled in the German submarine U-180 around the Cape of Good Hope to the southeast of Madagascar, where he boarded a Japanese submarine I-29 to Imperial Japan. Netaji Bose took charge of the Indian National Army created, among others, by Rash Behari Bose.

It was claimed that Netaji Subhas had perished in a plane crash in Taipei on 18 August 1945; and that his ashes are enshrined in Tokyo's Renkoji temple. This was the version accepted by Nehru and the Congress, and was the conclusion of the first two Enquiry Commissions on Netaji, who had conveniently endorsed the government's position. However, Justice Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry set up in 1999 during the Vajpayee's NDA regime, following a Calcutta High Court Order, contradicted the conclusions of the first two Enquiry Commissions. As per the Mukherjee Commission Report: "...On a conspectus of all the facts and circumstances relevant to the above issues it stands established that emplaning at Saigon on August 17, 1945 Netaji succeeded in evading the Allied Forces and escaping out of their reach and as a camouflage thereof the entire make-believe story of the air crash, Netaji's death therein and his cremation was engineered by the Japanese army authorities including the two doctors and Habibur Rahman and then aired on August 23, 1945..." For exhaustive details in the matter, please refer to the chapter on Netaji in the author's book 'Foundations of Misery: The Nehruvian Era 1947-64' available on Amazon, and the author's blog-post:

<http://rajnikantp.blogspot.in/2014/05/netaji-subhas-mystery.html>

Apart from dragging its feet in instituting an enquiry into Netaji's death, manipulating the enquiry report, being hostile to INA, and not recognising Netaji for Bharat Ratna, Nehru's Government had been so hostile that in 1947 it refused to put up his portrait in the Parliament House.

Nehru and the Congress of independent India under him showed unpardonable ingratitude to the real man behind India's freedom.

As per an article on the web, in a confidential memo dated 11 February 1949 under the signature of Major General PN Khandoori the government recommended: "The photos of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose be not

displayed at prominent places, Unit Lines, Canteens, Quarter Guards or Recreation rooms.”

### Indian National Army (INA)



Japan and South-East Asia were the major refuges for exiled Indian nationalists till WW-II. Rash Behari Bose had also managed to escape to Japan.

During WW-II, Japan had sent intelligence missions, notably under Major Iwaichi Fujiwara, into South Asia to gather support from the Malays, overseas Chinese, Burmese resistance, and the Indian independence movement.

The Wake Island and the Philippines, then under the US, fell to the Japanese on 23 and 27 December 1941 respectively. Japan captured Malaysia, then under the British, on 14 January 1942, taking 50,000 Allied soldiers (many of whom were Indians) as prisoners of war. Japan also captured parts of Indonesia. Next, Japan captured the British stronghold of Singapore—aka the ‘Gibraltar of the East’—on 15 February 1942, taking 80,000 Allied soldiers (British, Indian, and Australian) as prisoners of war (POWs). From these Indian POWs, the Japanese facilitated formation of the Indian National Army under Captain Mohan Singh.

Earlier, at a conference, Rash Behari Bose had established the Indian Independence League (IIL) in Tokyo in March 1942, and passed a resolution to raise an army for the Indian independence. The Indian POWs captured by the Japanese were encouraged to join the IIL, and become part of the Indian National Army (INA), also called 'Azad Hind Fauj', formed on 1 Sep 1942 as the military wing of Rash Behari's IIL. Mohan Singh dissociated with INA in December 1942. Overseen by Rash Behari, the INA then came under Lt Col MZ Kiani and Lt Col JR Bhonsle, to whom Lt

Col Shah Nawaz Khan, Major PK Sahgal, Major Habib ur Rahman, and Lt Col AC Chatterji reported.

Looking to his suitability and popularity Netaji Subhas Bose was invited in 1943 to lead INA. Netaji reached Tokyo on 11 May 1943 after a three-month long arduous journey by submarine from Germany, and a short stop in Singapore. Later, Netaji reached Singapore in July 1943, and took command of INA and IIL on 4 July 1943. He famously proclaimed: "Give me blood! I will give you freedom." Bose's magic appeal worked wonders with even the civilian population: barristers, traders, plantation workers, shopkeepers, young and old, men and women volunteered to work for IIL or INA. The membership of the IIL peaked at 350,000. Over a lakh local Indians in South-east Asia volunteered to join the INA. INA ultimately reaching a force of 50,000.

INA's various divisions were commanded by MZ Kiani, Inayat Kiani, Gulzara Singh, Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon, Shah Nawaz Khan, and so on. Its training school was led by Habib ur Rahman. A youth wing of the INA comprising 45 young Indians personally chosen by Bose, called the Tokyo Boys, was sent to Japan's Imperial Military Academy for training as fighter pilots. An all-female unit, Jhansi ki Rani Regiment, was created under Lakshmi Sahgal.

In October 1943, Bose proclaimed the formation of the Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind, or the Provisional Government of Free India (aka Azad Hind). The INA (Azad Hind Fauz) was declared the army of Azad Hind. On 23 October 1943, Azad Hind declared war against Britain and the US. INA operated mostly in the North-East and Burma. With the fall of the Axis powers that included Japan, INA too suffered. Many INA soldiers were arrested by the British-Indian army.

About 10 courts-martial, famous as the Red Fort Trials 1945-6, against the INA top-brass were held in public at the Red Fort in Delhi, with the British and their Commander-in-Chief in India, Claude Auchinleck, hoping the trials would turn the public opinion against the INA. However, the reverse happened. The first and most celebrated joint courts-martial was of Prem Sahgal, Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Shah Nawaz Khan of INA: a Hindu, a Sikh, and a Muslim. People realised that the INA represented a true, secular, national army; in sharp contrast to the British-Indian Army, where caste and religions reflected in the naming and organisation of the

regiments. Seen as the real fighters for freedom of India, a huge sympathy wave was generated in their favour.

Despite considerable legal defence, the accused were sentenced to transportation for life. But, the sentence was not carried out. The trials unleashed massive patriotic fervour. It also caused unease and unrest among the Indian troops of the Raj. Realising how the general public was agitated about the trials, and how most in the army sympathised with the accused, the Raj thought it prudent not to push things further towards alienation of the public and the army. Immense public pressure forced the then Army Chief Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck to commute the sentences. All the three accused were released in January 1946. The Raj's climb down signalled imminence of the Indian independence. It prompted Sardar Patel to remark: "The British had only to be helped to roll up their bedding and depart!"

Writes Michael Edwardes in his book "Last Years of British India": "The Government of India had hoped, by prosecuting members of the INA, to reinforce the morale of the Indian army. It succeeded only in creating unease, in making the soldiers feel slightly ashamed that they themselves had supported the British. If Bose and his men had been on the right side—and all India now confirmed that they were—then Indians in the Indian army must have been on the wrong side. It slowly dawned upon the Government of India that the backbone of the British rule, the Indian army, might now no longer be trustworthy. The ghost of Subhas Bose, like Hamlet's father, walked the battlements of the Red Fort (where the INA soldiers were being tried), and his suddenly amplified figure overawed the conference that was to lead to independence."

Incidentally, the Congress had all through opposed Subhas and INA, yet a lot is made of Nehru donning his lawyer's robes to fight for INA soldiers in their trial by the British in 1945, although the defence was led by Bhulabhai Desai. The actual reality was that elections were imminent, and INA and Bose being the people's favourites, Congress and Nehru wanted to get cheap popularity by projecting themselves as pro-INA to win elections.

Says Anuj Dhar in his book 'India's Biggest Cover-up': "The British saw through the Congressmen's change of heart. Commander-in-Chief of British Indian armed forces General Claude Auchinleck wrote to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell on 24 November 1945 that 'the present INA trials

are agitating all sections of Indian public opinion deeply and have also provided the Congress with an excellent election cry.’...Captain Badhwar reported that the Congress leaders’ turnaround had little to do with any love for their ousted former president [Bose] or the people who fought under his command...He [Asaf Ali—CWC member] travelled across India and discovered that people were overwhelmingly in support of the INA. ‘This inflamed feeling forced Congress to take the line it did,’ Badhwar said...Ali was positive that as and when Congress came to power, they ‘would have no hesitation in removing all INA from the Services and even in putting some of them to trial.’...The top Congress leadership’s duplicitous disapproval of Bose and INA was exposed by numerous pre-1947 statements made by its leaders, especially Nehru.”

As expected from Nehru and the Congress, rather than honouring and rewarding them, the INA-veterans were debarred from the Indian Army by the Government of independent India! Why? Because, that was the way the British and Mountbatten wanted, as INA soldiers had fought against them. That was in sharp contrast to Jinnah who had inducted Muslim INA soldiers into the Pakistani army. The INA personnel remained ineligible for the Freedom Fighters Pension till 1972.

Captain Ram Singh Thakur (1914–2002) was an INA soldier of Nepali origin. He was also a musician and a composer. His famous patriotic compositions include “Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja, khushi kē geet gāē jā, yē zīndagi hai qāum kī, tū qāum pē lūtāē jā...” and “Subh Sukh Chain”. His final years were difficult. He was also initially denied the status of a freedom fighter by the government.

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Associated with Gandhi

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Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam

*Born:* 11 November 1888 at Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

*Died:* 22 February 1958 at Delhi.



Azad's father was a Bengali Maulana who traced his ancestry to Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and the son of Talib and Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatimah. Azad compiled many treatises interpreting the Quran, and the Hadith.

Unlike the Muslim leaders like Aga Khan who supported partition of Bengal (which was obviously and deliberately a communal act of the British) in 1905, Azad opposed it.

As a leader of the Khilafat Movement (a regressive movement: please see details elsewhere in this book) of 1919-22, he came into close contact with Gandhi. He became President of the Congress in 1923 at the age of 35. He also served as Congress President between 1940 and 1945. He was one of the organisers of the Dharasana Satyagraha in 1931, part of the Salt Satyagraha. He was imprisoned along with many other Congress leaders in the Ahmednagar Fort Jail in 1942 on account of the Quit India Movement.

Azad belonged to the socialist group (which did much harm to India) of Nehru and others, and was therefore opposed to the non-socialists Sardar Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad, and Rajaji. He backed Nehru in 1936 in espousing socialism as the goal of the Congress.

He became the first Education Minister of independent India.

Azad wrote in his autobiography 'India Wins Freedom': "...[then] it seemed to me that Jawaharlal should be the new President [in 1946—and hence the first Prime Minister] ...I acted according to my best judgement but the way things have shaped since then has made me to realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life... My second mistake was that when I decided not to stand myself, I did not support Sardar Patel."

## Bordoloi, Gopinath

*Born:* 6 June 1890, Raha, Assam.

*Died:* 5 August 1950, Guwahati, Assam.



Gopinath Bordoloi had for some years functioned as the Prime Minister of undivided Assam before independence, and after independence, as Chief Minister of Assam. He was one of the leading freedom fighters.

When we talk of the Northeast we must first pay our tributes to Gopinath Bordoloi but for whom Assam and the Northeast may not have been part of India. The initial British Plan of 1946 for the Indian Independence clubbed Assam and Bengal together in 'Group-C'. Such an inclusion would have had the consequence of Assamese being in a minority, to be overruled into ultimately being absorbed in East-Pakistan. Sensing this ominous possibility, Bordoloi opposed being clubbed into Group-C, contrary to what Nehru had agreed to. With Nehru remaining unamenable, Bordoloi started mass agitation. He fought the Muslim League's efforts to include Assam and other parts of the Northeast Region (NER) in East Pakistan. The Congress Party at the national level, led by Nehru, would have acquiesced to the Muslim League had it not been for a revolt by Bordoloi, backed by the Assam unit of the Congress Party and supported by Mahatma Gandhi and the Assamese public.

Among the biggest problems of the Northeast is the problem of the migrants. With the annexation of Assam by the British in 1826, British brought in the peasantry from over-populated East-Bengal, now Bangladesh, for tea plantation and other purposes. The All India Muslim League (AIML), in order to improve its strength in the predominantly non-Muslim Assam, strategized back in 1906 in its conference at Dacca to increase the Muslim population in Assam, and exhorted the East-Bengal Muslims to migrate and settle in Assam.

In the 1930s and later, when the Muslims of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) began migrating to Brahmaputra valley in Assam for livelihood, pooh-poohing the grave warnings from sane quarters, Nehru

made an irresponsible statement: “Nature abhors vacuum, meaning where there is open space how can one prevent people from settling there?”

The fact of large-scale migration was also noted in the Census report of 1931. Congress leaders Bardoloi, Medhi and others raised this serious issue of migration, but did not get due support from the Congress leadership at the Centre. Even after Independence, when the Central Government could have taken a tough stand and effectively dealt with the problem, it remained ostrich-like, and demographic invasion from East-Pakistan continued, becoming a major source of ethnic bitterness and tension. The ongoing Bodo-Bangladeshi Muslim clash is an offshoot of this bitterness.

Writes Kuldip Nayar in *Beyond the Lines*: “The state subsequently paid the price...when illegal migration from the then East Pakistan reduced the Assamese-speaking population in Assam to a minority... It was not Chaliha who initiated the issue of illegal migration but his senior in the Congress, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, who rose to be India’s president. In fact, the entire party was guilty. Its simplistic solution was to win elections in Assam by allowing would-be settlers from across the border into the state thus creating a vote bank...[Gobind Ballabh] Pant [the then Home Minister in Nehru’s cabinet] knew that large number of people were coming across the border. After all, his party had connived at the migration since independence...”

The problems of the Northeast have their roots in the Nehruvian era on account of faulty understanding of the issues, distorted world view, Muslim appeasement and vote-bank politics, defective grasp of national security interests, and the faulty policies and remedies that flowed from them. Nehru, thanks to his policies, managed to make all our international borders and the regions in the border areas sensitive and insecure, costing us a fortune to maintain them. Nehru could have and should have put in place a reliable and robust mechanism to plug the migrations from East-Pakistan after Independence; but he remained casual and indifferent.

Bordoloi, who had helped expand India’s geographical boundary to Assam and the Northeast, was not awarded Bharat Ratna by the successive Congress Governments starting from Nehru, while many, not as deserving, got that award. Why? Because, he had opposed Nehru before independence, and for good reason—to include Assam in India. It was only when a non-

Congress (Vajpayee) government came to power that Bordoloi, a veteran Congressman, was awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1999.

## Gandhi , Mohandas Karamchand

Aka 'Mahatma', Bapu, Gandhiji.

Unofficially called the 'Father of the Nation'.

*Born:* 2 October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat.

*Died:* 30 January 1948 in New Delhi (shot dead).



MK Gandhi was born in a Hindu Modh Baniya family in Porbandar, a coastal town in the Kathiawar Peninsula in a small princely state of Porbandar, in which his father Karamchand Uttamchand Gandhi (1822–1885), earlier a clerk, served as the Chief Minister (diwan) to the Rana of Porbandar, Vikmatji. Karamchand only had an elementary education, and had married four times: first two wives had died after bearing a daughter each, the third was childless, and the fourth, Putlibai (1844–1891) from a Pranami Vaishnava family from Junagadh, bore four children—Laxmidas (1860–1914), Raliatbehn (1862–1960), Karsandas (1866–1913), and Mohandas. In 1876, Karamchand's brother Tulsidas took over as diwan of Porbandar, while Karamchand shifted to Rajkot as diwan in 1876.

Mohandas did his schooling in Rajkot. In May 1883, when just 13, Mohandas married 14-year-old Kasturbai Makhanji Kapadia. They had four sons: Harilal (born: 1888), Manilal (b. 1892), Ramdas (b. 1897), and Devdas (b. 1900).

He matriculated in 1887 scoring 40%. He enrolled at Samaldas College in Bhavnagar in 1888, but returned to Porbandar on account of ill-health. Gandhi left for England in 1888 to study law. In London, Gandhi enrolled at the Inner Temple. He was called to the bar in June 1891. He returned to Bombay, but failed to establish his law practice, finding it difficult to cross-examine witnesses. He returned to Rajkot, and began to make a modest living drafting petitions for litigants. There he ran afoul of a British officer,

and was forced to stop his practice. In 1893, he sailed for South Africa after accepting a one-year contract from an Indian firm Dada Abdulla & Co to a post in Natal.

Gandhi arrived in South Africa in 1893 when 24, and spent the next 21 years there till 1914. He worked as a legal representative for the Indian Muslim Traders of Pretoria. He returned to India in 1915. Much is made of Gandhi's work in South Africa, but actually he failed to achieve any of the things that he had set out as the agenda/demands of his movements there. Even in India, none of the three major movements—'Khilafat & Non-cooperation Movement' (KNCM, 1920–22; 'Salt Satyagraha & Civil Disobedience Movement', 1930-32; 'Quit India', 1942—that Gandhi led against the British achieved any of the aims that Gandhi had set out for them when he started the movement! Please see details under "Interesting Indian Timelines" in this book.

Besides, in South Africa, he entertained certain racist notions there. One of the first battles Gandhi fought was over the separate entrances for whites and blacks at the Durban post office. Gandhi objected that Indians were "classed with the natives" who he called the kaffirs. Said Gandhi: "We felt the indignity too much and ...petitioned the authorities to do away with the invidious distinction, and they have now provided three separate entrances for natives, Asiatics and Europeans." In 1904, he wrote to a health officer in Johannesburg that the council "must withdraw Kaffirs" from an unsanitary slum called the "Coolie Location" where a large number of Africans lived alongside Indians. "About the mixing of the Kaffirs with the Indians, I must confess I feel most strongly."

Gandhi entertained queer notions on economics as obvious from this passage from his book 'Hind Swaraj': "...Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country... Machinery...represents a great sin... India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the last fifty years. The railways, the telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors and the such like have to go;..."

The Brits were happy at the emergence of a 'Hindu' Jesus who evoked Hindu symbols but spread the Jesus message of non-violence, "turn the other cheek", and so on. The irony was that the real Christians, the British, had little use for the Christian dictums, and they didn't flinch in using extreme violence to achieve their ends.

Popular, publicised notion is that Gandhi, Gandhians, and the Congress, through their non-violence creed and non-cooperation, won freedom for India from the British—the fact is they were a minor factor. For details, please see the last chapter ‘What Really Led to Freedom & Partition’ in this book.

## Nehru, Jawaharlal

*Born:* 14 November 1889 at Allahabad.

*Died:* 27 May 1964 in New Delhi.



Jawaharlal was a Kashmiri Pandit whose parents were Motilal Nehru and Swaruprani. He married Kamala Kaul (1899–1936) in 1916.

A general impression has been created that among the freedom fighters if there was one exceptional intellectual and highly educated person it was Nehru. But was it really so? Writes MJ Akbar in his book ‘Nehru: The Making of India’: “Eventually when he [Jawaharlal] passed in the second half of the second class, Motilal was relieved enough to celebrate lavishly...Motilal was acutely terrified that his son might fail, so even such moderate results were cause for celebrations... Motilal had set his heart on sending his son to the Indian Civil Service... He called the ICS the ‘greatest of services in the world’... But the weak Second [class of Jawaharlal Nehru] at the end of Cambridge persuaded Motilal that his son was unlikely to get through the tough ICS examinations...His [Jawaharlal’s] expenditure in 1911 was £800, enough to pay for three years of an ordinary student’s existence...”

While Nehru scraped through graduation, Sardar Patel had topped in his exams in London. Subhas Bose was a brilliant student at Cambridge who had also cleared ICS, getting fourth rank. Dr Rajendra Prasad was a great scholar who always topped in his class—his examiner had once written a comment on his answer sheet: “examinee is better than examiner!” Dr BR Ambedkar, with all his severe monetary and social handicaps, earned the degrees of Master of Arts in 1915, followed by Doctorate in Philosophy in 1916 from the Columbia University in the US, and Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) in Economics from the London School of Economics (LSE).

Jawaharlal’s father Motilal had a major role to play in Jawaharlal’s undeserved elevation as the Congress President in 1929. Motilal was the Congress President in 1928. He desired that his position be inherited by his

son. Subsequent to Vallabhbhai Patel's Bardoli win, Motilal wrote to Gandhi on 11 July 1928: "I am quite clear that the hero of the hour is Vallabhbhai, and the least we can do is to offer him the crown [make him President of the Congress]. Failing him, I think that under all the circumstances Jawahar would be the best choice." Motilal actively canvassed for Jawaharlal with Gandhi. Nepotism and "fight" for freedom went together: Nehrus from Motilal downwards ensured their family was well taken care of; and that it came first, ahead of the nation! In the long run, the nation paid heavily for Motilal's brazen nepotism, exemplarily emulated by his dynasty.

On Nehru undemocratically becoming the President of the Congress in 1946, and hence the first PM, please see "26 April 1946 : Nehru Usurps Congress Presidentship" under "Interesting Indian Timelines" in this book.

It cost India heavy to have Nehru in a position that could have been ably handled only by Sardar Patel as the Congress President in 1946, and later as the first Prime Minister of India. Unfortunately for the millions of Indians, particularly its poor, Jawaharlal Nehru, despite his best intentions, ended up as an all-round comprehensive failure, unwittingly laying the foundations of India's misery. But for a series of major blunders by Nehru across the spectrum—it would not be an exaggeration to say that he blundered comprehensively—India would have been on a rapidly ascending path to becoming a shining, prosperous, first-world country by the end of his term, and would surely have become so by early 1980s—provided, of course, Nehru's dynasty had not followed him to power. For details, please check the following two books on Amazon, available both in the Kindle Digital Edition and in Paperback: "Foundations of Misery: The Nehruvian Era 1947–64", and "Nehru's 97 Major Blunders".

Of course, Nehru was upright, knowledgeable, secular, cultured, hard-working, and a man of integrity, who gave his all to the nation. One also has to appreciate Nehru's physical fitness, despite his busy and stressful life—it was thanks to yoga and his healthy life style. His was reportedly a singularly unmedicated body till about two years before his death. He wrote books, and they were good, though not great. They were rather average. He was courageous—unlike the current nobodies moving under loads of security. Once during the 1947 riots, when he saw a person being attacked in Chandni Chowk, he stopped his car and personally charged-in to save him. He was a popular leader. He valued the virtues of parliamentary

democracy, secularism and liberalism. He was one of the founders of Non-Aligned Movement.

## Patel, Vallabhbhai

Aka Sardar Patel.

*Born:* 31 October 1875 at Nadiad, Kheda, Gujarat.

*Died:* 15 December 1950 in Mumbai.



Vallabhbhai was the fourth son of Ladbhai Patel, and Jhaverbhai Patel, a patidar–farmer of Karamsad, who had played a notable role in India's First War for Independence of 1857, having joined the Rani of Jhansi.

Sardar Patel's temperament that made him a successful freedom fighter and a distinguished statesman showed up since his early years. Right since childhood Vallabhbhai rebelled against wrong-doing. While in schools, he once learnt a teacher was making illegal gains by selling text-books and stationery in black. He first cautioned the teacher, and when that didn't work, gave a warning. When that too failed, he organised a strike. That did the teacher in.

In those days, a matriculate could become a lawyer by taking the Pleaders' ('Mukhtari' or Junior Pleader) Examination. Not having the means to finance his higher studies, Vallabhbhai, after completing high school, started working as an assistant to an advocate at Nadiad; and borrowing books from him, engaged in self-study for the examination. He sat for the District Pleaders' Examination in 1900, and cleared it. Soon after, he started his practice in Godhra.

Sardar had been saving money from his practice to be able to go to England for higher studies. In Sardar's own words: "I longed to go overseas to see the people of England who, living 7,000 miles away, were able to rule us for so long. My father had no means to enable me to fulfil my ambitions. I was told that only if I could get 7 to 10,000 rupees I would be able to proceed to England... I therefore studied very earnestly for my law

examination and resolved firmly to save sufficient money for a visit to England.”

He enrolled at the Middle Temple, one of the Inns of Court, as London’s law colleges were called, for a 36-month course in 1910. If one was diligent and cleared the terms with honours, it was possible to complete the 36-month, 12-terms (4 per year) course earlier than stipulated. Sardar Patel took advantage of the special concession for the meritorious students getting honours, and appeared for the final examinations in June 1912 after mere 20 months, obtaining first class with honours, getting first rank, and thus topping the class, and winning a prize of 50 pounds!

After return from England Patel set up a thriving legal practice in Ahmedabad, which he gave up upon a call from Gandhi.

It was Patel who put the Congress on strong footing organisationally. What Patel was can be better brought forth by quoting the stalwarts:

“Patel possessed the organising ability of Bismarck, the astute statesmanship of Chanakya, and the single-minded devotion to the cause of national unity of Abraham Lincoln.”

— *VV Giri, ex-President of India*

“You saw his [Sardar’s] face;  
it grew year by year in power and determination...”

— *Acharya Kriplani*

“While I usually came back from meeting Gandhiji elated and inspired but always a bit sceptical, and from talks with Jawaharlal fired with emotional zeal but often confused and unconvinced, meetings with Vallabhbhai were a joy from which I returned with renewed confidence in the future of our country. I have often thought that if fate had decreed that he [Sardar Patel], instead of Jawaharlal, would be younger of the two, India would have followed a very different path and would be in better economic shape than it is today.”

— *JRD Tata*

“Dressed in his Dhoti, Patel conjures up the vision of a Roman Emperor in his toga. There are, in fact, Roman qualities about this man—administrative talent, the capacity to take and sustain strong decisions, and a certain

serenity which invariably accompanies real strength of character. Off duty he is indeed the embodiment of the gentle Hindu, full of benevolence and smiles.”

— *Allan Campbell-Johnson*

“Here was a man with a crystal-clear mind who could see to the core of the problem within the shortest possible time...” — *Frank Anthony*

“The Mahatma was the most respected, Jawaharlal Nehru the most loved and Subhas Bose the most longed-for. But in terms of the iron control he exercised over the largest political apparatus in the country and the grip he had on political currents and cross-currents in virtually every province in India, the power wielded by the Patidar from Karamsad [Sardar Patel], Gujarat, had no match. No near-match, either. Not by far...”

— *Gopalkrishna Gandhi*

“The problem of the [Princely] states is so difficult that only you can solve it.”

— *Gandhi to Patel.*

Sir Stafford Cripps had estimated it would take India 10 to 15 years, if not more, to liquidate the Indian Princely States and merge them with India. It was a surprise to all, and a tribute to the Sardar’s abilities, that he took, not 10 to 15 years, but less than 10 to 15 months to merge all the 548 Princely States with India, extending India’s geographical area by a whopping 40%.

“...Nationalist India was fortunate to have Sardar Patel to guide her destiny for a generation. But her misfortune is that there will be none to take his place when he is no more... On that issue Sardar Patel proved to be greater than the Mahatma, who had declared that India could be partitioned only over his dead body... Could Sardar Patel have had his way on the Kashmir issue, India would not be today spending fifty percent of her revenue on military budget... His [Patel] death is in fact a greater loss than that of the Mahatma... What India is today, however, is rather a creation of Patel than of his master.”

—MN Roy, *Communist Leader and Theoretician*,  
in “Men I Met”

“When we are faced with thorny problems, and Gandhi’s advice is not available, we consider Sardar Patel as our leader.”

—*Acharya Kriplani*

Rajagopalachari, Chakravarti

Aka CR or *Rajaji*

Born: 10 December 1878 in Thorapalli, Tamil Nadu.

*Died:* 25 December 1972 in Chennai.



Rajaji had a thriving legal practice in Tamil Nadu which he left to join the nationalist cause. He was a realist and a pragmatic who advocated co-operation in WW-II with Britain, opposed Quit India, and favoured talks with Jinnah on Pakistan, as per his CR Formula (please see details under “Interesting Indian Timelines”). In a way, what Rajaji suggested in 1942 happened in 1947.

He served as Premier of the Madras Presidency, Governor of West Bengal, Minister for Home Affairs in the Union Government, and Chief Minister of Madras state. He became the first and the last Indian Governor General of India, taking charge from Mountbatten on 21 June 1948.

CR was brilliant and original, not a copy-cat like Nehru, and was among the first top leaders to have seen through the farce of Nehru’s poverty-perpetuating socialism. CR founded the rightist *Swatantra Party* on 4 June 1959, along with Murari Vaidya of the Forum of Free Enterprise (FFE), and Minoo Masani. Later, NG Ranga, KM Munshi, Field Marshal KM Cariappa, and others joined the party.

Rajaji proved prescient and on-the-dot both in regard to his CR Formula of 1942, and his advocacy of the free-market economic policies, as opposed to Nehruvian misery-multiplying socialism.

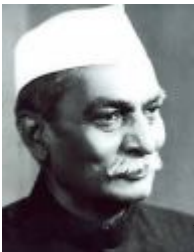
Rajaji had commented: “Mr Jawaharlal Nehru returned from Cambridge with notions of how an all-governing interventionist state can force people into happiness and prosperity through socialism...He sticks to this bias in spite of the demonstration of world experience against it... I hate the present folly and arrogance as much as I hated the foreign arrogance of those [British] days.”

He was an accomplished writer in Tamil and English, and was a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. He co-founded Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He was among the first to be awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1954 along with Dr CV Raman and Dr S Radhakrishnan.

### Dr Rajendra Prasad

Born: 3 December 1884 at Ziradie, Siwan, Bihar.

*Died:* 28 February 1963 (aged 78) at Patna.



Prasad was a brilliant student. He did his MA in Economics from the University of Calcutta. Impressed by his answers, an examiner had once commented on his answer sheet “examinee is better than examiner”. He served also as a professor in English, and as principal of a college. Later, while pursuing his law studies in Kolkata he also worked as Professor of Economics at Calcutta City College. He won gold medal in the examination of Masters of Law. He did his Doctorate in Law from Allahabad University.

He joined the Congress in 1911, during its annual session held in Calcutta. He left his lucrative career as a lawyer to join the independence movement. Dr Prasad was associated with Gandhi in Champaran in 1917; and also in the subsequent ‘Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement’ of 1920-22, Salt Satyagraha of 1930, and the Quit India of 1942. He served one term as the President of the Congress during 1934–35.

In the 1946 Interim Government, Prasad served as the Food & Agriculture Minister. He was elected the President of the Constituent Assembly of India that prepared the Indian Constitution. Dr Rajendra Prasad was the first President of the Republic of India, and remained in that

position between 26 January 1950 to 14 May 1962. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna.

Dr Prasad differed from Nehru on Tibet, and had made a prescient remark: “I hope I am not seeing ghosts and phantoms, but I see the murder of Tibet recoiling on India.”

Pseudo-secular Nehru had opposed Dr Prasad’s attending the inaugural function of the rebuilt Somnath temple in May 1951, and wrote to him: “...I confess that I do not like the idea of your associating yourself with a spectacular opening of the Somnath Temple...” Dr Rajendra Prasad, of course, attended, and replied to Nehru: “I would do the same thing [attend inauguration] with a mosque or a church if I were invited... Our State is neither religious nor anti-religious.”

Baba Ram Chandra

(1864—1950)



**<71** His real name was Shridhar Balwant Jodhpurkar. He was a Maharashtrian Brahmin. To enable him to leave for Fiji as an indentured labourer in 1904 he took on the name Baba Ram Chandra [Rao/Das] to conceal his identity as a Brahmin, since Brahmins were not preferred as indentured labourers. He was in Fiji for 13 years, and worked for the emancipation of indentured labourers, inspiring them through Ramayana, and by organising Ram-Lilas. Upon return to India he settled in Ayodhya, and became a sadhu. He organised peasants of Oudh against their exploiters, and the British Raj. He founded Oudh Kisan Sabha.

He tried to garner support from Nehru (who belonged to UP) and the Congress, but was sorely disappointed. Nehru and the Congress were urban-oriented, and didn't evince much interest in the travails of the peasants.

Write joint authors Dikgaj, Saswati Sarkar, Shanmukh, and Latha Isloor in their article 'How Gandhi and Nehrus subverted Hindu grass-root peasant movements in collusion with British and Islamists:Part-I' dated 6 November 2016 at MyIndMakers ([www.myind.net](http://www.myind.net)): "...The peasant movement under Ram Chandra attained a revolutionary fervour, and Ram Chandra sought to connect it to the Non-Cooperation movement. This is when the Congress leadership decided that he had become too big for his own good, and Gandhi, Nehrus, and Khilafatists, all joined hands with the British to destroy him... He was an educated man who attempted to connect peasant grievances to the nationalist freedom struggle, the Non-Cooperation movement that Gandhi had called. In normal course, he should have been treated as an asset by any leader committed to freedom fight as he was promising to connect the peasant multitudes to the freedom fight which was

then being driven by urban educated middle and upper classes. Yet, he was crushed with contempt, unceremoniously flung to a cell in a British jail reserved for mad dogs and—unbelievable as it may sound—all this was conducted with the active connivance of the icon who was supposedly championing the ‘dumb millions’ [Gandhi], and other leading lights of the freedom struggle such as Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehrus. But why? The peasant revolt was certainly in conflict with an important power base of Congress [and many Muslim leaders], the taluqdars and the zamindars... Ram Chandra was removed in part because Congress wanted to cripple genuine peasant movements. Peasants were not a strong Congress base, but the zamindars and taluqdars were...”

### Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar

Aka Baba Saheb or BR Ambedkar

*Born:* 14 April 1891 in Mhow (Military Cantt.), MP.

*Died:* 6 December 1956 (aged 65) at Delhi.



Determinedly overcoming the severe handicap imposed on him by the society for being a Dalit, and despite the debilitating monetary constraints, Ambedkar became a prolific student, coming out in flying colours all through his academic career. He graduated in Political Science and Economics from Bombay University in 1912. On scholarship from the Maharaja of Baroda, he went to New York in 1913 and earned the degrees of Master of Arts in 1915, followed by Doctorate in Philosophy in 1916 from the Columbia University. Thereafter, he went to London, where he joined the Grays Inn for Law and the London School of Economics (LSE) for Economics. He earned his second doctorate—Doctor of Science (D.Sc.)—from LSE. He also became a barrister.

His original surname was Ambavadekar, after the name of his native village Ambavade in Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra. His teacher in school was Mahadev Ambedkar. He was so fond of Bhimrao that he changed his surname from Ambavadekar to his own surname Ambedkar in school records!

Ambedkar became Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Mumbai in 1918. Ambedkar had testified before the Southborough Committee preparing the Government of India Act 1919; and argued for creation of separate electorates and reservations for Dalits. He started the weekly Mooknayak (Leader of the Silent) in 1920 in Mumbai: Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur helped him in the venture. Ambedkar practised in Bombay High Court, and also engaged in social and political work, and in working against untouchability. Assigned to work with the all-European Simon Commission in 1925, Ambedkar wrote a separate set of recommendations for the future Constitution of India. On the Poona Pact with Gandhi in 1932, please read details under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines”. Ambedkar was appointed principal of the Government Law College, Bombay in 1935; and also the chairman of Governing body of Ramjas College, University of Delhi.

Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party in 1936, and contested for the 13 reserved and 4 general seats to the Central Legislative Assembly in the 1937 elections; and won 11 reserved and 3 general seats.

After independence, Ambedkar was invited to serve as the first Law Minister of India. He was also appointed Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. During the Constituent Assembly Debates, Ambedkar strongly argued for Uniform Civil Code. Ambedkar opposed Article 370 of the Constitution brought in at the instance of Nehru to grant special status to J&K. Nehru had sent Abdullah to Ambedkar to explain to him the position and to draft an appropriate Article for the Constitution. Ambedkar had reportedly remarked: *“Mr Abdullah, you want that India should defend Kashmir, India should develop Kashmir and Kashmiris should have equal rights as the citizens of India, but you don’t want India and any citizen of India to have any rights in Kashmir. I am the Law minister of India. I cannot betray the interest of my country.”* About Article 370, Sardar Patel had confided to his secretary, V Shankar, *“Jawaharlal royega [Nehru will regret this]”*—the fact unfortunately being that it is the whole of India, and particularly the Kashmiri Pandits, who have been crying for the last many decades since independence. Through Article-370 Nehru managed to turn the Hindu State of Maharaja Hari Singh into a bigoted Muslim State.

Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951. Here is an extract from the resignation letter of Dr Ambedkar from the Nehru’s cabinet dated 27 September 1951: “As a result of my being a Member of the Viceroy’s

Executive Council, I knew the Law Ministry to be administratively of no importance. It gave no opportunity for shaping the policy of the Government of India. We used to call it an empty soap box only good for old lawyers to play with. When the Prime Minister [not voluntarily, but at the instance of Gandhi] made me the offer [Law Minister], I told him that besides being a lawyer by my education and experience, I was competent to run any administrative Department and that in the old Viceroy's Executive Council, I held two administrative portfolios, that of Labour and C.P.W.D., where a great deal of planning projects were dealt with by me and would like to have some administrative portfolio. The Prime Minister agreed and said he would give me in addition to Law the Planning Department which, he said, was intending to create. Unfortunately the Planning Department came very late in the day and when it did come, I was left out... It is difficult to understand what is the principle underlying the distribution of Government work among Ministers which the Prime Minister follows. Is it capacity? Is it trust? Is it friendship? Is it pliability?... When the Economics Affairs Committee was formed, I expected, in view of the fact that I was primarily a student of Economics and Finance, to be appointed to this Committee. But I was left out..."

His house in Dadar in Mumbai stocked his personal library of more than 50,000 books. Unlike the plethora of lawyer-politicians like Nehru, Gandhi, and so on, Ambedkar had the unique distinction of being also highly qualified in the subject most relevant for independent India—Economics. He had penned scholarly books on economics. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) established in 1935 was based on the ideas that Ambedkar had presented to the Hilton Young Commission. Ambedkar also had richer administrative experience in handling departments and ministries, having practically worked on responsible positions under British-India. Yet, arrogant Nehru refused to use his prodigious talent.

Ambedkar was a genuine, serious scholar who went in-depth into the subjects he chose. That was quite unlike the superficial and show-off Nehru who despite his "Discovery of India" failed to grasp the essence of India and its great heritage, and who despite his "Glimpses of World History" failed to learn the elementary lessons of history, and blighted India's bright future after independence. Ambedkar was also unlike Gandhi who projected himself as an all-knowing Mahatma. While the British and the Western historians and Indologists, and their local lackeys—the

Nehruvians, and the leftist–Marxists history distortionists—unscientifically advanced the AIT (Aryan Invasion Theory), something that has lately been comprehensively junked on scientific, historical and genetic grounds; the wise Ambedkar was among the first who had, on solid grounds, dismissed it long back in 1946 in his book “Who Were the Shudras?”.

Ambedkar’s writings are a delight to read: they are logical, well-reasoned, and in-depth—genuinely scholarly.

The terrible Partition mayhem and horrendous loss of precious lives and properties could have been avoided had Ambedkar’s wise counsel given long before partition been heeded: Ambedkar’s well-argued book ‘*Pakistan or the Partition of India*’ (second edition) published in January 1945, and his earlier book ‘Thoughts on Pakistan’ on the same theme published in 1941, contained an elaborate plan and protocols on the peaceful transfer (exchange) of population (Hindus–Muslims) and property. But, with “Mahatmas” as leaders who would listen to the genuinely learned and wise people like Ambedkar? Although leaders and administrators tried to blame people for being communal so as to rid themselves of the accountability, all the three parties—the British headed by Mountbatten, the Congress leadership, and the Muslim League leadership—were guilty, and none can claim they were not aware of what might happen.

Ambedkar penned numerous works, the last one being “The Buddha and His Dhamma” in 1956, and he converted to Buddhism, along with his followers, in 1956.

Ambedkar's first wife Ramabai had expired after a long illness in 1935. His second wife whom he married in 1948 was a doctor—Dr Sharada Kabir. She took very good care of him. Ambedkar was a severe diabetic. He expired in his sleep in Delhi on 6 December 1956.

Incidentally, Dr BR Ambedkar was declared as “The Greatest Indian after Gandhi” in the Outlook–CNN-IBN–History18 TV Channel–BBC Poll, the results of which were announced on 15 August 2012. Yet, he was given Bharat Ratna only in 1990. In the Poll, while Ambedkar topped with 19,91,734 votes, Nehru, at the bottom at number 10, got just 9,921 votes!

## Bal Gangadhar Tilak

aka Lokmanya Tilak

Born: 23 July 1856 in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

*Died:* 1 August 1920 in Mumbai.



Tilak was born in a Marathi Chitpavan Brahmin family. He graduated in first class in Mathematics from Deccan College of Pune in 1877; and did LLB from the Government Law College. He organised the Deccan Education Society, along with Agarkar, Namjoshi and Chiplunkar, with a view to bring up educated nationalist Indians. Their Society founded the New English School and the Fergusson College in 1885. Tilak taught mathematics at the Fergusson College.

1894 onwards, Tilak vigorously promoted Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav, spread over several days, as a grand public celebration involving puja, music, food, cultural programmes and processions, with contributions from all. In 1895, Tilak founded Shri Shivaji Fund Committee for celebration of Shiv Jayanti. Tilak's purpose of promoting such events was to build a national spirit.

Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1890, and opposed its moderate attitude, especially towards the fight for self-government. Tilak was a radical nationalist, and began a mass movement for independence leveraging on religious and cultural elements. Along with the other two in the "Lal-Bal-Pal" triumvirate, Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Tilak opposed the moderate views of Gopal Krishna Gokhale (mentor of Gandhi) . Aurobindo Ghose supported them.

Tilak was tried thrice for sedition—in 1897, 1909, and 1916. Tilak had defended the actions of revolutionaries Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose in his paper Kesari, and called for immediate Swaraj—for which he was charged with sedition and sentenced to six-year jail in Mandalay, Burma. While in prison he wrote *Gita Rahasya*. The prison term badly affected his health, and he also developed diabetes. Famous for his quote "*Swarajya is*

*my birth-right, and I shall have it"*, the British labelled him as the "*Father of the Indian unrest*". Tilak encouraged the *Swadeshi Movement* (usage of natively produced goods) and the *Boycott Movement* (boycott of foreign goods, and social boycott of any Indian who used foreign goods).

Tilak was the first Congress leader to advocate Hindi written in the Devanagari script as the national language of India.

An example of the greatness of Tilak: Once he was asked whether he would become Prime Minister when India won Swaraj. Pat came his response: "*No, sir, under Swaraj I will be a professor of mathematics in a swadeshi college, and retire from public life.*"

### Bipin Chandra Pal

Aka '*Bengal Tiger*' and the '*Father of Revolutionary Thoughts*'

*Born: 7 Nov 1858 in Habiganj, Bangladesh.*

*Died: 20 May 1932 in Kolkata.*

Pal was a teacher, journalist, orator, writer, librarian, reformer, and a



politician and freedom fighter. Pal had studied and taught at the Church Mission Society College. He was a member of the Brahma Samaj and believed in gender equality. He encouraged widow marriages and female education. He started a periodical named '*New India*' which sought to be "intensely national in spirit, breathing the deepest veneration for the spiritual, moral and intellectual achievements of Indian civilization and distinctly universal in aspiration".

He had joined the Congress in 1886. In 1904, he presided over the Bombay session of the Congress. Pal blasted the British move to partition Bengal in 1905, and started a paper '*Bande Mataram*' to spell out his nationalist views, with Aurobindo Ghosh (Sri Aurobindo) as an editor. Pal was one among the triumvirate of Lal-Bal-Pal comprising Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and himself, who belonged to the "Garam Dal" of the Congress.

He and Aurobindo Ghosh were the chief exponents of *Purna Swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, *Boycott of Foreign Goods*, and *National Education*. He was

known as the 'Father of Revolutionary Thoughts'.

He had contempt for the mild protests in the form of non-cooperation, and as such, had nothing in common with Gandhi. During the last six years of his life he parted company with the Congress and led a secluded life.

His son Niranjan Pal was the co-founder of the *Bombay Talkies*.

## Chittaranjan Das

Aka '*Deshbandhu*' (Friend of the Country)

*Born:* 5 November 1870.

*Died:* 16 June 1925 (aged 55).

Das completed his graduation in 1890 from Presidency College, Kolkata



. He then went to England for higher education, and became a barrister. He successfully defended Aurobindo Ghosh in the Alipore Bomb Case in 1909.

At one time, his clothes were tailored and laundered in Paris. He gave all up when he became actively involved in the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-1922. He became the first mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.

He believed in constitutional methods and in non-violence for gaining independence, and advocated Hindu-Muslim unity. After a break with Gandhi and the Congress, he founded the Swaraj Party in 1923 with Motilal Nehru and Hussain Suhrawardy. Netaji Subhas was his disciple. Desh Bandhu's wife Basanti Devi (1880- 1974) was also a freedom fighter who took part in the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1921. Das was jailed with his wife and son in 1921.

He substantially contributed to the periodical '*Bande Mataram*' brought out by Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose. Das had a flair for writing and this was evident from his literary magazines *Narayan*, *Mala*, *Sagar Sangit*, *Kishore-Kishoree* and *Antaryami*. He published *Forward* (later named *Liberty*), a newspaper, as a weapon against the British Raj.

On account of failing health, Das withdrew to a mountain home in Darjeeling in 1925, but expired on 16 June 1925 at a relatively young age of 55. His body was brought to Calcutta. Mahatma Gandhi led his funeral procession.

Das had gifted his house and the adjoining land for the betterment of women—it is now Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, a huge hospital.

He has been immortalized through many places and institutions named after him: Chittaranjan Avenue, Chittaranjan College, Chittaranjan High School, Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Deshbandhu College for Girls, and so on.

### Dadabhai Naoroji

Aka the *Grand Old Man of India*.  
*Born:* 4 September 1825 in Mumbai.  
*Died:* 30 June 1917 in Mumbai.



Naoroji was a Parsi intellectual, educator, cotton trader, politician, and a social worker. He came from a poor family, and was a self-made person. Naoroji became a professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Elphinstone Institution at the age of 27. He sailed to England in 1855 at age 30 mainly to educate the British people and the British Parliament on the plight of India. In 1859, he established Dadabhai Naoroji & Co, a cotton trading company, in Britain. Later, he became professor of Gujarati at University College London. In 1867, he co-founded the East India Association for putting across the Indian point of view in Britain. In 1874, he became Prime Minister of Baroda Princely State. He was a member of the Legislative Council of Mumbai during 1885–88. He co-founded the Indian National Congress with AO Hume and Dinshaw Edulji Wacha in 1885, and was its President in 1886.

He was a Liberal Party MP in the UK House of Commons between 1892 and 1895, and tried to promote India's cause. The Congress demand for swaraj (self-rule) was first expressed publicly by him in his presidential address in 1906. Dadabhai Naoroji believed in the constitutional methods of protest. He was also a member of the Second International along with Kautsky and Plekhanov.

His book 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' drew attention to the draining of India's wealth into Britain.

Garhwali, Veer Chander Singh



*Born:* 15 December 1891 in Pauri Garhwal.

*Died:* 1 October 1979, Delhi.

Garhwali was the hero of *Peshawar Kand*, and thus *Veer* got prefixed to his name. On 23 April 1930, Garhwali, who was then heading a platoon of Royal Garhwal Rifles in Peshawar, had refused to fire at unarmed protesting Pathans. For details on Garhwali, please read in this book “1930: Qissa Khwani Bazaar Massacre & Garhwali”.

## Gopal Krishna Gokhale

*Born:* 9 May 1866, Kothluk, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

*Died:* 19 February 1915 (aged 48) at Mumbai.



Like Tilak, Gokhale was born in a Marathi Chitpavan Brahmin family. He graduated from Elphinstone College in 1884. Like Tilak, he became a mathematics professor; and was a members of the Deccan Education Society along with Tilak.

Gokhale joined the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1889. He was a protégé of the distinguished founder-member of the INC Mahadev Govind Ranade. Gokhale was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council in 1899; and to the Imperial Council of the Governor-General of India in 1901. He was appointed a ‘Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire’ (CIE) in the 1904. In 1905 Gokhale was elected president of the Congress, and founded the ‘Servants of India Society’ to further the cause of education, among other things. Gokhale helped shape the Morley-Minto Reforms introduced in 1909—he was specially invited to London to meet the Secretary of State Lord John Morley for the purpose. He served in the Imperial Legislative Council after 1909.

Gokhale was more concerned with reforms than with independence, and became the leader of the moderate faction of the Congress party that advocated reforms by working with the existing government institutions. He was a leader of the ‘Naram Dal’ (moderates) within the Congress, as opposed to the ‘Garam Dal’ (radicals/ aggressive nationalists) faction within the Congress of Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Bipin Chandra Pal).

He founded the ‘Ranade Institute of Economics’ in 1908. He deprecated the caste-system and untouchability, pleaded for the emancipation of women, and championed the cause of female education.

Gokhale had visited Gandhi in South Africa in 1912, and was instrumental in getting Gandhi back in India. Gandhi had called Gokhale his mentor and guide. However, Gandhi did not agree with Gokhale’s view

of working with the established British Government institutions to achieve social reforms, and ultimately freedom. Jinnah considered Gokhale his role model.

## Lala Lajpat Rai

Aka '*Lion of Punjab*' and '*Punjab Kesari*'

*Born:* 28 January 1865, Dhudike, Moga, Punjab.

*Died:* 17 November 1928, Lahore.



Lala Lajpat Rai's father Radha Krishan was an Urdu teacher. Lajpat's initial education was in Rewari, Haryana. After studying law both in Kolkata, and at the Government College in Lahore, Lajpat Rai set up his law-practice at Hissar and Lahore, where he also helped establish the nationalistic Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Schools. He had set up the National College in Lahore, as an alternative to the British educational institutions. Bhagat Singh had graduated from there. He was also initially associated with the Punjab National Bank and the Lakshmi Insurance Company.

For his anti-British agitational politics he was deported to jail in Mandalay in Burma without any trial in May 1907. However, he was released in November 1907 for want of evidence. He, along with Bal-Pal, was part of the 'Garam Dal' in the Congress. The opposition members of the 'Naram Dal' of the Congress led by Gokhale, who favoured co-operation with the British, did not allow him to become the President of the Congress in the Surat session of the Congress in December 1907. During WW-I he was mostly in the US. He was imprisoned during 1921-23 for participating in the KNCM (Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement).

Lajpat Rai led a silent march in protest against the Simon Commission when it visited Lahore on 30 October 1928. The SP James Scott ordered the police to lathi-charge the protesters, and personally assaulted Lajpat Rai. Despite the serious injury, Lajpat Rai subsequently addressed the crowd: "I declare that the blows struck at me today will be the last nails in the coffin of British rule in India." Rai succumbed to his injuries on 17 November 1928.

Being pragmatic, he had demanded way back on 14 December 1923, in an article in '*The Tribune*', much before the Muslim League, for "a clear

partition of India into a Muslim India and non-Muslim India”. Bhai Parmanand (please see above) had demanded something similar in 1905 at the time of partition of Bengal.

## Motilal Nehru

*Born:* 6 May 1861 in Agra.

*Died:* 6 February 1931 (aged 69) in Lucknow.

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Motilal was son of Gangadhar Nehru, a Kashmiri Brahmin, who was a kotwal in Delhi. Motilal did matriculation from Kanpur. Later, he attended Muir Central College at Allahabad, but didn't appear for the final year for his graduation. He passed the lawyer examination in 1883, and began practising as a lawyer at Kanpur. Subsequently, he moved to Allahabad. Most of Motilal's cases were civil in nature, involving large land-owning families; and that's how he became rich. He bought a large bungalow in Civil Lines in Allahabad, rebuilt it, and named it as Anand Bhavan. Later, he bought another palatial house from Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and named it Swaraj Bhawan.

Nehru served as the president of the Congress for two one-year terms in 1919 and 1928. Although he participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1919-22, he severely criticised Gandhi for calling it off on the pretext of the Chauri-Chaura incident. He later formed a separate party—the Swaraj Party with Chittaranjan Das and others. Motilal chaired the Nehru Commission in 1928 as a counter to the all-British Simon Commission, and came out with 'The Nehru Report' that was the first constitution of India written by only Indians, which envisioned a dominion status for India within the Empire. Although endorsed by the Congress, it was rejected by the nationalists demanding complete independence. It was also rejected by the Muslim League.

True to nepotistic and dynastic tendencies of the Nehrus, Motilal persuaded Gandhi to let his son take over the Congress Presidentship from him in 1929, as if in a dynastic succession, even though Jawaharlal was not elected, and was junior—overriding the far more deserving Sardar Patel.

Thanks to Motilal's upbringing, Jawaharlal was too westernised to be suitable to lead a country like India with a rich civilizational heritage. Malcolm Muggeridge, the British journalist, had characterized Nehru after seeing him shortly before his death as "a man of echoes and mimicry, the last viceroy rather than the first leader of a liberated India."

### Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

*Born:* 6 July 1901 in Calcutta..

*Died:* 23 June 1953 in Srinagar, J&K.



Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was the son of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee (1864–1924), renowned as 'Banglar Bagh' or the 'Tiger of Bengal'.

Ashutosh Mukherjee was a great educationist who had helped found many educational institutions like the Bengal Technical Institute, College of Science, University College of Law, and the Calcutta Mathematical Society, and served as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta during 1906–1914.

Thanks to his educational excellence, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee became the youngest Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta at the age of 33 in 1934, and remained in that post till 1938. He was an eloquent speaker.

He joined the Hindu Mahasabha in 1939. He was the Minister for Industry and Supply in Nehru's cabinet after independence, and joined the Congress. He had supported the partition of Bengal in 1947, and ensured that the whole of it did not go to Pakistan.

He opposed the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950, and in protest resigned from the cabinet, and left the Congress. He co-founded the Bhartiya Jan Sangh on 21 October 1951, and became its first President.

He opposed Article 370 related to J&K (Dr Ambedkar, Sardar Patel and others too had expressed their disapproval of it), and opposed the decision to grant Kashmir a special status with its own flag and Prime Minister, and according to which, no one, including the President of India, could enter into Kashmir without the permission of Kashmir's Prime Minister! He

coined a slogan: “Ek desh mein do Vidhan, do Pradhan aur do Nishan nahi challenge” (A single country can't have two constitutions, two prime ministers, and two national emblems).

In protest, he tried to enter Kashmir on 11 May 1953, but was arrested at the border, and was lodged in a run-down, dilapidated structure by the then PM(!) of J&K Sheikh Abdullah! Reportedly, all this was in the knowledge of Nehru, and was done with his concurrence. Even the British had not treated the Congress freedom fighters, especially the Gandhian leadership, in such an abject manner. Nehru wrote books sitting in British jails, and he had himself written in his autobiography that his treatment in the British jails was very good, and full of respect.

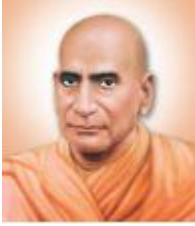
Dr Mukherjee was already not in good health, and such deliberately inhuman treatment exacerbated his dry pleurisy and coronary (heart) troubles. So callous and cruel was the attitude of the J&K government and Sheikh Abdullah (and Nehru must have been fully aware of the goings on) that Dr Mukherjee was taken to a hospital full month and a half after his arrest! And, so careless and incompetent was the treatment that he was administered penicillin, even though he had informed the doctor-in-charge of his allergy to penicillin. Couldn't Nehru have flown-in heart-specialists, or shifted him to New Delhi! Poor Dr Mukherjee, he succumbed to the ill-treatment on 23 June 1953.

Such a major death, and that too in government custody, and yet no Enquiry Commission was set up, despite demands. Dr Mukherjee's mother (his wife had expired long ago) wrote to Nehru asking for a proper, independent enquiry, but “democratic” Nehru turned down, or turned a deaf ear to, all such requests. Nehru stated dismissively that he had made enquiries, and was satisfied there was no wrong-doing. Was he a detective? Such an immature comment from a PM! And, if there was no wrong-doing, he could have let an Enquiry Commission establish it.

Swami Shraddhanand

*Born:* 22 February 1856, Jalandhar.

*Died:* 23 December 1926 (aged 70), Delhi.



Swami Shraddhanand, also known as Mahatma Munshi Ram Vij, was an Indian educationist, writer and an Arya Samaj missionary, who also published newspapers.

He started a movement for education of girls. Alarmed at her daughter Ved Kumari coming under the influence of Christianity while studying in a Christian Mission school, he resolved to start quality schools to keep children away from such influences. He founded the first Gurukul on 16 May 1900 at Gujranwala in the West Punjab, now in Pakistan. He later moved it to Kangri near Haridwar. The underlying idea was to provide high-quality education, and produce good and disciplined citizens imbued with a nationalist outlook. It is now a full-fledged university: Gurukul Kangri University. When he visited the Gurukul, Ramsay Macdonald likened Munshi Ram to a biblical prophet walking the shores of Galilee. Upon his return from South Africa, Gandhi visited Gurukul Kangri along with Madan Mohan Malviya in 1915, and stayed at the campus. Impressed, Gandhi addressed Munshi Ram as 'Mahatma'. However, *it was the institute that labelled Gandhi as 'Mahatma' here for the first time, and the label stayed.*

After the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in 1919, when none had the courage to conduct the Congress Session at Amritsar, Swami Shraddhanand took the initiative and did the needful. He was among the first to sign the oath for participating in the Gandhian satyagraha movement, and supported Gandhi. Once, when he led a group of Satyagrahis in Ghantaghar area at Delhi, and the British soldiers were ordered to shoot them, he bravely challenged them to “first shoot me in my chest”—the soldiers didn't dare.

When he was lying in his sick bed, Shraddhanand was shot dead by a Muslim fanatic Abdul Rashid on 23rd December 1926. Despite Gandhi's bonhomie with Muslim Khilafat leaders, no Muslim leader condemned the attack. Indeed, the Muslims rejoiced over it. Shockingly, rather than denouncing the gruesome murder, and demanding punishment for the perpetrator, Gandhi wrote a letter to the murderer, addressing him as “Pyare Bhai Rashid” (Dear Brother Rashid); and tried to establish cordial relations

with him. Moving a condolence motion on Swami Shraddhanand at the Guwahati session of the Congress on 25 December 1926, Gandhi said: "...I have called Abdul Rashid a brother and I repeat it. I do not even regard him as guilty of Swamiji's murder. Guilty indeed are all those who excited feelings of hatred against one another..."

India being then under the British rule, and not under the Gandhi-Nehru pseudo-secular rule, Abdul Rashid was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death. Not the one to keep quiet on the "injustice", the secular-appeaser Gandhi promptly petitioned the Viceroy for clemency to the murderer—the petition was, however, thankfully rejected, and Rashid was hanged to death.

### Vithalbhai Patel

*Born:* 1873 in Nadiad, Gujarat.

*Died:* 22 October 1933 in Geneva, Switzerland.



Vithalbhai was the third of five Patel brothers, and was four years elder to Vallabhbhai Patel. He was born in Nadiad in Gujarat, and was raised in Karamsad. He married Diwaliba at a young age. She died in 1915. Vithalbhai remained a widower thereafter.

Vithalbhai studied in London at the Middle Temple Inn, and completed the 36-month course in 30 months. He topped his class, something his younger brother Vallabhbhai repeated later.

Vithalbhai grew up to be a very successful lawyer. When he devoted himself full-time to the cause of freedom, he gave up his thriving law practice.

Unlike his younger brother Vallabhbhai, Vithalbhai was not a follower of Gandhi. After withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhi in 1922 following the Chauri Chaura incident, Vithalbhai left the Congress to co-found the Swaraj Party along with Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. Vithalbhai was respected for his wit and oratorical skills. He was an outstanding legislator, and became the first Indian speaker of the Central Assembly.

Vithalbhai rejoined the Congress upon the declaration of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) in 1930. He was subsequently imprisoned, but was released in 1931 on health grounds.

Vithalbhai left the Congress after the end of the Salt Satyagraha, and became a fierce critic of Gandhi. He became a strong ally of Subhas Chandra Bose. Both Bose and Vithalbhai happened to be in Vienna in 1933 for medical treatment, and came close, their political views being similar. Among other things, they jointly stated: "...as a political leader Mahatma Gandhi has failed.... and a change of leadership is necessary..." Subhas Bose and Vithalbhai travelled together across Europe mobilising funds. They also met the President of Ireland.

Even as Subhas Bose's health improved, unfortunately, Vithalbhai's health took a turn for the worse. When he came to know of the condition, Vallabhbhai wrote several anxious letters to Vithalbhai, but apparently none reached him: Vithalbhai felt neglected. Subhas Bose and colleagues took much care of Vithalbhai. However, he expired in Geneva, Switzerland, on 22 October 1933. His body was flown to India. As Vallabhbhai was then in jail, Vallabhbhai's son, Dahyabhai, performed the last rites.

### VP Menon

*Born:* 30 September 1893 at Ottapalam, Kerala.

*Died:* 31 December 1965 (aged 72).



Vappala Pangunni (VP) Menon was the Constitutional Adviser and Political Reforms Commissioner to the last three Viceroys during the British rule in India. Son of a school headmaster, Menon, a Keralite born in Malabar, had modest beginning working as a railway stoker, miner, an English teacher, a clerk, before joining the Indian Civil Service in a junior post in 1914. By dint of his honesty, sincerity, competence, brilliance and hard work, he rose through the ranks to become the highest serving Indian officer in British India. He had also attended the Indian Round Table Conferences in London.

Senior British staff of Mountbatten had advised him that although VP Menon was a fine gentleman and a very competent professional; being a Hindu, and being close to the Congress, he ought not to be taken into confidence as before. However, Menon's stellar role in Shimla in May 1947 that retrieved Mountbatten from his embarrassing situation so impressed Mountbatten that Menon became one of his most trusted advisors thereafter.

After independence, Menon was appointed secretary of the Ministry of the States headed by Sardar Patel. Menon impressed Patel with his political genius and work ethic, and became his trusted colleague, and a right-hand man. Menon played a major role both in negotiating “Transfer of Power” from the British, and in the “Integration of the Princely States”. VP Menon’s two books “The Transfer of Power in India” and “The Story of Integration of the Indian States” are must-read references on the subjects from the horse’s mouth.

It was VP Menon’s scheme for partition and creation of the two dominions of India and Pakistan that was ultimately adopted, after modifications. Mountbatten Partition Plan of June 1947 was actually modified VP Menon Plan, for which Menon had obtained in-principle clearance from Sardar Patel way back in January 1947. Again, it was VP Menon who drafted the “Instrument of Accession” and insisted upon the necessity of accession of the Princely States into India before the date of independence of 15 August 1947, and tactfully implemented it along with Sardar Patel.

It was VP Menon who first flew to Srinagar along with Sam Manekshaw and MC Mahajan (J&K Premier) on 25 October 1947 to assess the situation in Kashmir; returned on 26 October 1947, and recommended immediate air-lifting of Indian troops to Srinagar to save Kashmir from Pakistan-backed raiders; and then flew to Jammu the same day and got the “Instrument of Accession” signed by Maharaja Hari Singh in India’s favour.

Unlike the dominant crowd of unenlightened, zero-in-the-basics-of-economics, socialist-communist imitators who joined the Congress, Socialist Parties, or the Communist Party, Menon joined the Swatantra Party of Rajaji that believed in the free market economy.

For his unmatched contribution for the integration of the Indian Princely States that enhanced India’s geographical area by a whopping 40%, and for his critical positive role in the transfer of power from the British to India,

VP Menon certainly deserved a Bharat Ratna. But, when Nehru and Indira (Rajiv too) refused to recognise even Sardar Patel for Bharat Ratna, and shamelessly pinned the award on themselves when they were the ones deciding upon the same as prime ministers, where was the question of recognising Sardar Patel's deputy?

Indeed, despite his proven capabilities, Nehru made no use of VP Menon's unmatched talents after the death of Sardar Patel—so partisan was Nehru: anything or anyone related to Patel invited Nehru's contempt, deserving to be ignored or obliterated or erased from the public memory.

On Menon, please read further under “May 1947: Mountbatten's Initial Plan that Failed” and “June 1947: VP Menon–Mountbatten Plan” under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines”.

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## Prominent Muslim Leaders

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### Aga Khan

*Born:* 2 November 1877 at Karachi, Pakistan.

*Died:* 11 July 1957.



Sir Sultan Muhammed Shah, Aga Khan III, was the 48th Imam of the Nizari Ismaili/Khoja community. His father Aqa Ali Shah, aka Aga Khan II, was a member of the Iranian royal family, and was the 47th Imam of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims.

Thanks to his British loyalty, he was conferred the title ‘Knight Commander of the Indian Empire’ by Queen Victoria in 1897, ‘Knight Grand Commander’ in 1902 by King Edward VII, and ‘Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India’ by King George V in 1912. He was nominated to serve as a member of the League of Nations during 1934–37, and served as its President in 1937.

The concept of Hindus and Muslims as two nations was initially floated by the Aga Khan III. Aga Khan was the first—back in 1883—to put forth the idea of reserving a certain number of seats in elections for Muslims; and that the Muslim electorate should vote only for them. Thus, the divisive proposal of a separate electorate for Muslims emerged that ultimately led to Partition and Pakistan.

He was co-founder of the All-India Muslim League. The name ‘All-India Muslim League’ was proposed by Aga Khan. Political formations to counter the growing nationalism and the Congress were being actively encouraged by the British Raj. Curiously, when in 1906, the Aga Khan lead a delegation to Viceroy Lord Minto to plead Muslim interests, Jinnah (then a liberal) questioned his credentials to speak on behalf of the Indian Muslims.

The curious thing, however, was that when the British left in 1947 after partition and creation of Pakistan, Aga Khan foreswore his citizenship, and

vanished from the Indian subcontinent, leaving crores of his co-religionists (Muslims) behind in India and Pakistan.

It is significant that the Shias have been at the receiving end of the Sunnis in Pakistan, although the two principal advocates and founders of Pakistan, Jinnah and Aga Khan, were Shias!

## Ali Brothers

Maulana Muhammad Ali Jouhar

*Born:* 10 December 1878 in Rampur, UP.

*Died:* 4 January 1931 in London.



Muhammad Ali studied at the Darul Uloom Deoband, Aligarh Muslim University, and at Lincoln College, Oxford (1898: Modern History). Upon return from England, he served as the Education Director in the Rampur State, and then in the civil services in Baroda. He wrote for several British newspapers, and also edited/published newspapers and periodicals. He helped expand Aligarh Muslim University (then called Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College), and co-founded Jamia Millia Islamia in 1920 (which later moved to Delhi).

He co-founded the All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906. He was also elected the President of Indian National Congress in 1923 (dual membership was allowed then).

He, along with Shaukat Ali (his elder brother), Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Gandhi, and others, led the Khilafat Movement during 1919-22 (for details on the Khilafat Movement, please check under the chapter “Interesting Indian Timelines”). He was also a member of the delegation that visited London in 1919 to convince the British government to influence the Turkish nationalist Mustafa Kemal Ataturk not to depose the Sultan of Turkey, who was also the Caliph of Islam (Khalifa). Their demand rejected, they formed the Khilafat Committee to start the Khilafat Movement against the British in India. These people were apparently more worried about Caliph, Khalifa, and Turkey, then about the independence of the country they were living in.

Gandhi’s calling off of the Khilafat Movement alienated the Muslim leaders. Muhammad Ali and other Muslim leaders increasingly began to share a feeling that Swaraj (independence) would be a gift for the Hindus

only, unless the Muslims fought for their share of spoils. He broke with Gandhi, and began supporting Jinnah.

He died of a stroke in London on 4 January 1931, and was buried in Jerusalem. The inscription on his grave near the Dome of the Rock (Islamic shrine located on the Temple Mount) reads: “Here lies al-Sayyid Muhammad Ali al-Hindi”.

\* \* \*

Maulana Shaukat Ali

*Born:* 10 March 1873 at Rampur, UP.

*Died:* 26 November 1938 (aged 65).

Shaukat Ali, like his elder brother Muhammad Ali, was a leader of the Khilafat Movement. He was educated at the Aligarh Muslim University, and served in the civil services in the United Provinces for 17 years between 1896 to 1913.

He supported revolutionary movements too: he reportedly supplied guns to the revolutionary [Sachindranath Sanyal](#).

He became a member of the Muslim League in 1936, and a close associate of Jinnah.

Fazli Husain

(1877 – 1936)

While there were bigots like Iqbal, and Muslim leaders like Aga Khan, and later Jinnah who advocated ‘Partition and Pakistan’, there were also Muslim leaders like Sir Mian Fazl-i-Husain who were opposed to the idea. He was the co-founder of the Punjab Unionist Party. When he was nominated by the British Raj to the Central Government, he made a Hindu, Chaudhry Sir Chhotu Ram, the leader of the Punjab Unionist Party to emphasize the importance of communal harmony.

This is what Durga Das writes of his interaction with Fazl-i-Husain in ‘India from Curzon to Nehru and After’ (Page# 169-173): “Most Muslims of today, he (Fazli) said to me [Durga Das], belonged to families that were Hindus not so long ago. Two generations back, the forefathers of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet, were Saprus—Kashmiri Brahmins—and Jinnah’s ancestors not so far removed either were also Hindus. In his self-interest, the Muslim was inclined to flatter the British by protestations of loyalty... Fazli threw considerable light on the plan for Pakistan... Those

who fathered the idea in the early thirties had been financed by the British Intelligence in London, he said... The best way to protect the interests of the minorities, according to Fazli, was for them to form provincial parties which could join hands with other parties to improve economic conditions. Communal differences, he added, were not based on religion but on sharing political power and the meagre economic resources of the country... 'I do not want Punjab to be the Ulster of India,' he added... Fazli expressed total opposition to Jinnah's plan to fight the elections through a communal party, the League. He would see to it, he said, that Muslims everywhere joined non-communal parties... He recalled that Jinnah had written to the Times of India on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1925 decrying the charge that the Congress was a Hindu body... He [Jinnah] had declared: 'I am a nationalist first, a nationalist second, and a nationalist last.'...

“Here was a tragic situation. Fazli, a communalist-turned-nationalist, envisaged co-operation with the Congress on the economic plane, and Jinnah, a nationalist-turned-communalist, sought a coalition [in 1930s] with the Congress on communal basis... The idea of partitioning the country took root among the Muslims only after Fazli's death...”

### Jinnah, Muhammad Ali

*Born:* 25 December 1876 at Karachi, Pakistan.

*Died:* 11 September 1948 at Karachi, Pakistan.



Jinnah led All-India Muslim League from 1913 right till the creation of Pakistan on 14 Aug 1947, after which he served as Pakistan's first Governor-General until his death. Unlike Nehru-Gandhi, Jinnah refused to have a British—Mountbatten, who did much damage to India's cause in J&K and elsewhere—as its first Governor-General.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, like most politicians of his time, was a lawyer—a very successful lawyer, like Rajaji, CR Das, Sarat Chandra Bose, Vithalbhai Patel, Sardar Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad. Born in Karachi, he was trained as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn in London. At age 19, he was the youngest Indian to be called to the bar in England in 1895. Jinnah began his

practice in Bombay at a young age of 20. He was then the only Muslim barrister in Bombay.

Jinnah was offered a permanent post of Bombay presidency magistrate in 1900, on which he was working temporarily, on a princely monthly salary of rupees 1,500 (equivalent to about 5 lakhs now)! Yet, he declined it, for he planned earning that sum per day through his private practice!! Jinnah rose in his profession and acquired huge wealth through sheer dint of his disciplined hard work, intelligence, professional competence, and a burning passion to shine and succeed.

He was a Gujarati, with Khoja Ismaili (Shia) background. His father was a merchant and a money-lender born in a family of weavers in Paneli village in Gondal, Kathiawar, Gujarat; and moved to Karachi in 1875. Jinnah was the second of three brothers and three sisters, including sister Fatima Jinnah.

Premjibhai Meghji Thakkar, a Hindu Lohana from Paneli village in Gondal State in Kathiawar, was the paternal grandfather Jinnah. He had converted to Islam. There is a story that Premjibhai entered the fish-trading business in the coastal town of Veraval in Gujarat to support his family. The nature of his business was contrary to the vegetarianism of the Lohanas, who therefore ostracised him from the community. After making enough money, he attempted to rejoin the community by discontinuing his fish business. However, the Lohana leaders refused to accept him back. Enraged at their father's humiliation, his sons prevailed upon him to convert.

Jinnah married Emibai Jinnah from his ancestral village of Paneli before leaving for London. She, however, expired during his absence in England. In 1918, Jinnah, at the age of 42, married his second wife Ruttie (Rattanbai Petit) aged 18, a Parsi, and 24 years his junior. They had a daughter, Dina. They separated prior to Ruttie's death in 1929. Thereafter, Jinnah's sister Fatima looked after him and the child Dina. Dina was educated in India and England. Dina's relations with Jinnah soured after she married a Parsi Neville Wadia (of Bombay Dyeing). When Jinnah insisted Dina on marrying a Muslim, she reminded him that he too had married a non-Muslim. Dina did not visit Pakistan in Jinnah's lifetime, and only went there for his funeral.

Jinnah was sent to London in January 1893 by his father to work as an apprentice book-keeper with Douglas Graham & Co. However, Jinnah soon abandoned it in favour of studying at Lincoln's Inn. Jinnah was an independent-minded, self-contained, strong-willed, and arrogant man.

In London, he became an admirer of Dadabhai Naoroji (first British Member of Parliament of Indian origin) and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. Jinnah adopted Western dress in London. Thereafter, all through life he used to be immaculately dressed in a suit and tie. He reportedly owned over 300 suits, and innumerable silk ties. Wrote New York Times about Jinnah: "undoubtedly one of the best dressed men in the British Empire."

He was a leader of the Indian National Congress in the first two decades of the 20th century. He attended the 20<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Congress in Bombay in December 1904; and began following leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale. In those days dual-membership was allowed, and Jinnah also became a prominent leader of the All-India Muslim League 1913 onwards.

In 1906, when the Aga Khan lead a delegation to Viceroy Lord Minto to plead Muslim interests, Jinnah wrote in a Gujarati newspaper what rights the unelected and self-appointed members of the Aga Khan delegation had to speak on behalf of the Indian Muslims. Jinnah also opposed their meeting in Dacca in December 1906 in which the All-India Muslim League was formed. Jinnah was not enthused with the Morley-Minto Reforms (Act of 1909) that provided for separate Muslim electorates, and commented that the separate electorates were "*a poisonous dose to divide the nation against itself.*"

He fought the case of Bal Gangadhar Tilak who was arrested for sedition in 1908; and although he could not secure his bail in 1908, Jinnah won him his acquittal in 1916. In those times Jinnah advocated Hindu-Muslim unity, and helped forge the 1916 Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League.

However, in the wake for Gandhi's support for the Khilafat Movement, which Jinnah advised against saying it would give a leg up to fundamentalist Muslim and mullah elements, and unhappy with the Gandhian departure from the Constitutional Methods, Jinnah parted company with Gandhi and the Congress, particularly after the 1920 session of the Congress in Nagpur in which he was shouted down by the delegates,

who passed Gandhi's proposal. To exploit Jinnah–Gandhi split, Lord Reading had offered Jinnah knighthood—Jinnah refused saying he wanted to die ‘plain Mr. Jinnah’.

Between 1930 and 1934 Jinnah remained mostly in Britain along with his sister Fatima and daughter Dina, perhaps unhappy and disillusioned with the Indian political situation; and would have settled in England, but for the urging and persuasion of the Muslims from the United Provinces like Liaquat Ali Khan and Iqbal to return to India. In London, Jinnah stayed in a house in Hampstead Heath surrounded by eight acres of garden!

1939 onwards, particularly after Britain came into WW-II, Jinnah played his game, actively encouraged by the British (who had their own massive vested interests), so skilfully that he managed to outmanoeuvre Gandhi and the Congress into ensuring Pakistan. Jinnah, who had a major role to play in the creation of Pakistan, came to be called as Quaid-i-Azam (Great Leader) and Baba-i-Qaum (Father of the Nation).

Jinnah had been suffering from TB since the 1930s, and died of TB and lung cancer on 11 September 1948 at the age of 71 at Karachi, where he now rests in a large marble mausoleum, Mazar-e-Quaid.

Said Stanley Wolpert: *“Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all three.”* Wolpert could have added that this “achievement” of Jinnah would not have been possible but for two major factors: (a) the active encouragement, co-operation and scheming of the British to achieve their own strategic aims; and (b) the Gandhian path adopted by the Congress.

Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders never went to jail or sacrificed anything to get Pakistan. Thanks to the willing collusion of the British for their own vested interests in oil in the middle-east, and in containing Communist Russia, Jinnah was able to force Pakistan. In fact, if Jinnah had not done what the British wanted, they would have picked up an alternate Muslim leader, and made a Jinnah of him. Credit for Pakistan goes not as much to Jinnah as to the British!

Addressing the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, Jinnah had said: “...You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State...” Colonel Elahi Baksh, the doctor who had attended Jinnah during his last days, reportedly heard

Jinnah confess: “I have made it [Pakistan] but I am convinced that I have committed the greatest blunder of my life.” Even Premier Liaqat Ali Khan had remarked one day after coming out of the ailing Jinnah’s room: “The old man [Jinnah] has now discovered his mistake.”

### Iqbal, Sir Muhammad

*Born:* 9 November 1877, Sialkot, Punjab.

*Died:* 21 April 1938 at Lahore.



Iqbal was knighted by King George V in 1922. While in England studying law and philosophy, Iqbal became a member of the London branch of the Muslim League.

Although Jinnah and the British were the main factors in the creation of Pakistan, the concept of Hindus and Muslims as two nations was initially floated by the Aga Khan III, and later by Sir Allama Mohammad Iqbal in the late 1920s. “I would like to see Punjab, the NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state... the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India...” stated Iqbal in 1929.

In the Allahabad session of the Muslim League in 1929, Iqbal said in his Presidential address: “I confess to be a Pan-Islamist... The mission for which Islam came into this world will ultimately be fulfilled: the world will be purged of infidelity and the worship of false gods; and the true soul of Islam will be triumphant.”

It would be hard to find a more bigoted poet! And, it would be even harder to believe that Iqbal’s ancestors were Kashmiri Pandits. Their surname was Saprus, and they belonged to village Saprain (hence the name Saprus) in Kashmir. As remarked by Steven Weinberg: “*With or without religion good people can behave well and bad people can do evil; but for good people to do evil—that takes religion.*” Or, what Blaise Pascal said:

*“Men never commit evil so fully and joyfully as when they do it for religious convictions.”*

What is astounding, Iqbal was only the first-generation convert. Perhaps new converts are more passionate to show off their religious loyalty. As per an article “Iqbal’s Hindu Relations” by Khushwant Singh in ‘The Telegraph’ of 30 June 2007, Mohammad Iqbal’s father was one Rattan Lal Sapru. He was the revenue collector of the Afghan governor of Kashmir. He was caught embezzling money. The governor offered him a choice: he should either convert to Islam or be hanged. Rattan Lal chose to stay alive. He was named Nur Mohammad after conversion. The Saprus disowned Rattan Lal and severed all connections with him.

The first-generation-convert Muhammad Iqbal had a major influence on Jinnah in gradually turning him from a liberal, advocating Hindu-Muslim unity, into a bigot.

*“Sare Jahan se Accha”* (aka *Tarānah-i-Hindi*) was penned as a patriotic song for children by Iqbal, and was first published in the weekly Ittehad on 16 August 1904. It was recited by him in 1905 at Government College, Lahore. The song also had the wordings *“Mazhab nahin sikhata apas men bair rakhnā; Hindi hain ham, waṭan hai Hindustan hamara”* (Religion does not teach bearing ill-will among ourselves. We are of Hind, our homeland is Hindustan.). However, *soon after Iqbal turned a bigot*, he penned another song in the same metre: *Tarana-e-Milli*, that is, “Anthem of the Religious Community”. One of its stanza read: *“Cin-o-Arab hamara, Hindustan hamara. Muslim hain ham waṭan hai sara jahan hamara”* (Central Asia and Arabia are ours, Hindustan is ours. We are Muslims, the whole world is our homeland.).

### Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan

*Born: 5 June 1892 in Multan.*

*Died: 25 December 1942 in Lahore.*



Captain Sardar Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was educated at Aligarh Muslim University and had joined the British Army. After 1920, he

turned to business, and thanks to his business and managerial talent, he set up a large number of well-known companies in diverse segments, including tea, sugar, cement, railway-lines, electricity production and supply, and so on.

He was briefly the acting deputy-governor of the newly established Reserve Bank of India in 1935. He was non-communal, and used to say, “I am Punjabi first then a Muslim”.

He co-founded the Unionist Party in Punjab and remained at its helm till his death. He was the Punjab Premier from 1937 to 1942.

Following his pact with Jinnah in October 1937 (Jinnah–Sikandar Pact) he advised the Muslim members of his party (Unionist Party) to also become members of the AIML. He was later party to the Lahore Resolution of March 1940 calling for an autonomous or semi-independent Muslim majority region within the larger Indian confederation—what subsequently led to Pakistan.

### Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

*Born:* 17 October 1817 in Delhi.

*Died:* 27 March 1898 (aged 80) at Aligarh.



Syed Ahmad Khan’s family had strong ties with the Moghul court. He joined as a clerk in a court in 1838 in the service of the East India Company, and gradually rose to be a judge in a Small Causes Court, and retired in 1876. He remained loyal to the British during the First War of Independence 1857. He was critical of the Indian National Congress; and exhorted Muslims to be loyal to the British. He advocated strong interfaith relations between Islam and Christianity. He was the original founder of the two-nation theory, and influenced Iqbal and Jinnah.

Initially he was all for Hindu-Muslim unity, and even said: “We (Hindus and Muslims) should try to become one heart and soul and act in unison; if united we can support each other...” However, he wrongly thought that democratic, representative governments were suitable only for ethnical and religiously homogeneous societies. And, this wrong belief led to his advocating ways to prevent likely domination of Hindus. He strongly

influenced other Muslim leaders like the bigot Allama Iqbal. He considered Muslim madrasas utterly futile, and to promote education among Muslims, he helped found several schools—Gulshan School at Muradabad, Victoria School at Ghazipur in 1863, etc.—and most notably the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (that later became Aligarh Muslim University) in 1875. He established a scientific society for Muslims in 1864. He promoted Urdu as the lingua franca of all Indian Muslims. He wrote a number of works in Urdu, including *Asaar-us-sanadeed* (Great Monuments) documenting antiquities of Delhi. He also wrote a pamphlet establishing Muslims were not disloyal to the British, and to asking the British to end their hostility to Muslims.

### Zafrullah Khan

*Born:* 6 February 1893 in Sialkot, Punjab.

*Died:* 1 September 1985 (aged 92) at Lahore.



Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan had an illustrious career. Educated at London's King's College, he was the foreign minister of Pakistan (1947-54), the president for the UN General Assembly (1962), and the judge (1954-61, 1964-73), vice-president (1958-61) and the president (1970-73) of the International Court of Justice. He had been a member of the All-India Muslim League, and had served as its president between 1931 and 1932. He was the Minister of Railway of British India in 1935. He sat on the British Viceroy's Executive Council as its Muslim member between 1935 and 1941. He represented India at the League of Nations in Geneva in 1939. He was the Agent-General of British India to China in 1942. He became judge at the Federal Court of India.

Zafrullah Khan was the man behind both the critical Lahore Resolution of March 1940 that led to the creation of Pakistan (he had authored the resolution), and the make-or-break presentation of Pakistan's case on J&K in the UN in 1948.

When India and Pakistan presented their cases on J&K at the UN in January 1948, Zafrullah Khan represented Pakistan. The Indian case, on the

other hand, was presented by Gopaldaswami Aiyangar, Minister for Kashmir Affairs, specifically appointed by Nehru in his cabinet. Aiyangar was the leader of the Indian team that also included Sheikh Abdullah. Quipped Zafrullah Khan, when he came to know about Gopaldaswami Aiyangar as India's representative: "*You are offering me Kashmir on a platter.*" Expectedly, while Zafrullah Khan's presentation was brilliant, and received all-round praise, that of Aiyangar's was an unmitigated disaster!

Incidentally, Zafrullah Khan was an Ahmadiyya, like Abdus Salam (1926–1996), a Pakistani theoretical physicist, who shared the 1979 Nobel Prize in Physics. Abdus Salam left Pakistan in 1974 in protest against the passage of the parliamentary bill declaring the Ahmadiyya Community as not-Islamic. Jinnah and Aga Khan, both Shias, were the prime movers of Pakistan. Shias too are at the receiving end in Pakistan.

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## Prominent Britishers

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*Relevant from the Indian angle.*

### Robert Clive

25 September 1725 — 22 November 1774



In a way, Robert Clive founded the British Empire by conquering Bengal after winning the Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757. When 19, he became a ‘factor’ or company agent of the East India Company (EIC) in 1744. He arrived at Fort St. George in Madras in June 1744. He worked for the EIC as an assistant tallying books and tackling suppliers. There he utilised his access to the governor's library to become a prolific reader.

Clive bravely fought against the French attack, resulting in his securing a post in the EIC army. He later triumphed against Tanjore. That led to his lucrative posting as the commissary at Fort St. George, that enabled him to earn commissions on all supply contracts. He was afflicted by a nervous disorder in 1750, and went to Bengal to recuperate. He returned to Madras in 1751; and led the siege of Arcot, that made him famous. William Pitt, the then PM, described Clive, who had received no formal military training, as the “*heaven-born general*”. Clive went back to the UK in early 1753; and sat as a Member of Parliament during 1754-55.

Clive returned to India as Deputy Governor of Fort St. David at Cuddalore in July 1755. He was also promoted as Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army. He took part in several battles, including the capture of the fortress of Gheriah then under the Maratha Admiral Tuloji Angre.

Meanwhile, in Bengal, early in 1756, Siraj-ud-Daulah had succeeded his grandfather Alivardi Khan as Nawab of Bengal. Siraj had attacked the English, and had taken the fort at Calcutta on 20 June 1756. The EIC suffered a huge loss of about two million pounds on account of fall of Calcutta. As per a British prisoner and a witness John Holwell, after the fall of Fort William, the surviving British soldiers were imprisoned overnight in

a dungeon (18'x14') in the fort that came to be known as "The Black Hole of Calcutta" in conditions so cramped that 123 of the 146 died of suffocation. However, in 1915, a British schoolmaster JH Little brought out unreliability of Holwell as a witness, and other discrepancies on the report. A study in 1959 pointed out the gross exaggeration: the actual numbers who entered the Black Hole were about 64 and that 21 survived. It was also pointed that Siraj-ud-Daula did not order the prisoners to be shut in the black hole, and that he knew nothing about it until afterwards. The controversial incident became an excuse, a cause célèbre for the British in the establishment of the British Empire in India.

*Battle of Plassey:* Plassey is a place near Murshidabad, the capital of the Mughal viceroys of Bengal. The British forces were far outnumbered by those of Siraj-ud-Daula, and there was no way the British could have won the battle. However, Clive brought Mir Jafar, the Nawab's commander-in-chief, to his side. The treachery of Mir Jafar and group, combined with the monetary support (at a price) and influence of wealthy merchants like Jagat Seth and Umichand, did the Nawab (Siraj-ud-Daula) in, who fled the battlefield on a camel with his wealth, but was caught and executed by the assassin Mohammadi Beg. It was a battle won, not through army, but through treachery and trickery. Clive entered Murshidabad, and established Mir Jafar as Nawab, as was agreed. Clive was taken through the treasury. Clive took £160,000 for himself, while half a million was distributed among the army and navy of the East India Company.

Prior to 1757, Bengal was one of the richest parts of the world: 'the paradise of the earth', as Clive himself described it. Clive had become one of the richest persons in UK, thanks to his Indian plunder. Robert Clive's salary when he came to India in 1744 was £5 per year, plus an additional allowance of £3 per year, a total of £8 per year. However, he returned to England in 1760 with a huge fortune: £2,34,000 plus £27,000 per year for life from rental income from what was called Clive's Jagir, a piece of land in Calcutta.

He was again in India between 1764 and 1767. Upon his return, corruption charges were brought against him. Defending himself, he actually pleaded to the effect as to how much less he had looted compared to the opportunities he had: "...I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! By God, Mr.

Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation!” He was booked for corruption, and ultimately committed suicide in 1774.

### Allan Octavian Hume

6 June 1829 — 31 July 1912



The Indian National Congress (INC) was founded by members of the Theosophical Society. Scotsman Allan Octavian Hume, a retired ICS officer and a notable ornithologist, was instrumental in its formation (in fact, an Indian would not have been permitted to form such an organisation).

The purpose behind the formation of the Congress was to provide a safety valve to the Indian nationalists to vent their grievances and frustration, and avoid another situation like the First Indian War of Independence of 1857. In other words, the Congress was meant to prolong, and not curtail, the British rule.

### Clement Richard Attlee

3 January 1883 – 8 October 1967



Clement Attlee was educated at Haileybury College, a boarding school in Hertfordshire with a strong imperial tradition, and the University of Oxford. He was called to the bar in 1905 but abandoned law in 1909.

The harsh poverty of East London affected him deeply. He joined the Fabian Society in 1907 and the Independent Labour Party in 1908. During World War-I he served in Gallipoli, Iraq, and France.

He became an MP in the House of Commons in 1922. He quickly rose to become a minister. He was the leader of the Labour Party of the UK from 1935 to 1955. He became the Deputy Prime Minister in 1942 in the

coalition government, while Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister. Both Attlee and Churchill worked smoothly together during the WW-II. After he led the Labour to an unexpected victory in the 1945 general elections after the WW-II, he became the Prime Minister, and remained in that post between 26 July 1945 and 26 October 1951. India got its freedom during his tenure. Attlee was also a member of the Simon Commission of 1928. He went in for mixed-economy, and turned the UK economy in the socialist direction.

## Winston Churchill

30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965



Churchill had been an army officer, and was a politician, historian, and a writer. He won Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953.

Churchill was the Prime Minister of the UK from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Warning against the rise of Nazi Germany, Churchill campaigned for rearmament. Churchill became the UK PM on 10 May 1940, after the resignation of Neville Chamberlain. Through his powerful speeches and radio broadcasts he inspired British resistance, and successfully sailed the UK out of its difficult days of 1940–41 when it stood almost alone resisting Hitler. Along with the USA and the USSR, he led the Allies to victory in WW-II.

Churchill was not good, was rather a curse, from the Indian angle. He was an imperialist who resisted independence and self-rule for Indians with all his might. He founded the India Defence League—committed to preserving the British Raj in India. With reference to Gandhi's KNCM (Khilafat & Non-cooperation Movement) of 1920–22, Churchill commented that Gandhi “ought to be lain bound hand and foot at the gates of Delhi, and then trampled on by an enormous elephant with the new Viceroy seated on its back.”

The Great Bengal Famine of 1943 was man-made, rather British-made (export of food-grains for WW-II), and was thanks to the callousness and complicity of Churchill. Considering the numbers who perished in the Great Bengal Famine, Churchill's role was almost Hitlerian. Appraising him of

the Bengal Famine Crisis, when the Viceroy of India sought urgent help, Prime Minister Winston Churchill cruelly commented that as far as he was concerned “the starvation of anyhow underfed Bengalis is less serious than...” and that Indians would anyway “breed like rabbits”. In response to the telegraphic request from India for food shipment for famine, Churchill heartlessly responded: “Is Gandhi still alive?”

His pronouncements often happened to be insulting to Hindus and Indians. Just one quote of Winston Churchill should suffice to illustrate his unabashed thanklessness, utter crudeness, uncivilised behaviour, lack of culture, and his being out and out a racist: “I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion.”

Imperialist Winston Churchill, bemoaning the disappearance of the title of Emperor of India from the Royal titles in June 1948, and true to his anti-India stance, made a derogatory remark that the Government of India had been handed over to “men of straw”. Earlier, in response to the announcement of Prime Minister Clement Attlee in 1947 in the British Parliament on granting of independence to India, Churchill had commented in his foul tongue: “Power will go into the hands of rascals, rogues and freebooters... These are men of straw of whom no trace will be found after a few years...”

Sardar Patel responded: “Churchill is an unashamed imperialist at a time when imperialism is on its last legs... [is] the proverbial last ditcher for whom obstinacy and stupid consistency count more than reason, imagination or wisdom...”

Churchill was also intimately involved in ensuring the partition of India, and creation of Pakistan, as that suited the British interests. He, therefore, has to share the blame for the massive Partition mayhem along with Mountbatten and other Britishers. Churchill used to communicate secretly with Jinnah, and had advised Jinnah to stand firm to get his Pakistan. Jinnah had himself commented, “*Am I a fool to accept this [offer of Wavell], when I am offered Pakistan on a platter?*” Partition of India was actually a British-Churchillian plan; and Jinnah was but an instrument for its implementation. If Jinnah had refused to do what the British and Churchill wanted, the British would have chosen another Muslim leader, and made a Jinnah of him. Churchill indeed favoured partition of India into “*Pakistan, Hindustan and Princestan* [comprising Princely States]”.

Kashmir problem is also a creation of the British, in which Churchill was actively involved.

However, one has to grant that Churchill had a prominent and exemplary leadership role in the defeat of Hitler. Churchillian quotes on economics, socialism and communism happen to be very appropriate and incisive. Said he: *“The vice of capitalism is that it stands for the unequal sharing of blessings; whereas the virtue of socialism is that it stands for the equal sharing of misery ...Socialism is the philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy.”*

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## Prominent Governor-Generals

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(Figures in brackets like '1773–1785' below refer to tenure of the Governor-General in India.)

### Warren Hastings

(1773–1785)



Hastings was the first Governor-General of India. The Regulating Act of 1773 was introduced during his time. It was an Act of the British Parliament to overhaul the management of the East India Company's rule in India. Experimentation was done on land settlements. The Treasury moved from Murshidabad to Calcutta. The Asiatic Society of Bengal and a New Sanskrit School were set up. Bengal Gazette, India's first newspaper, was published.

In the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82) Mahadji Shinde commanded the Maratha forces, and along with Tukoji Rao Holkar, defeated the British forces resulting in the Treaty of Wadgaon. Finally, the Treaty of Salbai was signed between the British and Nana Phadnavis. The Second Anglo-Mysore war (1780-84) between Hyder Ali backed by the French and the British finally resulted in the Treaty of Mangalore.

To make up for the lost revenues of Bengal, Hastings subjugated the nearby prosperous kingdom of Oudh, and began extracting punishing revenues from there. Thanks to the British, like it happened in Bengal in 1770, Oudh then faced famine in 1784! And people talk of prosperity under the British!!

Warren Hastings was impeached by Edmund Burke in the UK—accused, among other things, of personal corruption, and of venality and brutality in forcible collection of revenues. Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was a famous British statesman, parliamentary orator and political thinker. During the trial of Hastings in 1787, Burke charged him not only with promoting the economic rape of India but also with the literal rape of Indian

women. Burke accused Hastings of not only using sexual violence as a strategy of control by his colonial subordinates but that he had also personally “undone women of the first rank” in India, noting especially his humiliation of the Princesses of Oudh. The following extracts are from the speech of Edmund Burke in the House of Commons that vividly catalogued the barbaric treatment meted out to the Indians at the hands of Hastings and his men: “...My lords, I am here obliged to offer some apology for the horrid scenes I am about to open... I would rather wish to draw a veil over them, than shock your feelings by a detail. But it is necessary for the substantial ends of justice and humanity, and for the honour of government, that they should be exposed, that they should be recorded, and handed down to after ages... My lords, when the people [Indian peasants] had been stripped of everything, it was, in some cases suspected, and justly, that they had hid some share of the grain. Their bodies were then applied to the fiercest mode of torture, which was this : they began with winding cords about their fingers, till the flesh on each hand clung and was actually incorporated. Then they hammered wedges of wood and iron between those fingers, until they crushed and maimed those poor, honest, and laborious hands, which were never lifted up to their mouths but with a scanty supply of provision. My lords, these acts of unparalleled cruelty, began with the poor ryots; but if they began there, there they did not stop. The heads of the villages, the leading yeomen of the country, respectable for their virtues, respectable for their age, were tied together, two and two, the unoffending and helpless, thrown across a bar, upon which they were hung with their feet uppermost, and there beat with bamboo canes on the soles of those feet, until the nails started from their toes, and then with the cudgels of their blind fury these poor wretches were afterwards beat about the head, until the blood gushed out at their mouth, nose, and ears.

“My lords, they did not stop here. Bamboos, wangees, rattans, canes, common whips, and scourges were not sufficient. They found a tree in the country which bears strong and sharp thorns not satisfied with those other cruelties, they scourged them with these. Not satisfied with this, but searching everything through the deepest parts of nature, where she seems to have forgot her usual benevolence, they found a poisonous plant, a deadly caustic, that inflames the part that is bruised, and often occasions death. This they applied to those wounds. My lords, we know that there are men (for so we are made) whom bodily pains cannot subdue.

“The mind of some men strengthens in proportion as the body suffers. But people who can bear up against their own tortures, cannot bear up against those of their children and their friends. To add, therefore, to their sufferings, the innocent children were brought forth, and cruelly scourged before the faces of their parents. They frequently bound the father and the son, face to face, arm to arm, body to body, and then flogged till the skin was torn from the flesh : and thus they had the devilish satisfaction of knowing, that every blow must wound the body or the mind ; for if one escaped the son, his sensibility was wounded by the knowledge he had that the blow had fallen upon his father; the same torture was felt by the father, when he knew that every blow that missed him had fallen upon his unfortunate son.

“My lords, this was not, this was not all ! The treatment of the females cannot be described. Virgins that were kept from the sight of the sun, were dragged into the public court that court which was intended to be a refuge against all oppression and there, in the presence of day, their delicacies were offended, and their persons cruelly violated, by the basest of mankind. It did not end there : the wives of the men of the country only suffered less by this : they lost their honour in the bottom of the most cruel dungeons, in which they were confined.

“They were then dragged out naked, and in that situation exposed to public view, and scourged before all the people. My lords, here is my authority for otherwise you will not believe it possible. My lords, what will you feel when I tell you, that they put the nipples of the women into the cleft notches of sharp bamboos, and tore them from their bodies. What modesty in all nations most carefully conceals, these monsters revealed to view, and consumed by burning tortures, and cruel slow fires ! My lords, I am ashamed to open it horrid to tell! These infernal fiends, ...”

[Here Mr. Burke dropped his head upon his hands, unable to proceed, so greatly was he oppressed by the horror which he felt at this narration. The effect of it was visible through the whole audience—several women in the gallery fainted.]

Incidentally, Warren Hastings, despite the above horrible, unpardonable offences in India, was ultimately acquitted by the British “Justice” System in 1795, after a trial that lasted seven years. So much for the “great” and “just” British Judicial System!!

## Charles Cornwallis

(1786–1793)



Cornwallis was an Army General who was appointed as both the Governor of the Presidency of Fort William, aka the Bengal Presidency, and the Commander-in-Chief of British India. He gradually consolidated the British control over India, setting the stage for the British Raj. He enacted wide-ranging administrative (introduced Civil Services), legal (set up lower and appellate courts), and land (Permanent Settlement was done in Bihar and Bengal in 1793) reforms. The mechanism and standards that he set for the services, courts, and revenue collection remained almost unaltered till the end of the British rule.

He led the British army in the Third Anglo-Mysore War, and defeated Tipu Sultan, forcing him to sign the Treaty of Seringapatam on 18 March 1792.

After serving in Ireland, he was reposted as the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of India. He assumed his duties on 30 July 1805, but fell ill after a boat trip to Ghazipur, and expired there on 5 October 1805.

## Richard Wellesley

(1798–1805)



Tipu Sultan, who was defeated in the Third Anglo-Mysore War, was finally killed on 4 May 1799 in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War by the British forces under Wellesley. His clever strategies with the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad led to the eclipse of the French influence in India resulting in the British dominance, and in transforming EIC (East India Company) from a trading company into an imperial power.

He introduced the doctrine of subsidiary alliance that gradually led to a large number of Indian Princely States becoming only nominally sovereign by surrendering to the British under a *Paramountcy Agreement* what really make a state sovereign: Communications, Defence, and Foreign Policy. Under the terms of the paramountcy the troops of the British Army were permanently stationed within their territories, and their maintenance was heavily subsidised by the Princely States! That is, the Princely States paid the British for keeping the Princely States under the British military control!! The Subsidiary Alliance system proved extremely advantageous to the British, as it enabled them to maintain a large army at the cost of the Indian states. Such terms led to disbandment of the soldiers of the Princely States, depriving them of their hereditary livelihood, spreading unemployment, poverty and misery. *The first such Subsidiary Treaty was signed with the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1798. There were 562 such Princely States at the time of independence in 1947, covering 40% of the area of India.*

He founded Fort William College at Kolkata, a training centre for administering India.

Lord Minto I

(1807–1813)



Under Minto, the Treaty of Amritsar was concluded on 25 April 1809 with Maharaja Ranjeet Singh to “establish perpetual amity between the British Government and the State of Lahore”. As per the treaty neither party was to encroach or interfere in the territory of the other. It was the shortest treaty of mere fifteen lines, and was never infringed.

During Minto’s time, the gold standard was introduced into the monetary system.

Rawdon-Hastings (Earl of Moira)

(1813–1823)



He had served with the British army during the American Revolutionary War and the French Revolutionary Wars. He was appointed both the Governor-General of India and the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in 1813. He won the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1813 forcing the Gurkhas to sue for peace under the Sugauli Treaty.

He also won the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818) defeating the forces of Peshwa Baji Rao II, Mudhoji II Bhonsle of Nagpur, and Malharrao Holkar III of Indore, and gaining for the EIC (East India Company) control over most of India. After capture, Peshwa was moved to a small estate at Bithur, on the banks of Ganges, near Kanpur.

During his time, the purchase of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles from the Sultan of Jahore was confirmed in January 1819.

The Bombay Presidency was created under him in 1818. Ryotwari System in Madras was started during his time. He abolished press censorship. That gave a fillip to press and publications. Vernacular press came up. Raja Rammohan Roy started national press, and published “Sambad Kaumudi” in 1821. Unfortunately, his liberal policy was overturned by his successors.

*Upon his death in 1824, following his will, his right hand was cut off and preserved, and was later buried, clasped with that of his wife, when she died.* Hastings County, Ontario was named after him, as also the Moira River in Ontario, Canada. The HMS Moira was named in his honour in 1805.

William Bentinck

(1828–1835)



He was the first Governor General of India. The earlier ones were Governor General of Bengal. Influenced by the Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, he adopted a policy of westernisation: He made English as the language of the higher courts, and extended western-style education for Indians. English was introduced as a medium of higher education on the advice of Thomas Babington Macaulay. A medical college and hospital was established in Kolkata during his time.

He supported Raja Ram Mohan Roy's campaign against sati, polygamy, child marriages, and caste rigidity, and brought in the Bengal Sati Regulation 1829. The other social reforms carried out during his tenure were the Suppression of Thugi, and Suppression of Infanticide. Coorg was annexed after the Coorg War of 1834.

### Lord Dalhousie

(1848–1856)



After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Princely State of Punjab was captured by the British in 1849 in the Second Anglo-Sikh War under Dalhousie's command. Dalhousie also commanded the Second Burmese War in 1852 resulting in the capture of parts of Burma.

His '*Doctrine of Lapse*'—annexation of a Princely State with the British Empire if upon the death of its king there was no son as legal heir—resulted in the annexation of several Princely States, including Oudh. He had also recommended annexation of Satara, Sambalpur, Nagpur, Jhansi, etc. This and other steps caused bitterness among the Indian soldiers in the British Army, which contributed to the causes behind the First War of Independence in 1857.

*By 1856, the British army had 2,23,000 Indians and 45,000 Europeans.* Not wanting to take chances with the dominant Indians, he created the *Gurkha regiment*, and an “*Irregular Force*” in *Punjab*, both of which came in handy to suppress the First War of Independence in 1857-58.

By declaring all ports as free, he allowed the English merchants, having power and resources, to *develop the harbours of Karachi, Bombay, and Calcutta*, and capture all the sea-trade.

*He was the father of the Indian Railways.* During his time, the first railway line between Bombay and Thane went operational in 1853, followed by that between Calcutta and Raniganj Coal Fields. The railway lines were built by private English Companies under a system of “Government Guarantee”.

The *Electric Telegraph System* was introduced in 1852; and the first telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra was opened in 1854, which was extended to Lahore and Peshawar in 1857.

Dalhousie carried out a number of significant administrative reforms. For example, he handed over all powers relating to justice, police, and land revenue to the District Magistrates.

*The Postal Department* was established in 1854 under the *Post Office Act*. A uniform rate of half-anna per letter was introduced; and postage stamps were issued for the first time.

Dalhousie *established the Public Works Department (PWD)* for the construction of roads, bridges, irrigation works, and government offices and residences. The PWD *constructed the Ganges Canal*. It was inaugurated on 8 April 1854. The construction of *Grand Trunk Road* was taken up.

*By establishing engineering colleges at Roorkee and in other presidencies he became the father of the technical education in India.* He completely reorganised the educational system.

Charles Canning

(1856–1862)



Both Canning's actions and that of his predecessor Dalhousie precipitated the *First War of Independence in 1957*. Canning was able to handle the difficult times for the British Empire, and ensured its survival in India. He withdrew the "Doctrine of Lapse" introduced by Dalhousie (pl. see above) that became one of the reasons of the Mutiny of 1857-1858.

Suppression of the Mutiny was followed by the enactment of the *Government of India (GoI) Act on 2 August 1858*, which got royal assent (Queen Victoria's Proclamation) on *1 November 1858*, and became effective from that date. *The act transferred the powers from the East India Company to the British Crown*. It also created the office of the Viceroy to be held by the same person who was *Governor General of India*. The Viceroy acted as the direct representative of the Crown (rather than that of the British Government), and dealt with the Princely States; while the Governor General came under the British Government, and controlled the provinces of British India.

In respect of land reforms, Bengal Rent Act 1859 was passed that gave certain rights to peasants/ryots vis-à-vis landlords. *The wasteland settlement policy for tea cultivation in Assam adopted by the British between 1850 and 1860 was drastically liberalised* by Canning whereby land was sold to prospective planters at a throw-away price of rupees 3 to 5 per acre, without any clearance conditions. This hugely enhances tea cultivation. Forcing of Indigo plantations by the Europeans led to Indigo Revolt by the Bengal peasantry in 1859-60. *The Indian Civil Services Act and the Indian High Courts Act were passed in 1861. The Indian Penal Code became effective from 1862. Income Tax was introduced in 1861 @5% on the yearly income of rupees 500 or more. University of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were set up in 1857.*

Taking a lesson from the Mutiny, the British decided not to have the number of Indian soldiers in the British army as more than twice the European soldiers; and to put the artillery exclusively in the hands of the European soldiers.

(1876–1880)



There was wide-spread famine during 1876-78, the worst affected areas being South India (Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad), Bombay, Central India and Punjab. The toll was over five million lives. The outbreak of cholera and fever further worsened the situation. Lytton's Government miserably failed to provide succour to people.

The draconian Vernacular Press Act 1878 was passed prohibiting the editor, publisher and printer of a vernacular press to publish anything against the Government. *The Arms Act of 1878 prohibited Indians from keeping arms without appropriate license.* The act did not apply to the Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

Britain wanted Afghanistan to remain a buffer between British India and Russia; but alarmed at the growing influence of Russia in Afghanistan, British-India invaded it in 1878 in what came to be known as the Second Anglo-Afghan War 1878–80. Though Britain won at the end, it was a pyrrhic victory. *What is notable about it is the British concern, anxiety and action to protect British India at all costs by keeping Afghanistan as a buffer. Contrast this with the Nehru's costly lack of foresight, callousness on external security, and his unpardonable blunder of letting Tibet go as a buffer between India and China without even registering a protest in the UN and other world forums.*

Lord Ripon

(1880–1884)



Ripon repealed the regressive Vernacular Press Act 1878 brought in by his predecessor. He brought in the *First Factory Act 1881* to

prohibit child labour. *The Negotiable Instruments Act* was introduced in 1881, and the *Transfer of Properties Act* in 1882. He introduced *Local Self Government* in 1882 paving the way for elected local members to manage municipalities in towns, and local boards in taluks and villages. He appointed *Hunter Commission* to reform and expand the education system, and gave powers to local bodies to manage schools. Stress was also laid on education of females.

Lord Curzon

(1899–1905)



1899-1900 was the period of severe famine that claimed lakhs of lives in the areas of Agra, Oudh, Bengal, Central Provinces, Rajputana, and Gujarat. The British Government, as also the Princely States, failed to rise to the occasion.

Famine led to the realisation for better irrigation, and an *Irrigation Commission* was set up in 1901, as per whose recommendations a network of canals were setup in Punjab over the next two decades.

Curzon set up a *Police Commission* in 1902-03, as per whose recommendations, among other things, *Criminal Investigation Departments (CIDs)* were established. The purpose seemed to have been to track better the growing nationalistic activities: CIDs remained almost unchanged till independence.

*Punjab Land Alienation Act* to prohibit sale of agricultural land to non-peasants was passed in 1900 with a view to protect agriculturists, but it had an overall negative impact.

*Bengal Partition*. On the pretext of Bengal being too large to be managed efficiently, it was partitioned into two on 16 October 1905: (1) East Bengal plus Assam, and (2) Rest of Bengal (Western Part). The purpose appears to have been communal: create Muslim-majority East. Partition was severely resented, and led to rise of revolutionary movements, including Vande Mataram, Swadeshi, and Boycott Movements. It was ultimately annulled in 1911.

*Indian Universities Act 1904* was passed mainly with a view to bring the universities under the government control looking to the increasing patriotic activities of the students and teachers. It also provided for financial grants to universities, that later became a permanent feature under the University Grants Commission.

Under the *Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904*, the Archaeological Department was established, and injuries to the protected monuments was made a punishable offence.

Imperial Cadet Corps came into being in 1901. Northwest Frontier Province (*NWFP*) was established. The *Agriculture Research Institute in Pusa* was set up. British Pound @15 rupees was made legal tender in India.

## Lord Minto II

(1905–1910)



Among the prominent events of Minto's time were foundation of the *Indian Muslim League* (1906), Garam–Naram Dal in the Congress (1907), deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai to Mandalay Jail (1907), enactment of Newspapers (Incitement to offences) Act (1908), Explosive Substances Act, trial of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1908), and the Indian Council Act 1909 (*Morley-Minto Reforms*).

The formation of the Muslim League and the putting forth of its demands to the Raj like “separate and privileged representation in any electoral system that might be set up” were actually encouraged and facilitated by Viceroy Lord Minto and the British officials. *Partition of Bengal* came into force on 16 October 1906. Foundation stone of Victoria Memorial Hall was laid at Calcutta in 1906.

By the time of the Surat Session of the Congress in 1907, there was a clear split between the moderates (Naram Dal) led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale and extremists (Garam Dal) led by Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Bipin Chandra Pal).

Anushilan Samiti was established during the period. Alipore Bomb Case involving Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki took place in April 1908.

Nasik Conspiracy Case 1909 involved members of Abhinav Bharat Society established in 1904 by VD Savarkar. 27 members of the Society were convicted. Ganesh Savarkar, brother of VD Savarkar, was sent to the Cellular jail in the Andamans (Kala Pani).

In 1907–8, the government passed a series of bills to curb revolutionary activities: Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act 1907, Explosive Substance Act 1908, Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act 1908, etc. These resulted in some of the key extremist leaders having to temporarily suspend their activities: Aurobindo Ghosh left for Pondicherry, Bipin Chandra Pal left politics, and Lala Lajpat Rai went to England.

The Indian Councils Act 1909 (Morley Minto Reforms), besides expanding the legislative councils at the central and provincial levels, introduced Communal Representation and Electorate, that was yet another major step in India's partition and Pakistan. It was actually a conspiracy to bring the Muslims closer to the British, and widen the gulf further between the Hindus and Muslims.

## Lord Hardinge II

(1911–1916)



King George V paid a visit to India in 1911 during Hardinge's tenure. At the pompous Delhi Darbar, the King declared on 12 December 1911 that the capital would be shifted from Calcutta to Delhi; and that the partition of Bengal would be annulled. The Delhi Conspiracy (aka Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy) culminated in the attempted assassination of Hardinge on 23 December 1912, masterminded by Rash Behari Bose. In the World War-I that started on 28 June 1914, the Congress and others wholeheartedly supported the British Empire in the hope of self-government. Gandhi, the Apostle of Non-Violence (who had returned from South Africa on 8 January 1915), personally involved himself in the recruitment for the British Army.

The *Forest Research Institute and College* was opened at Dehra Dun in 1914. The *BHU Act 1915* was passed that enabled Pandit Madan Mohan

Malviya to establish the Banaras Hindu University.

### Lord Chelmsford

(1916–1921)

Chelmsford served as Governor of Queensland from 1905 to 1909, Governor of New South Wales from 1909 to 1913, and Viceroy of India



from 1916 to 1921.

For all the massive assistance provided by Indians to the British in WW-I (pl. see details elsewhere in this book) hoping for self-rule, all that the Indians got was the Government of India Act 1919, that fell far short of expectations. GoI Act 1919 was based on Montague–Chelmsford (Mont-Ford) Reforms of 1918 (For details, please refer to “1918–19: Mont-Ford Reforms & the GoI Act” under “Interesting Indian Timelines”).

On top of it, to curb the revolutionary and nationalistic surge, the government came up with the repressive Rowlatt Acts in 1919, protests against which led to the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy (pl. see details elsewhere in this book).

The Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement was launched in 1920.

### Lord Reading

(1921–1926)



He was born in a humble Jew family but had risen to the ranks of Chief Justice of England. Moplah anti-Hindu attacks (pl. see details elsewhere in this book) took place in 1921 during his tenure. The British and the Congress under Gandhi did little to protect Hindu victims or bring succour to them.

Gandhi suddenly withdrew the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement (KNCM) in 1922 under the flimsy excuse of an incident in Chauri Chaura (pl. see details elsewhere in this book). In sharp contrast, the far worse violence of the above Moplah anti-Hindu attacks of 1921 did not move him into similar action.

Kakori Train Conspiracy (pl. see details elsewhere in this book) by revolutionaries happened in 1925.

Lord Irwin

(1926–1931)



Simon Commission (pl. see details elsewhere in this book) visited India in 1928 during Irwin's time.

Although the Purna Swaraj Declaration, or the Declaration of the Complete Independence of India, was promulgated by the Indian National Congress on 26 January 1930, there was no mention of it or demand for it in the subsequent (pl. see next para) Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement.

Gandhi led his once-in-a-decade major movement in 1930: the Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement. The Gandhi–Irwin Pact (pl. see details elsewhere in this book) was signed on 5 March 1931. Before the start of the Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement (SS & CDM) an 11-point demand was put up by Gandhi and the Congress. None of the demands was met by the British, yet the Pact was signed. There was NO withdrawal of salt tax. Salt laws remained intact. Notably, there was NO demand for independence or swaraj in the 11-point demands! Nor was there a demand for clemency to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress did nothing to save them. Although it brought in lots of publicity for Gandhi, and gave a psychological boost to the freedom movement, the net real results of the Salt Satyagraha were zilch.

Lord Willingdon

(1931–1936)



Willingdon was earlier governor of Bombay and Madras, and Governor-General of Canada.

Willingdon compensated for the perceived softness of his predecessor Irwin, and ignored several terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, leading to revival of the CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement), which was effectively put down. Willingdon imprisoned Gandhi, Nehru and most of the members of the CWC, and banned the Congress. He put around 80,000 activists behind bars.

Second and Third Round Table Conferences (RTCs) took place in 1931 and 1932 respectively during Willingdon's tenure, leading finally to the Government of India (GoI) Act of 1935. The Communal Award (pl. see under "Interesting Timelines") provision for the Depressed Classes was opposed by Gandhi leading to his fast, and the Poona Pact with Dr BR Ambedkar.

The *Lloyd Barrage* across the Indus, and the *Safdarjung Airport* were commissioned during his tenure. *Even though he was a Viceroy, he was denied entry to the Royal Bombay Yacht Club as he was in the company of his Indian friends.* This prompted him to establish the *Willingdon Sports Club* in Bombay, open to both Indians and British.

## Lord Linlithgow

(1936–1943)



Linlithgow's was the longest reign as Viceroy of India. He was a Scottish Unionist politician, agriculturalist and colonial administrator. He served as an officer on the Western Front during the First World War, ending the war with the rank of Colonel. He was later appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. In 1926 he was the Chairman of the

Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, which published its findings in 1928. A decade later, when he became the Viceroy of India he showed special interest in nutrition, pushing it to the top of the research agenda.

The major events (for their details, please check under “Interesting Indian Timelines”) during the tenure of Linlithgow were the following: Enforcement of the GoI Act 1935; elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures leading to the Congress government in majority of the provinces; declaration of the war against the Allied forces in WW-II by the British on behalf of India leading to the resignation of the Congress ministries in 1939 in protest; India’s participation in WW-II; Jinnah’s Two-Nation Theory of 1940; escape of Netaji Subhas Bose from India; Gandhi’s Individual Satyagraha of 1940–41; Cripps Mission and Proposals of 1942; Quit India Movement of 1942, and imprisonment of almost all Congress leaders; fizzling out of Quit India Movement in mere months, and its complete failure; and refusal of Linlithgow to agree to any of the terms of Gandhi and the Congress; the Great Bengal Famine of 1943.

Lord Wavell

(1943–1947)



He served in the Second World War, initially as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, and later as Commander-in-Chief, India, from July 1941 till June 1943, after which he became the Viceroy of India.

The major events (for details, please check under ‘Interesting Indian Timelines’) during the tenure of Wavell were as follows: Continuing Great Famine of Bengal of 1943; conclusion of WW-II; release of Congress leaders from jail; Gandhi’s failed attempts to form common ground with Jinnah; the Shimla conference of 1945; the Cabinet Mission of 1946; Jinnah and Muslim League’s directed riots against Hindus through the Direct Action Day in Calcutta in 1946, and anti-Hindu attacks in Noakhali; Gandhi’s unjust and undemocratic anointment of Nehru as the Congress President in 1946 overriding Sardar Patel, followed by Nehru’s heading of the Interim Government as prime minister; elections to the Central and

Provincial legislatures, in which the Muslim League managed to get very good results; INA trials that provoked mutiny in the army and navy; and the formation of the Constituent Assembly in December 1946.

Wavell was a great lover of literature, and while Viceroy of India he compiled and annotated an anthology of great poetry “Other Men's Flowers” which was published in 1944. He wrote the last poem in the anthology himself.

### Louis Mountbatten

12 February 1947 – 21 June 1948



Lord Mountbatten was the Viceroy of British-India from 12 February 1947 to 14 August 1947; and the Governor-General of independent India from 15 August 1947 to 21 June 1948.

Much is made of Mountbatten, but he had been a failure in most of his past assignments. He belonged to navy, and in the Admiralty he was long known as the “Master of Disaster”.

He was reckless and a show-off, and the Raj thought he might be the right person to ensure fastest possible exit for the British, who were getting desperate to quit. No wonder with his coming into the viceroyalty the original date of the British departure of June 1948, which itself was considered too tight and ambitious, was postponed to 15 August 1947—not because of the pressure from the Congress, but because, in a way, the British themselves wanted freedom from India as soon as possible! True to his “competence” and recklessness, little proper security arrangements were ensured resulting in the uncontrolled partition mayhem. All that Mountbatten did was ensure convenient, quiet and quick exit of the British from India at the cost of partition-mayhem, ignoring his responsibility to ensure orderly transfer of power.

It was he who fooled Nehru and messed up the Kashmir issue for India in multiple ways, including its reference to the UN. He was playing the

same trick with Hyderabad and Junagadh, but Sardar Patel put his foot down, and did not allow either Nehru or Mountbatten to mess up.

Mountbatten was widely (and rightly) held responsible for his gross mismanagement resulting in the horrifying scale of the partition mayhem. Historian Andrew Roberts has commented: “Mountbatten deserved to be court-martialled on his return to London.” Winston Churchill had accused Mountbatten of killing two million Indians!

Nehru had adopted Mountbatten as his guru and guide. Reflects much on Nehru’s competence and his judgement of people. Where Nehru was not readily amenable, Mountbatten reportedly used his wife Edwina to get Nehru around. The net result was Mountbatten managed what the Raj desired—to the detriment of India. It was thanks to Nehru that Mountbatten became the first Governor General of independent India. Why did the freedom-fighters choose a foreigner, a British, for the top post? Weren’t competent Indians available? Jinnah didn’t do so. He himself became the Governor General of Pakistan. If Jinnah could manage Pakistan, couldn’t an Indian manage India?

Of course, for integration of the Princely States into India Mountbatten did help Sardar Patel and VP Menon where he could; but he played mischief in respect of Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Junagadh.

## Relevant International Timelines

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### Timelines of Prominent International Events

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#### 1915–17: Armenian Genocide by the Ottomans

Khalifa and the Ottoman Empire perpetrated the dastardly Armenian Genocide, also known as the Armenian Holocaust, during 1915-17 involving the *systematic extermination of about 15 lakhs* (1.5 million) of its minority Armenian subjects (mostly Christians) inside their historic homeland, which lies within the present-day Republic of Turkey. The genocide commenced with Ottoman authorities rounding up and deporting around 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders from Constantinople to Ankara, and eventually murdering most of them. The genocide then expanded to the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population; subjection of army conscripts to forced labour; and deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm—deprived of food and water, and subjected to rape robbery and murder—on death marches to the Syrian desert. Many women were raped, stripped naked, and crucified—in testimony, there are photographs of rows of naked women nailed to cross, searchable on the web!

It was the first modern genocide, and precursor of Hitler’s Holocaust—indeed Hitler was inspired from, and took lessons from the same. Hitler was reported to have remarked in the context of his order to exterminate the Polish race: “I have issued the command, and I’ll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing squad... that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness for the present only in the East with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (Lebensraum) which we need. *Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?*”

7 November 1917 : “October” Revolution

The Russian Communist or Bolshevik or October Revolution (25 October 1917 by the Julian or Old Style calendar, hence called October Revolution).

18 July 1925

Adolf Hitler's autobiographical manifesto Mein Kampf published.

29 October 1929

Start of the Great Depression, with the Wall Street Crash.

1932-33 : Soviet Famine

Start of the Soviet famine caused by the collectivization of agriculture as part of the First Five-Year Plan. Nehru did not learn from the failed Soviet Model, and pushed India into the abyss of socialism after independence.

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## WW-I Chronology & India's Role

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28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918

Start and end of World War-I (WW-I) between the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire) and the Allied Powers or the Allies (the British Empire, the US, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Romania, Serbia, and others).

18 January 1919 to 21 July 1919

Start of the conference on the Treaty of Versailles (WW-I) and its final ratification.

### WW-I & India's Massive Contribution

Over a million (1.34 million to be precise) Indian troops served overseas during the First World War, of whom about 62,000 died and another 67,000 were wounded. The Indian Army fought in Europe, South-East Asia, East Africa, Egypt, and nearly 700,000 Indian soldiers served in Mesopotamia against the Ottoman Empire, also fighting in Palestine. When with mounting officer casualties the British found their replacement difficult (officers used to be all British), they were left with no alternative but to take in officer cadets of Indian descent beginning 1919. India provided more (1,78,000 more) soldiers for the war than the combined contribution of all other colonies.

Despite chronic impoverishment, thanks to the British, Indians contributed 700 million dollars as their subscription to war loans, in addition to sending various products valued to the tune of 1.25 billion dollars. Gandhi, the 'Apostle of Non-violence', had actively supported the British war efforts.

The *India Gate in New Delhi* was built in 1931 to commemorate the Indian soldiers who gave their lives fighting in the First World War.

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## WW-II Chronology & India's Role

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### India's Role in WW-II

At the height of the World War II, more than 2.5 million Indian troops were fighting Axis forces around the globe. India's contribution was not just soldiers and manpower, but also financial and industrial on a large scale, and provision of armaments and logistics. India also provided the base for American operations in support of China in the China–Burma–India region. Indian army fought with distinction throughout the world, including in Europe, North Africa, South Asia, and South-East Asia. Indian army helped liberate Singapore and Hong Kong after the Japanese surrender in August 1945. Over 87,000 Indian soldiers died in the war.

The British Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army asserted that the British “*couldn't have come through both the wars [WW-I and WW-II] if they hadn't had the Indian Army.*”

### WW-II as a Military Training Opportunity for Indians

Gandhi, Nehru, and the Congress, wedded to their pointless and self-defeating non-violence creed, didn't have the vision to ensure India was well-equipped militarily to protect itself after independence, and take care of all its external security needs. They, therefore, never bothered to look at WW-II as an opportunity for India to get a well-trained and well-experienced army. Their approach to the whole question verged on the irresponsible. But, not so the wiser Muslim leadership, who made sure enough Muslims were inducted into the army. However, there were non-Congress leaders like Veer Savarkar who knew what India needed upon independence.

After the Muslim League's Pakistan Resolution of 1940 Savarkar could foresee the problems ahead for Hindus in India, and wanted Hindus to be militarily well-equipped. Therefore, rather than the 'Quit India 1942', Savarkar gave a call to the Hindus to take advantage of the opportunity of getting militarily trained by joining the army in the British war effort in WW-II.

Fortunately, a very large number of Hindus responded to Savarkar's call, and joined the British army—finally making it Hindu-majority from its

earlier position of Muslim-majority. That helped tremendously after partition and independence, providing a large army to India, the Muslims in the army having mostly opted for Pakistan. Unlike Gandhi and Nehru, Savarkar knew what a country of the size of India needed to defend itself. Dr Ziauddin Ahmed, the then Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), had indeed raised an alarm on the increasing number of Hindus enlisting in the armed forces, thereby reducing the proportion of Muslims.

But for Savarkar's whirlwind recruitment drive during WW-II, Pakistan, after partition, would have had 60–70% of the soldiers, enough to overwhelm India in the border areas in a conflict—this debt to Savarkar is sadly unacknowledged. While Gandhi advocated and promoted feminization of both men and politics, Savarkar sought militarization of Hindus in view of the serious challenges ahead.

## WW-II Chronology

1933 Jan 30	Adolf Hitler, Nazi leader, appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg.
1933 Oct 17	Albert Einstein settled as a refugee in the US, after arriving from Germany.
1936 Nov 25	Anti-Comintern Pact was signed between Japan and Germany, as per which if either of the parties were to be attacked by the Soviet Union, the other too would go to war with the Soviet Union.
1938 Mar 13	Austria annexed by Germany.
1938 Sep 30	To appease Hitler, the Munich Agreement was signed by Germany, France, the UK, and Italy allowing Germany to annex the Czechoslovak Sudetenland area, in exchange for peace.
1939 Mar 15	Germany occupied Czech Republic in violation of the Munich Agreement.
1939 Aug 2	The Einstein-Szilárd letter is sent to the US President Franklin Roosevelt warning that Germany might develop atomic bombs. This letter eventually resulted in the Manhattan Project.
1939 Aug 23	Soviet Union and Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, aka the Nazi-Soviet Pact, or the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, with secret provisions for the division of Eastern Europe: joint occupation of Poland, and Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Finland and Bessarabia.
1939 Sep 1	Germany invaded Poland. Start of WW-II.
1939 Sep 3	Great Britain and France declared war on Germany.
1939 Sep 3	Viceroy Linlithgow announces that India, along with Britain, had joined the WW-II.  The Congress resented not being consulted in the matter. The Congress put forth conditions to the Raj for its support in WW-II. The Raj treated the conditions of the Congress as blackmail, and refusing to agree to them, offered minor concessions.  The Muslim League whole-heartedly supported the Raj, and gained favour and ascendancy over the Congress.
1939 Sep 17	Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east.
1939 Sep 27-29	Soviet Union and Germany divided Poland among them.
1940 Jun 28	Soviet Union forced Romania to cede the eastern province.
1940 Jun-Aug	Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States annexing them as Soviet Republics.
1940 Jul-Oct	Battle of Britain (Germany-UK air war): Nazi Germany defeated!
1939 Nov -1940 Mar	Soviet Union invaded Finland, initiating the so-called Winter War.
1940 Apr-Jun	Germany invaded Denmark and Norway.
1940 May	Evacuation of Allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk, as the

	Germans menacingly advanced into France.
1940 May–Jun	Germany attacked and occupied Luxembourg on May 14, Belgium on May 28, and France on June 22.
1940 Sep 13	Italians invaded British-controlled Egypt from Italian-controlled Libya.
1940 Sep 27	Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact.
1940 Oct 28	Italy invaded Greece from Albania.
1940 Nov	Hungary (Nov 20), Romania (Nov 22), and Slovakia (Nov 23) joined the Axis Powers.
1941 Jan 19	Released after a 7-day hunger strike, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's house was put under CID-surveillance. However, in a daredevil act, Bose managed to escaped on 19 January 1941 along with his nephew Sisir Bose. Remaining incognito, he reached Germany via Afghanistan, Russia and Italy. The feat required tremendous guts, intelligence, cunning, and risk-taking ability. But, that was Bose, a leader like no other in India.
1941 Mar 1	Bulgaria joined the Axis Powers.
1941 Apr 10	Independent State of Croatia that included Bosnia-Herzegovina recognized by Germany and Italy. Croatia joined the Axis powers on 15 June 1941.
1941 Apr-Jun	Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria invaded and dismembered Yugoslavia.
1941 Jun-Dec	Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 Jun. The Germans overran the Baltic States and, joined by the Finns, laid siege to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) by September. They drove on to Moscow by October. German and Romanian troops captured Kiev (Kyiv) in September, and Rostov on the Don River in November. A Soviet counter-offensive drove away the Germans from the Moscow suburbs on 6 Dec 1941.
1941 Dec 7	The Japanese Navy carried out a surprise attack against the US naval base at the <i>Pearl Harbor</i> situated in the US territory of Hawaii at 7.48am Hawaiian time. It was a massive attack in two waves involving 353 Japanese fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes launched from 6 aircraft carriers causing enormous loss to the US Navy: 4 of its battleships were sunk, while the remaining 4 were extensively damaged; additionally 1 minelayer, 1 anti-aircraft training ship, 3 cruisers, and 3 destroyers were badly hit, and 188 aircrafts were destroyed. 2403 Americans were killed, while 1178 were wounded. Both the scale and the unexpectedness of the unprovoked attack profoundly shocked the Americans. The attack happened without a declaration of war by Japan or without explicit warning. Pearl Harbor effectively turned the European war into a global war.
1941 Dec 8	The Pearl Harbor attack led to the US entry into WW-II. The US declared war on Japan.
1941 Dec 11	The Axis Powers declared war on the US.
1941 Dec –1942 Apr	Japanese troops landed in the Philippines, French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), and British Singapore, and by April 1942 they came under Japanese occupation.

	British strongholds in South East Asia began to fall into Japanese hands one by one. The security of the Indian sub-continent was threatened.
1941 Dec 23	Taking cognizance of the changed world situation in the wake of the Pearl Harbor, the CWC meeting at Bardoli in Gujarat recognised India could not be defended non-violently against a Japanese invasion. (—A profound realisation! As if against an invader other than Japan, quixotic non-violent means would have worked!) At the persuasion of Rajaji, subject to the declaration of freedom for India, the CWC offered cooperation with the Allies.
1941 Dec 23	The Wake Island, then under the US, fell to the Japanese.
1941 Dec 27	The Philippines, then under the US, fell to the Japanese.
1942 Jan 14	Japanese captured Malaysia, then under the British, taking 50,000 Allied soldiers as prisoners of war. Japanese captured parts of Indonesia.
1942 Feb 15	Japanese captured the British stronghold of Singapore—aka the ‘Gibraltar of the East’—taking 85,000 Allied soldiers (British, Indian, and Australian) as prisoners of war. PM Winston Churchill called the ignominious fall of Singapore as the "worst disaster" and "largest capitulation" in the British military history.
1942 Jan	At the AICC meeting in Wardha, the Bardoli proposal of 23 Dec 1941 was ratified in the hope that the British authorities would do something positive for India.
1942 Mar 7	Burma (Myanmar) was the next target of the Japanese blitzkrieg. Rangoon fell on 7 March 1942. With that, the attack on India seemed imminent. Looking to the critical situation, the US President Roosevelt and the Chinese Generalissimo Chiang urged the British PM Churchill to make a reconciliatory move towards the Congress to obtain India’s full co-operation in WW-II. Churchill was reluctant, but once Rangoon fell, he was forced to make a move. He announced a <i>mission to Delhi</i> under the Leader of the House, Sir <i>Stafford Cripps</i> .
1942 Mar	Over Radio Berlin, Indians heard Netaji Bose for the first time after about a year in March 1942 confirming his taking of help from the Axis Powers for the Indian independence.
1942 Apr 12	With the Indian public, particularly the youth, gaga over the daring of Subhas, Nehru, who used to show himself off as a combative youthful leader, felt jealous, and tried to demonstrate his “principled” anti-fascist position by claiming on 12 April 1942 that he would even fight Subhas on the battlefield. People would have wondered why Nehru never showed that dare against the real enemy, the British.
1941 May –1945 May	Anglo-American bombings reduced urban Germany to rubble.
1942 Jun-Sep	Germany/Axis partners fought their way into Stalingrad (Volgograd) on the Volga River, and penetrated deep into the Caucasus after securing the Crimean Peninsula.
1942 Jul	With the British having been routed in SE-Asia, the Japanese almost next door in Rangoon, and Axis powers doing relatively well, Gandhi misread that the tide was in favour of the Axis Powers. Getting

	irrelevant, not having led a mass movement for a decade, and with leaders like Netaji Bose getting popular, Gandhi insisted in CWC at Wardha for “Quit India”.
1942 Aug-Nov	US troops halted the Japanese island-hopping advance towards Australia at the Solomon Islands.
1942 Oct	British troops defeated the Germans and Italians in Egypt.
1942 Nov — 1943 Feb	Soviet troops counter-attacked in Stalingrad trapping the German Sixth Army in the city. Forbidden by Hitler to retreat or try to break out of the Soviet ring, the survivors of the Sixth Army surrendered.
1943 May 13	Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered to the Allies, ending the North African campaign.
1943 July 5	The Germans launched a massive tank offensive near Kursk in the Soviet Union. The Soviets blunted the attack, and went on the offensive.
1943 July 25	The Fascist Grand Council deposed Benito Mussolini.
1943 Jul 10	Anglo-American troops landed in Sicily, and occupied it by August.
1944 Jun 4	Allied troops liberated Rome.
1944 Jun 6	British–US troops landed on the Normandy beaches of France, opening a “Second Front” against the Germans.
1944 Jun 22	The Soviets launched a massive offensive in Belarus, destroying the German Army Group Center and driving fast westward.
1944 Jul 25	Anglo-American forces broke out of the Normandy beachhead and raced eastward towards Paris.
1944 Dec	France, Belgium, Netherlands liberated, despite German’s Battle of Bulge offensive against Belgium.
1945 Apr 16	Soviets launched their final offensive, encircling Berlin.
1945 Apr 30	Hitler committed suicide.
1945 May 7	Germany surrendered to the western Allies. WW-II practically ends.
1945 May 9	Germany surrendered to the Soviets.
1945 May	Allied troops conquered Okinawa, the last island stop before the Japanese islands.
1945 Aug 6	US dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
1945 Aug 9	US dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.
1945 Aug 14	Unconditional surrender by Japan.
1945 Sep 2	Formal surrender by Japan; and end of WW-II.

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## Interesting Indian Timelines

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## A Few Significant Pre-1880 Timelines

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### 1615–1757

31 December 1600, 1615: EIC

The East India Company (EIC) was formed on 31 December 1600. It got exclusive trading rights with India. Under William Hawkins, it set up a trading post in Surat, and a factory in Masulipatanam. Sir Thomas Roe presented his credentials as ambassador to Emperor Jehangir. EIC acquired its first territory in Mumbai in 1615.

1751 : Robert Clive seizes Arcot

Clive, then 26, seized Arcot in Tamil Nadu.

23 June 1757 : Battle of Plassey Heralds Company Rule

In the battle at Plassey near Murshidabad, Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah of Bengal was defeated by Robert Clive and the British army, thanks to the treachery of his commander-in-chief Mir Jafar, and the mechanics of the wealthy merchants like Jagat Seth and Umichand. It resulted in the start of the East India *Company Rule*, and heralded the British Raj in India. For details, please see under “Robert Clive” above.

### 1769–70 : Great Bengal Famine

Bengal had been one of the richest regions in the world. Writes Madhusree Mukerjee in ‘Churchill's Secret War : The British Empire and the Ravaging of India during World War II’: “...But before 1757, when General Robert Clive founded the British Empire by conquering Bengal, it was one of the richest parts of the world: ‘the paradise of the earth,’ as Clive himself described it...”

Wrote French physician and traveller Francois Bernier: “...In a word, Bengal abounds with every necessary of life; and it is this abundance that has induced so many Portuguese, half-casts, and other Christians, driven from their different settlements by the Dutch, to seek an asylum in this fertile kingdom. ...the rich exuberance of the country, together with the beauty and amiable disposition of the native women, has given rise to a proverb in common among the Portuguese, English and Dutch—the Kingdom of Bengale has a hundred gates to open for entrance, but not one

for departure.” That is, outsiders were keen to come in, but having come, none ever wanted to depart, so prosperous was Bengal!

The British so changed the land and revenue laws and so wrecked the economy and engaged in loot that within mere 12 years of their rule, Bengal faced severe famine of 1769—something which had never occurred earlier! Not until the famine broke out did people in Britain realise the reason for the extraordinary profits of the East India Co. About 10 million perished in the famine—roughly one-third of the population of Bengal.

The agricultural economy was wrecked because the English extracted usurious rents and revenues—even in the years of failure of crops, forcing farmers to sell their belongings and even children! Agriculturists and their families were tortured to make them somehow cough up the revenue. Those who could not pay were forced out of their lands.

## 1772–1880

1772

Britain establishes its capital in Calcutta.

1773

Warren Hastings became the first Governor General. EIC got monopoly on production and sale of opium in Bengal.

Sanyasi Revolt, 1773

Fakirs and sanyasis from Rangpur to Dhaka (both now in Bangladesh) led by Manju Shah Fakir—and joined by farmers, evicted landlords, and disbanded soldiers—revolted against the British government’s restrictions on visit to holy places. They even overcame a company of sepoys, and killed its commander. Overrunning several districts, they set up a parallel government. Governor General Warren Hastings launched operations against them. However, their resistance continued up to 1800.

1783–84 : Chalisa Famine

After having plundered Bengal, and to make up for its lost revenues as a consequence of that plunder, the British under the first Governor-General Warren Hastings then subjugated the nearby prosperous kingdom of Oudh, and began extracting punishing revenues from there. Thanks to the same, like it happened in Bengal in 1769-70, Oudh then faced famine in 1783-84, along with Delhi, Eastern Punjab, and Rajputana! An estimated 11 million perished in the famine. And people talk of prosperity under the British!!

1791-92 : Famine in Madras Presidency

The famine affecting Deccan, Hyderabad, South Maratha, Gujarat, and Marwar resulted in the death of about 10 million.

1799

Tipu Sultan was defeated and killed at Srirangapatnam by the British.

1817-18

The Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818) between the British East India Company (EIC) and the Maratha Empire led to the decisive defeat of the latter, and the break-up of the Maratha Empire. Peshwa Baji Rao II was captured and shifted to a estate at Bithur on the banks of Ganga, near Kanpur.

1828

Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Adi Brahma Samaj for socio-religious reforms in Calcutta.

1835

Macaulay's agenda of western education began to be implemented in India. The status of official language of the government and the courts was accorded to English.

1837-38 : Agra Famine

The famine affected Agra Province, Delhi, and Hissar, and resulted in the death of about 8 lakh people.

1853

First railway between Bombay and Thane.

Santhal Rebellion, 1855

Santhal rebellion, led by Sindhu and Kanhu, erupted in 1855 against the oppression of police and land revenue officials, and atrocities of landlords and moneylenders. The British pacified the Santhals by creating a separate district of Santhal Parganas.

1857-58: First War of Independence Heralds British Raj

The First War of Independence was ruthlessly crushed. It ended the nominal Moghul rule. British Crown took over India from the British East India Company (BEIC). Beginning of the Raj.

1859-60 : Indigo Revolt

In Bengal and Bihar, the European indigo planters used to force the local peasants to grow indigo on their lands, or part of their lands, instead of the more lucrative and useful crops like rice. The planters used to intimidate the peasants into accepting advance sums, and enter into fraudulent contracts with them. The intimidation involved kidnappings, illegal confinements, flogging, attacks on women and children, seizure of cattle, burning and demolition of houses and destruction of crops.

Led by Digambar and Bishnu Biswas of Nadia district, the peasants revolted in 1859 and resolved not to grow indigo under duress, and resisted the bullying techniques of the planters, who used to be backed by the police and the courts, and employed lathiyals (retainers).

1860-61 : Agra Famine

The famine affected Agra Province, Delhi, and Hissar, coming under East Rajputana, and resulted in the death of about 2 million people.

1865-67: Odisha Famine

The famine affected Odisha, Bihar, and parts of Madras, and claimed lives of over 15 lakh.

1868-70: Rajputana Famine

The famine claimed lives of over 1.5 million.

1874-75: Deccan Riots

Deccan peasant riots erupted in 1874 in the areas of and around Pune and Ahmednagar to protest high land revenue, forcing of land-revenue payments even during bad seasons, confiscation of land, cattle, jewellery, and other property by moneylenders to recover their usurious loans. Apart from targeted violence, it involved social boycott of moneylenders. It later got support from the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha led by Justice Ranade. As a consequence, the government was forced to pass the Agriculturists Relief Act in 1879.

1876: Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria was proclaimed the Empress of India.

1876-78: The Great Famine

The Great Famine of 1876–78 affected south and southwestern India, including Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad, and Bombay, and claimed the lives of about 5.5 million. Like the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–44, it was

man-made, rather British-made—Lord Lytton, then Viceroy, having exported record food-grains.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1880–1910

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### 1880–1897

1882 (1875): Vande Mataram

1875 was the year ‘*Vande Mataram*’, which is now the national song, was written by *Bankim Chandra Chatterjee*. It was later included by him in his novel ‘*Anandmath*’ published in 1882.

1883 : Revolutionary Phadke martyred

Revolutionary Vasudev Balwant Phadke was captured in a temple after a fierce fight with the Police on 20 July 1879 while on his way to Pandharpur. Realising he was too dangerous an individual to be allowed to remain in India, the British transported him for life to a prison in Aden. He was fettered and placed in solitary confinement. He, however, managed to escape by taking the door off from its hinges on 13 February 1883. But, he was recaptured. Phadke went on a hunger strike to death to protest his ill-treatment; and on 17 February 1883 he was martyred while on a hunger strike.

1883: Separate Muslim Electorates—Aga Khan

In 1883, Aga Khan put forth the idea of reserving a certain number of seats in elections for Muslims; and that the Muslim electorate should vote only for them. Thus, the divisive proposal of a separate electorate for Muslims emerged that laid the foundations of partition and Pakistan.

28 December 1885 : Foundation of INC

Please check details on the Indian National Congress (INC) under ‘Political Parties & Groups’ above.

1886: Muhammadan Educational Conference

Muhammadan Educational Conference was founded in 1886 by Syed Ahmad Khan at the Aligarh Muslim University. It sowed the seeds of Muslim separatism.

1896-97 Famine

1896-97 famine was almost pan-India hitting United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Madras Presidency, Bengal, Hyderabad, and Rajputana. Its toll was about 5 million.

1899-1900 Famine

1899-1900 famine struck Bombay, Central Provinces, Hyderabad, Rajputana, and Gujarat, and resulted in a million deaths.

#### Act of 1892

The British silently, stealthily, and mischievously brought in the Act of 1892 providing for the principle of separate representation for Muslims in the political constitution of India. It is this act that laid the foundation of Pakistan. The wise and the cunning British wanted to make sure the Hindus and the Muslims never ever came together, like they (Hindus–Muslims) had done during the First Indian War of Independence of 1857.

#### 22 June 1897 : Chapekar Brothers' Revenge

WC Rand, responsible for excesses during the plague in Pune, and his military escort Lt Ayerst, were shot dead by Chapekar Brothers—Damodar Hari, Balkrishna Hari, and Vasudeo Hari Chapekar—who hailed from Chinchwad, Pune. All the three brothers were found guilty and hanged. For details, please see “Chapekar Brothers” above, under “Notable Personalities/Revolutionaries”.

#### 1897 : Tilak Sentenced

Lokmanya Tilak took up the issue of the British highhandedness in Pune during the bubonic plague of 1896-97, and published articles in his paper ‘Kesari’—quoting the Bhagavad Gita, he stated that no blame could be attached to anyone who avenged an oppressor without any thought of reward. In the context of the revenge against the British by Chapekar Brothers, Tilak was charged with incitement to murder and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. Out of prison, he was revered as a martyr and a national hero.

#### 1899-1900: Birsa Munda's Tribal Revolt/Ulgulan

For details, please check for ‘Birsa Munda’ above, under “Notable Personalities/Revolutionaries”.

### 1900–1910

#### 24 March 1902: Anushilan Samiti

Anushilan Samiti was established in Calcutta. It propounded revolutionary violence for ending the British Raj in India. For details, please check “Anushilan Samiti” above, under “Notable Personalities/Revolutionaries Groups”.

18 February 1905 : Shyamji's IHRS

Shyamji Krishna Varma founded the 'Indian Home Rule Society' (IHRS) in London. Its written constitution stated its aims to be to "secure Home Rule for India, and to carry on a genuine Indian propaganda in this country [Britain] by all practicable means". It was also intended to rival the loyalists in the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. He was supported by Bhikaji Cama, Dadabhai Naoroji and SR Rana.

1 July 1905 : Shyamji's India House

Shyamji Krishna Varma founded the 'India House' in London as a hostel for Indian students, since most faced racist discrimination when seeking accommodation. India House soon became a hub of Indian nationalists and revolutionaries, the notables being Madan Lal Dhingra, Madame Bhikaji Rustom Cama, Lala Har Dayal, and Veer Savarkar. For details, please check "India House" above, under "Notable Personalities/Revolutionaries Groups".

16 October 1905: Bengal Partition

Partition of Bengal into largely Muslim East and predominantly Hindu West was announced in July 1905, and effected on 16 October 1905, under Viceroy Lord Curzon on the excuse of facilitating better administration, the real purpose being to "divide and rule"—drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims. What the British desired soon happened, rather, they encouraged and facilitated it: national Muslim communal organisation, All India Muslim League, was formed in 1906.

Rabindranath Tagore spoke out against the partition, and even led mass protests. The positive side of the partition was that it gave a major fillip to the revolutionary movement in Bengal and elsewhere.

1905 onwards : Swadeshi Movement

Vandemataram Movement, also called the Swadeshi Movement to boycott British manufactured goods, was started in 1905 for Bengal's re-unification. A large number of young leaders in Bengal took up the task of educating people with the Swadeshi spirit.

In 1905, Aurobindo Ghosh wrote 'Vawani Mandir' containing, inter alia, the plans and programmes of the Revolutionary Terrorist groups. Among the major revolutionary groups were the Abhinav Bharat (HQ at Nasik, and led by Veer Savarkar), the Anushilan Samiti (based in Dacca and

led by Pulin Das), the Jugantar group (led by Jatindranath Mukherji), and the group led by Rash Behari Bose and Sachindranath Sanyal.

December 1906: AIML

'All-India Muslim League' (AIML) was formed in December 1906 at a major conference of 3000 delegates in Dhaka. It was fuelled by the Bengal partition. Political formations to counter the growing nationalism and the Congress were being actively encouraged by the British Raj. Please check details on AIML under 'Political Parties & Groups' above.

1907: Shyamji Shifts to Paris

Facing prosecution in London, Shyamji Krishna Varma shifted to Paris. Many top French politicians supported him. Shyamji's work in Paris helped gain support for Indian independence from European countries.

1907: Radicals vs. Moderates in the Congress

In the 1907 Annual Session of the Congress Party at Surat the party split into the *Radicals Faction (Garam Dal)*, led by *Lal-Bal-Pal* (Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal), and the *Moderate Faction (Naram Dal)* led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale (mentor of Gandhi) of Maharashtra. Nationalists like *Aurobindo Ghose* and Chidambaram Pillai supported Tilak. To further their objectives, the Moderates followed *3Ps—Petitions, Prayers, and Protests*—without much effect or success. Impatient with the tardy pace, the Radicals advocated radical methods, something the Moderates were not comfortable with. The Radicals wanted *agitations, strikes and boycotts*, and not just 3 Ps, to force the issues. In later years, Gokhale had brought in Gandhi to strengthen the position of the Moderates. As expected, the British put their full weight behind the Moderates, and began to suppress the Radicals—for example, newspapers of the Radicals, including that of Tilak, were suppressed, and Tilak was packed off to Mandalay (in Myanmar/Burma) jail for 6 years.

30 April 1908 : Khudiram Bose & Chaki throw Bombs

In Muzzafarpur, Bengali youths Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb on a carriage of Chief Presidency Magistrate Douglas Kingsford of Calcutta. Unfortunately, two women traveling in it got killed. Chaki committed suicide when caught. Bose was hanged.

11 August 1908 : Khudiram Bose Hanged

Revolutionary Khudiram Bose was hanged by the British at Kolkata. He was only 18 years, 8 months and 8 days old! Amrit Bazar Patrika reported: “Khudiram's execution took place at 6 a.m. this morning. He walked to the gallows firmly and cheerfully and even smiled when the cap was drawn over his head.” Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote a poem to honour him.

1908 : Tilak Jailed

Through his paper ‘*Kesari*’, Tilak defended the revolutionaries Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, and called for immediate Swaraj or self-rule. The Government charged him with sedition. The Indian Judge Dinshaw Davar, in a shameless demonstration of his loyalty to the enslavers of India, passed needless strictures against Tilak, and sentenced him to an overlong six years (1908-14) in jail in Mandalay, Burma. Tilak commented on his sentence: “In spite of the verdict of the Jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations and it may be the will of providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than my remaining free.” These wordings are now inscribed on the marble tablet just outside the grand, wood-panelled Central Court. Incidentally, Jinnah was Tilak’s lawyer. Although Jinnah lost the case, he successfully defended Tilak in 1916 when Tilak was charged with sedition.

While in the prison Tilak wrote the ‘*Gita Rahasya*’. Sale proceeds from that hugely popular book were donated for the Indian Independence movement.

Life in Mandalay prison severely affected Tilak’s health.

1909: The Indian Councils Act (Morley-Minto Reforms)

The Act of 1909, aka Morley-Minto Reforms, while providing for election of Indians to the various legislative councils in India for the first time, conceded the Muslim demand for separate electorates, thus laying the foundation of Hindu-Muslim disunity, and the ultimate Partition and Pakistan.

1909 : Savarkar’s Book

Publication of the book ‘*The Indian War of Independence*’ 1857 by VD Savarkar on the Indian revolt of 1857 so rattled the British that they banned both its Marathi and English editions, confiscating all its copies within six months of their release. The book remained banned till independence. The book was published while Savarkar was in London. It was surreptitiously

printed in the Netherlands and shipped to India, quickly becoming a bible for the nationalists.

#### 1 July 1909 : Madan Lal Dhingra's Revolutionary Act

Revolutionary Madan Lal Dhingra shot dead Curzon Wylie at London. Wylie was Political Aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State of India, and was head of the Secret Police. Dhingra was hanged on 17 August 1909.

#### 1909: Nasik Conspiracy Case

Anant Laxman Kanhere of VD Savarkar's Abhinav Bharat Society shot dead the District Magistrate of Nasik AMT Jackson on 21 December 1909. 27 members of the Abhinav Bharat Society were convicted and punished. Ganesh Savarkar, brother of VD Savarkar, was sent to Kala Pani.

Although the victim Jackson used to portray himself as a person sympathetic to India, in practice, he left no stone unturned to favour the British, and mercilessly put down all Indian aspirations. During his tenure in Nasik, once when an English officer beat an Indian to death for merely touching his golf ball, he was merely transferred, and the Indian was declared dead on account of an ailment. A group shouting 'Vande Mataram' was charged with anti-national activities, and prosecuted. A lawyer who appeared pro bono for revolutionaries was barred from court, his property was confiscated, and he was imprisoned.

*Anant Kanhere was just 18 at the time of the act.* He was hanged in the Thane Prison on 19 April 1910. Krishnaji Karve and Vinayak Deshpande, the co-plotters and back-ups for eliminating Jackson, were also hanged.

#### 1910 : Savarkar's Kalapani

Veer Savarkar was arrested in 1910 for his revolutionary activities; and following his daring, but failed, attempt to escape while being transported from Marseille, a port city in southern France, he was re-arrested. He was sentenced to two life terms of imprisonment totalling fifty years and was moved to the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He was, however, released in 1921.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1911–1920

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### 1911–1915

#### 12 December 1911: Bengal Partition Annulled

Partitioned (in 1905) Bengal was re-united under Viceroy Hardinge to appease the Bengali sentiments, and to make administration easier (Strangely, the logic for its partition in 1905 was to make administration easier!).

#### 12 December 1911: Decision to Shift Capital to Delhi

King George V announced shifting of capital from Calcutta to New Delhi. Why shift out of Calcutta? Bengal had become a ‘dangerous’ ground on account of revolutionaries.

#### 15 December 1911: New Delhi Foundation Stone

The foundation stone of New Delhi was laid by King George V at Kingsway Camp. Large parts of New Delhi were planned by Edwin Lutyens. The contract was given to Sir Sobha Singh (Khushwant Singh’s father). Construction really began after WW-I and was completed by 1931.

#### Edwin Lutyens’ Contempt for Indians

Our TV and print media keep referring admiringly to the area of Raisina Hill, Rajpath, and so on as Lutyens’ Delhi, after the British architect, Edwin Lutyens, who designed it. When Edwin Lutyens descendants visited Delhi, they were accorded grand receptions from the President down, even though Edwin Lutyens had only contempt for India and Indians, and often used insulting adjectives about them. Such attitude is also revealed in his letters to his wife compiled in a book “The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to his Wife Lady Emily” edited by Clayre Percy and Jane Ridley. Unimpressed with anything Indian, including India’s architectural marvels, Edwin Lutyens described ‘natives’ (Indians) as ‘blacks’ who were beyond redemption, as, in his words, “the average Indian seems a hopeless creature” and “the low intellect of the natives spoils much and I do not think it possible for the Indians and Whites to mix freely and naturally.” He wrote of Tamils in Chennai (then Madras): “But oh the people—the scallywags. Awful faces, to me degenerate, very dark, very naked, and awful habits of hair dressings. The bulk of the faces merely loony.” Hindu idols revolted him, as, in his words, they were “terrible, a creature with four arms and as many legs”. In

rage, he wrote of his Indian assistant: “They ought to be reduced to slavery and not given the rights of man and beaten like brute beasts and shot like man eaters.”

Given the above, which self-respecting Indian would ever bring the name Edwin Lutyens on his tongue, or ever refer to a piece of real-estate in New Delhi as Lutyens’ Delhi. But, such is the culture promoted by Nehru-dynasty and the Lutyens’ cabal, and such is our shamelessness and ignorance that we honour and eulogise those who humiliated us!!

27 December 1911: ‘Jana Gana Mana’

‘*Jana Gana Mana*’ set to *Raag Alhiya Bilawal* was written by Rabindranath Tagore, and was based on the first of the five stanzas of the *Brahmo hymn* titled *Bharoto Bhagyo Bidhata*, its underlying message being pluralism. It was first sung on 27 December 1911 at the Calcutta Session of the Congress. It was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly as the *National Anthem* of India on 24 January 1950.

1913: Tagore gets Nobel

Rabindranath Tagore awarded Nobel Prize in Literature.

9 January 1915: Gandhi’s Return to India

Gandhi returned to India, landing at Apollo Bunder (permitted by the British as a special case) in Mumbai on 9 January 1915 to a hero’s welcome. He was honoured at a magnificent reception in the palatial house of Jehangir Bomanji Petit (1879–1946), a philanthropist, and owner of Petit Mills, and Chairman of Bombay Mill Owners Association.

The British Government of India too honoured him—Gandhi received ‘Kaiser-I-Hind’ gold medal in the King’s birthday honours list of 1915. It appears that what he had done in South Africa coupled with his association with Gopal Krishna Gokhale made the British and the business houses regard Gandhi as a “safe” politician. The fact that the British chose to award medals to Gandhi both while he was in South Africa, and also soon after his return, seem to suggest that rather than viewing him as a threat to their Raj, they regarded him either as an accomplice, or as a pliable Indian politician.

### 1915: The Grand Ghadar Mutiny

The *Ghadar Mutiny* or the *Ghadar Conspiracy*—aka the *Hindu–German Mutiny* or the *Indian–German Mutiny*—was meant to trigger

mutiny in the British-Indian Army during 1915-17, both within India and outside India where the Indian troops were stationed, aimed at ending the British Raj. The name Ghadar derived from the Ghadar Party of North America formed by the Sikhs in Canada and the US. The plot was jointly conceived by the *Ghadar Party* in the US, the *Berlin Committee*, the underground revolutionaries in India, and the German Foreign Office through their consulate in San Francisco. Please check “Ghadar Party” under the chapter “Notable Personalities/ Revolutionary Groups”).

The *Berlin Committee*, subsequently called the *Indian Independence Committee*, was formed in Germany by CR Pillai and VN Chatterjee. Its members included students in Europe and members from India House. Some of them were Abhinash Bhattacharya, P Pillai, Abdul Hafiz, AR Pillai, MPT Acharya and Gopal Paranjape. German government supported them. They also had links with the revolutionary Jatin Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin: details under “Notable Personalities”) of the Jugantar Party.

Following in the foot-steps of Shyamji Krishna Varma who had founded the India House in London in 1905, similar organisations had sprouted in the US and Japan, thanks to the efforts of the Indian students and academics there. An ‘India House’ was founded in Manhattan in New York in January 1908. Madame Cama, closely associated with Shyamji Krishna Varma, had also visited the US on a lecture tour, working up patriotic revolutionary zeal. With the arrival of Lala Har Dayal on the West Coast, the Indian patriotic activities on the East Coast gradually shifted to San Francisco laying the foundation for the Ghadar Movement, that also bridged the gap between the intellectual agitators and the predominantly Punjabi labour workers and migrants on the West Coast.

Nationalist Indian students like PS Khankhoje, Kanshi Ram, and Tarak Nath Das founded the *Indian Independence League* in Portland in 1908. Khankhoje was one of the founding members of the *Pacific Coast Hindustan Association*. He had also enrolled in a West Coast Military Academy. He met Lala Har Dayal in 1911, and subsequently founded the Ghadar Party. He was at the time one of the most influential members of the party.

The Ghadar Party was formed in 1913 in the US under the leadership of Lala Har Dayal Singh. Many of its members, including Har Dayal, PS Khankhoje, Tarak Nath Das, Kartar Singh Sarabha and VG Pingle, were

drawn from the University of California, Berkeley. The party gained support from Indian expatriates in the US, Canada, Europe and Asia—its meetings were held in Washington DC, Los Angeles, Oxford, Vienna, and Shanghai. Its aim was to overthrow the British Raj in India by armed insurrection. Its main strategy was to fire up the Indian soldiers in the British-India army with patriotism, and cause mutiny. Its Yugantar Ashram Press in San Francisco printed *Hindustan Ghadar* newspaper and nationalist literature. It established contact with prominent revolutionaries in India, including with *Rash Behari Bose*. ‘Hindustan Ghadar’, an Indian edition of the paper, espoused anarchism and revolutionary terrorism against the British.

*The Conspiracy:* Major portion of the British-Indian army was deployed abroad in WW-I, and a relatively nominal force was stationed in India. That was seen as a golden opportunity by the Ghadar conspirators to ignite mutiny in the drastically reduced forces in India, and overthrow the Raj. Hundreds of Ghadarites landed in India from abroad, and together with the local ones got in touch with their sympathisers in the army, and strengthened the network. Arrangements had also been made to procure arms. The activities of motley groups of Ghadarites was gradually organised under the common umbrella of the leadership of Sachindranath Sanyal in Benares, Rash Behari Bose in North India, and VG Pingle in Maharashtra.

A unified general uprising was planned for 21 February 1915: the 23rd Cavalry in Punjab was to seize weapons and kill their officers while on roll call; mutiny in the 26th Punjab; advance on Delhi and Lahore; revolt by the 130th Baluchi Regiment at Rangoon; revolts in the 7th Rajput, 130th Baluch, 24th Jat Artillery, the 12th Cavalry regiment at Meerut, and other regiments; mutinies in Ferozpur, Lahore, and Agra, and so on. It was an elaborate plan.

About 850 troops of the 5th Light Infantry stationed at Singapore, and nearly 100 men of the Malay States Guides successfully mutinied on 15 February 1915—it lasted 7 days, and resulted in the deaths of 47 British soldiers. After the mutiny was suppressed, about 800 mutineers were either shot, or imprisoned, or exiled.

Even after the February 1915 plot was scuttled, the plans for an uprising continued in Bengal by the Jugantar Group under Jatin Mukherjee (Bagha

Jatin). “The Christmas Day Plot” for 25 December 1915 was hatched, when the 14th Rajput Regiment in Calcutta would be won over, and the control of Bengal would be obtained. The plan was, however, leaked. Jatin and his group were cornered by the British on 9 September 1915 on the banks of the river Burha Balang, and in the ensuing gun battle Jatin was seriously injured, and died the next day in Balasore, Odisha.

Internationally, the conspiracy was also directed at the Indian troops serving in the Middle East. Exiled Indian prince Raja Mahendra Pratap had led an Indo-German mission to Afghanistan in 1915 to convince the Afghan Emir Habibullah Khan to break with Britain, declare Afghan independence, join the WW-I on the Central side, and invade British India. The Provisional Government of India was formed in December 1915 to force Emir's hands. After the Russian revolution, Pratap met Trotsky in Petrograd, Lenin in Moscow, and Kaiser in Berlin to work out a joint Soviet-German offensive through Afghanistan into India.

Lala Har Dayal and PT Acharya of the Berlin Committee visited Baghdad and Syria in the summer of 1915 with a mission aimed at assassinating the British officers by infiltrating the Indian Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia and Egypt. A group led by PN Dutt and Pandurang Khankhoje distributed nationalist and revolutionary literature among Indian troops in Mesopotamia and Persia. Another group, along with Egyptian freedom fighters, attempted blocking the Suez Canal.

Such various groups carried out successful clandestine propaganda among the Indian troops, and recruited Indian POWs into the Indian National Volunteer Corps. The Indian National Volunteer Corps, led by Amba Prasad Sufi, Kedar Nath Sondhi, Rishikesh Letha and Amin Chaudhry, made incursions into western India through Persia and Baluchistan. Amba Prasad Sufi was killed, but the Ghadarites carried on guerrilla warfare along with Iranian partisans until 1919.

Unfortunately, the British intelligence infiltrated the Ghadar Movement, and thwarted its plans. Mutinies in smaller units and garrisons within Indian army were crushed, and key conspirators were arrested. However, many managed to escape, including Rash Behari Bose, who ultimately landed in Japan. This movement was suppressed by means of a massive international counter-intelligence operation and draconian political acts like the Defence of India Act 1915.

Of the 291 Ghadar Conspirators of February-1915 mutinies subjected to the *Lahore Conspiracy Trial* in April 1915, 42 were awarded death sentences, 114 transportations for life, and 93 were awarded varying terms of imprisonment. Many were sent to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans (Kalapani). There were also trials for the Benares, Shimla, Delhi, and Ferozpur conspiracy cases. The *Hindu-German Conspiracy Trial* commenced in the US in San Francisco on 12 November 1917.

To nip in the bud a repeat of the Ghadar-like conspiracy the Rowlatt Acts were rammed through in 1919, the protest against which resulted in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The Ghadar Conspiracy was among the most significant threats to the British Raj. It inspired the activities of Rash Behari Bose and Netaji Subhas Bose during the WW-II, and the formation of IIL and INA that were actually instrumental in gaining independence for India.

The Ghadar Party Memorial Hall in Jalandhar in Punjab commemorates the Ghadar Conspirators. The Ghadar Memorial Hall in San Francisco honours those who were hanged following the Lahore Conspiracy Trial.

The Indian postage stamps honouring Lala Har Dayal, Bhai Parmanand, Rash Behari Bose, and others have been brought out.

### 1916 : The Lucknow Pact

The Lucknow Pact refers to the agreement between the Congress (INC), then led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and the Muslim League (AIML), then led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah—the pact was confirmed at their respective annual sessions at Lucknow on 29 and 31 December 1916. The Pact earned for Jinnah the title the “Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity” from Sarojini Naidu.

Why did the AIML (backed by the British) which was otherwise set up as a counterpoise to the INC take such a step? A number of Muslim leaders were put off by the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911, which had given them a Muslim-majority East Bengal. Many Muslims also became hostile to the British on account of the treatment meted out to the Caliph of Turkey in the First World War—Caliph or Khalifa of Turkey was regarded as the religious head of all Muslims all over the world.

The Pact stipulated, inter alia, the following:

*Provincial Legislative Councils (PLCs):* PLCs shall comprise 80% elected and 20% nominated members—the elections being on as broad a franchise as possible; the term of office shall be 5 years; adequate provision for representation of important minorities; Muslims to be elected through special/separate electorates, the seats reserved for them being 50% in Punjab, 40% in Bengal, 33% in Bombay, 30% in United Provinces (UP, etc.), 25% in Bihar, 15% in Central Provinces, and 15% in Madras (whole of South); no Bill shall be proceeded with if 75% of the members of a community in the particular Council, Imperial and Provincial, oppose the Bill; except customs, posts, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army, and tribute from Princely States, all other sources of revenue shall be provincial; all bills passed by PLCs shall have to receive assent of the Governor before they become law, but may be vetoed by the Governor-General.

*Imperial Legislative Council (ILC):* 80% of the members to be elected; the electorate shall be the elected members of the PLCs; the term of office shall be 5 years; all bills passed by ILC shall have to receive assent of the Governor-General before they become law; the Crown may exercise its veto on any bill passed by PLCs or ILC.

*The Government of India (GoI):* GoI will be headed by Governor-General, who will have an *Executive Council*, half of whose members shall be Indian, who shall be elected by the elected members of ILC.

*Other Matters:* The Secretary of State of India shall be assisted by two permanent under-secretaries, one of whom shall be Indian; both the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks shall be thrown open to Indians in the military and naval services of His Majesty.

Certain parts of the above were accepted by the British, and were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919.

Through the Lucknow Pact, the Congress effectively endorsed both the communal electorates, and the communal veto. This proved to be yet another major step in the communalisation of politics that ultimately resulted in Partition and Pakistan.

Its leaders being mostly selfish and self-seeking, protecting their turf and narrow group interests, and being all supplicants of the British, the Muslim League was on the fringe of national politics. However, the Lucknow Pact suddenly made the Muslim League a force to reckon with, and launched

them as a major factor in the national politics. Indians and Hindus have always lost through their foolish, self-defeating generosity, lack of foresight, and inability to learn lessons from their oppressive history.

It was bizarre that even after the bitter Partition and Pakistan, the Muslim political groups in India pushed for communal electorates in the post-independence India, and leaders like Maulana Azad supported it. It was only thanks to Sardar Patel that the mischief was nipped in the bud.

#### 1915–18 : All India Home Rule League

The All India Home Rule League was launched by *Annie Besant* in September 2015. Tilak, Jinnah, Joseph Baptista, GS Khaparde, Sir S Subramania Iyer, and others came together under its umbrella in April 2016. Its objectives were to establish self-government; endeavour to achieve home-rule by promoting political education and discussions; embolden the Indians against the British suppression, etc.

#### 10 April 1917 : Champaran & Gandhi

Gandhi visited Champaran in Bihar, near the Nepal border, on 10 April 1917 along with Dr Rajendra Prasad, and others. He was invited there by disgruntled tenant farmers of indigo plantations (blue dye) who alleged unfair treatment by their European masters: for many years, they had been forced into planting indigo (for dyes) on a portion of their land and then selling it at below-market prices to the British planters who had leased them the land. Reportedly, a Bihari farmer Rajkumar Shukla approached Gandhi in Lucknow in 1916 with a request to examine their plight, and pursued Gandhi wherever he went till Gandhi agreed to accompany him.

WB Heycock, the district magistrate, ordered Gandhi to leave the district. Refusing to comply, Gandhi responded: “I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district, but if it pleases the authorities I shall suffer the penalty of disobedience. I have disregarded the order served upon me in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience.”

The Raj conceded Gandhi’s right to conduct his inquiry, as a result of which the Champaran Agrarian Act came into force in Bihar on 29 November 1917.

#### 1917–18: Sardar Patel’s Successful Agitations

### 1917: Start of Sardar Patel's Association with Gandhi

Initially, Patel did not have much interest in Gandhian politics. He was reported to have joked to Mavlankar (later, the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha): "Gandhi would ask you if you know how to sift pebbles from wheat. And that is supposed to bring independence."

When Gandhi set up his Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, many were attracted to it—some out of curiosity, and others out of genuine respect. Patel, who was practising in Ahmedabad, remained unimpressed for over a year, and took no interest in Gandhi or Gandhism. Still a chain-smoking, bridge-playing barrister in suit and tie and hat, he remained dismissive of Gandhi.

There is an interesting episode about the arrival of Gandhi at the Ahmedabad club, where Sardar Patel was playing bridge. While almost all members rushed to meet Gandhi, Patel remained seated. When asked, Patel derisively commented he did not look forward to lessons in cleaning toilets; and that bridge needed intellect, and was a much better pursuit!

However, impressed by Gandhi's acts during 1916-17, particularly at Champaran, Patel accepted Gandhi as his Guru. Patel entered politics towards the end of 1917 when he attended the Gujarat Sabha's Provincial Political Conference at Godhra presided by Gandhi, and attended, among others, by Tilak and Jinnah.

### 1917 : Sardar Patel's Fight Against Veth & Plague

Sardar fought against veth, and finally got it abolished. Veth was forced servitude of Indians to Europeans: it was customary for an official visiting a village to command the services of carpenters, barbers, bullock-cart-wallas, kulis, sweepers, and potters for various odd jobs without payment, and make them wait on the officials.

Plague broke out in Ahmedabad at the end of 1917, leading to closure of schools and courts. Many left the city. But, Vallabhbai, ignoring his personal safety, refused to move out of his residence at Bhadra in Ahmedabad. He moved around in streets, getting the sewers cleaned. He mounted massive relief efforts for plague and famine.

### 1918 : Sardar Patel's Kheda Agitation

The peasants of Kheda had been agitating for exemption from taxation in the wake of plague and famine, but their plea had been turned down by the British authorities. Gandhiji was supportive of their demand, but was

busy elsewhere. Gandhiji was delighted when Patel readily volunteered for the assignment. It was a full time job, and it meant abandonment of his law-practice which Patel had built up with considerable efforts, the obvious consequence of which was to give up all material ambitions. Patel took a conscious, considered decision, and jumped into the peasant struggle, sacrificing everything.

Patel toured Kheda villages in 1918, mobilising villagers for state-wide refusal for payment of taxes—emphasising potential hardships, need for complete unity and non-violence despite any provocation—while also documenting their grievances. He was helped in the effort by Narhari Parikh, Mohanlal Pandya, Ravi Shankar Vyas and Abbas Tyabji.

The revolt invited government wrath. Upon refusal of tax, the government's collectors and inspectors sent in thugs to seize property and cattle, while the police forfeited the lands and other agrarian property. The revolt was astounding: even when all their personal property, land and livestock were seized, Kheda's farmers remained firmly united. Those who sought to buy the confiscated property were ostracized. The mobilisation was so effective, and the agitation was so successful that the government was ultimately forced to negotiate with Patel. Revenue was suspended for that year and the next, the revenue-rate was scaled back, and the seized property was returned.

The agitation brought Patel into the national limelight, and made him a hero to Gujaratis. Patel was elected president of the newly formed Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee in 1920. He served as its president till 1945.

#### 1918 : Mainpuri Conspiracy

Ram Prasad Bismil, through his revolutionary organisation Matrivedi, and Genda Lal Dixit, through his armed youth organisation Shivaji Samiti, mobilised youths in Etawah, Mainpuri, Agra and Shahjahanpur to collect funds for the party through loot of the government treasury. The whole plan came to be known as the 'Mainpuri Conspiracy'. The Judiciary Magistrate of Mainpuri held Dixit, Bismil and others as absconders on 1 November 1919.

#### 1918–19: Mont-Ford Reforms & the GoI Act

Edwin Montagu was the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford was the Viceroy of India. Along with several others, including

an Indian Bhupendra Nath Bose (1859–1924: Bose was the President of the Indian National Congress in 1914, and was a member and under-secretary in the Council of the Secretary of State for India from 1917 to 1923), they submitted a report known as Montagu–Chelmsford (Mont-Ford, in short) Reforms for the gradual movement of India towards self-government, that was finally incorporated in the Government of India Act 1919. It represented the maximum concessions the British were prepared to make at that time.

The GoI Act 1919 was an Act of the UK Parliament that received royal assent on 23 December 1919. Some of its salient features were as follows:

*Provincial Legislatures.* Diarchy, that is, dual set of governments, at the Provincial Level, with certain subjects (transferred subjects like education, health, local government, industry, agriculture, excise, etc.) under the Indian elected ministers, and the rest (reserved subjects like law and order, finance, land revenue, irrigation, etc.) under the governor, managed by executive councillors (bureaucrats). Governors were to be executive heads in provinces. 70% of the members of the Provincial Legislatures were to be elected.

*Central Legislature.* The Central Legislature was made bicameral: the Lower House was the Legislative Assembly (like today's Lok Sabha), and the Upper House was the Council of States (like today's Rajya Sabha). The Lower House was to consist of 144 members: 41 nominated and 103 elected. Of the 103 elected, the break-up was to be: 52 General, 30 Muslims, 2 Sikhs, 19 Special. The Upper House was to have 60 members: 26 nominated and 34 elected. Of the 34 elected, the break-up was to be: 20 General, 10 Muslims, 3 Europeans and 1 Sikh.

*Central Government Executive.* The Governor-General was to be the chief executive authority. In the Viceroy's Executive Council of eight, three were to be Indians.

*Communal Representation.* The communal representation for Muslims was extended to include Sikhs, Europeans and Anglo Indians.

*Electorate.* The Franchise (right of voting) was granted to those who paid certain minimum "Tax" to the government: those who had a property, taxable income, and paid land revenue of Rs 3000 were entitled to vote. Women were also given the right to vote.

*Other Items.* Establishment of a Public Service Commission.

*Review.* Provision for setting up of a statutory commission after 10 years to review practical working of the Act: it resulted in the Simon Commission of 1927.

The Congress declared the reforms and the Act to be short of expectations and disappointing.

### 1919: Rowlatt Acts & Satyagraha

On the promise of democratic reforms after World War I (WW-I), India had massively contributed to the British war efforts. Despite the huge economic and manpower contribution by poor India, and despite the solemn assurance the British had given, the deceitful, dishonest British reneged on the promise of democratic reforms, and instead came up with the draconian Rowlatt Acts on 21 March 1919. The draconian legislation provided for arrest and house-search without warrant; in-camera trial; non-provision of a counsel to the accused; and no right of appeal against orders of special tribunals. The legislation attracted a telling slogan: “No vakil (lawyer), no daleel (argument), no appeal.” The Rowlatt Acts of 1919 were rammed through the Legislative Council despite the unanimous Indian opposition. The Acts amounted to betrayal of trust by the British.

Jinnah had resigned from the Council in protest against the Rowlatt Acts 1919. Gandhi launched a nationwide protest against what came to be clubbed as the “Black Acts”. In fact, it were the Rowlatt Acts that marked the emergence of Gandhi on the national scene. On 6 April 1919, a nationwide ‘hartal’ was organised, and fasts were offered to oppose the laws—the event came to be known as the ‘Rowlatt Satyagraha’.

### 1919 : Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

On the Baisakhi religious day of 13 April 1919 a large unarmed crowd of about 10 to 15 thousand gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in a festive, celebratory mood, and to also peacefully protest the arrest of its two leaders, Dr Satyapal and Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew, who had protested against the Rowlatt Acts. And, what did the British authorities do? The beastly act of Jallianwala Bagh massacre!

Jallianwala Bagh was a large open space enclosed on three sides by high walls and buildings with only one narrow exit. Brigadier General Reginald Dyer, the military commander of Amritsar, surrounded the Bagh with his troops and armoured cars just before the sunset, closed off the exit and then

ordered his soldiers to shoot into the crowd with their machine-guns and rifles, without giving the slightest warning to the peaceful crowd to disperse. The trapped crowd had nowhere to run or hide. Men, women and children ran helter-skelter, some jumping into the well to escape the volley of bullets. Dyer personally directed the firing towards the exits where the crowd was most dense; “the targets,” he declared, were “good”. General ordered the firing to continue until all ammunition the soldiers had brought with them was exhausted. He then ordered his men to leave the area, his ghastly deed done. Dyer forbade his soldiers to give any aid to the injured, and by ordering all Indians off the streets, prevented relatives or friends from bringing even a cup of water to the wounded who were piled up in the field. The massacre toll: 1,200 killed, and 3,600 wounded.

A reign of terror followed. General Dyer issued an order that Indians using the street should crawl on their bellies; if they tried to rise on all fours, they were struck by the butts of soldiers’ guns. He arrested many teachers and students and compelled them to present themselves daily for roll-calls, forcing many to walk sixteen miles a day. He had hundreds of citizens flogged in the public square. He built an open cage, unprotected from the sun, for the confinement of arrested persons; other prisoners he bound together with ropes, and kept in open trucks. He had lime poured upon the naked bodies of Sadhus, and had them exposed to the sun. He cut off the electric and water supplies from Indian houses.

The British did their best to suppress this news of barbaric orgy of military sadism, and managed to delay the spread of the news.

Dyer showed no remorse for his beastly act. In fact, he openly bragged about the unforgettable lesson he had taught Indians! And, he was backed up by Sir Michael Francis O’Dwyer, the British Governor of Punjab. The House of Lords passed a motion in his support. Sir Edwin Montagu who rose in the British Parliament to condemn the act was shouted down with anti-Semitic insults, and charges of Bolshevism.

But, what did the “famed” British judicial system do to Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, the butcher of Amritsar? Nothing! He was tried by the Hunter Commission, but got away without any punishment—he was only censured. As if that was not enough, upon his return to Britain, Dyer was felicitated by the British parliament, given an honourable discharge, a purse of 80,000 pounds and a bejewelled sword inscribed ‘Saviour of the Punjab’!

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## Interesting Timelines : 1920–1922

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1920

### Kisan Movement in UP in 1920s

Farmers of Awadh united and revolted against the paucity of occupancy rights on land in many regions; exaction of tributes, cesses, gifts, forced labour, and excessive rent by landlords; upward revision of land revenue; payment of forced Larai Chanda (War contribution) during WW1; heavy indebtedness; steep rise in the price of food grains; “Jajmani system” under which, lower castes were obligated to supply certain items to the upper castes at discounted prices; and so on. The British, to bring the Talukdars to their side in order to counter the Congress influence, had given them free hand to collect rents, as a result of which there was an increase in Begari (forced labour) and Bedakhli (evicting tenant from land). In 1918, the UP Kisan Sabha was setup by the Home Rule leaders Gauri Shanker Mishra and Indra Narain Dwivedi with the support of Madan Mohan Malviya. Baba Ramchandra played a stellar role 1920 onwards in organising peasants of Awadh against the landlords, inspiring the peasants through Ramayana.

Awadh Kisan Sabha exhorted the farmers to stop working on bedakhli land; directed them to stop giving Begari and Jajmani; and asked them to socially boycott the farmers who violated these directions. The movement gradually turned militant and violent by 1921, and spread to districts of Eastern UP, where the properties of zamindars, landlords and moneylenders were attacked.

Government amended the Awadh Rent Act in 1921.

### 1920 : Chamber of Princes

The Chamber of Princes representing the Princely States was established in 1920. The Chamber usually met once a year presided by the Viceroy. The full Chamber used to elect from within its princely ranks a permanent officer styled the Chancellor, who chaired the Standing Committee of the Chamber, which used to meet more often. The last Chancellor during 1944–47 was the Nawab of Bhopal Sir Hamidullah Khan. This Chamber of Princes was among the major fault-lines forged by the British to ensure their continuance through their “divide & rule” policy.

## 1920–22: Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement (KNCM)

Ottoman emperor was also a Caliph/Khalifa, and being so, he was nominally the supreme religious and political leader of all Muslims across the world. With the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, an outcry to save the Khalifa and Caliphate emerged across the Muslim world, including in India. A number of Muslim leaders including Maulana Muhammad Ali, his brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad came together to form the All India Khilafat Committee. They published the Khilafat Manifesto in 1920 calling upon the British to protect the caliphate, and exhorting the Indian Muslims to unite and hold the British accountable on that count.

Gandhi supported the movement and worked out an alliance of the Congress with the Khilafat leaders in 1920. They launched the ‘Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement’ (KNCM). Gandhi promised Swaraj within 12 months!

Jinnah had advised against supporting Mullahs and the fundamentalist elements, and the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha had opposed the Khilafat Movement.

KNCM picked up steam, and by the end of 1921 over 30,000 were in British jails, including all the top Congress leaders. However, Gandhi suddenly suspended the non-cooperation movement on 12 February 1922, without consulting any of the stakeholders, including the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat Movement. The reason, or the excuse, was the perishing of 23 policemen when the *Chauri Chaura* Police Station in the Gorakhpur district of UP was set on fire in a retaliatory violence on 4 February 1922. Police had arrested leaders of a group picketing a liquor shop in the market place. In protest, a crowd gathered in front of the police station shouting slogans. The police opened fire into the crowd killing three and wounding several. Angered by the unprovoked firing, the protestors set fire to the police station, killing the policeman as a result. At the time Gandhi was over 800 miles away in Bardoli in Gujarat. So, linking his agitation to the incident was far-fetched.

Yet, Gandhi declared that his followers had sinned against God; and to continue the campaign would be to follow Satan. Satanic acts of the British didn't matter. But, stray violence, and that too only retaliatory violence, of some groups—that was bound to occur in a country as big as India, where

the British freely resorted to unjust acts, exploitation, violence, firing, and humiliation of the natives—did seem to matter for Gandhi. Gandhi even went on a five day fast to purify himself, and withdrew from all Satyagraha activities.

What is noteworthy is that rattled by the agitation, in which thousands were in jail, the British were about to yield. Had Gandhi stood firm, and not withdrawn the agitation, the Raj would have offered conciliatory terms. But, Gandhi's sudden withdrawal put paid to all hopes.

Once the British realised that Gandhi had become unpopular both with the Muslims and Hindus for withdrawing the agitation, and arresting him would not lead to any protests, they promptly arrested him, and sentenced him to six years of imprisonment. However, he was released after mere two years in February 1924 on grounds of ill health.

Even if one grants Gandhi his indefensible logic of calling off the agitation on account of the violence, the question is why didn't he do so earlier in the face of far more ghastly violence? Reference is to the terrible Moplah Anti-Hindu Attacks of August-September 1921 in the Malabar region of Kerala (please see details below). Chauri Chaura violence of February 1922 was not even 0.1% of Moplah Anti-Hindu Attacks earlier of August-September 1921, while both were in the context of the KNCM.

#### *1922: Swaraj Party*

Vithalbhai, Vallabhbhai's elder brother, left the Congress after Gandhi suddenly called off the KNCM; and co-founded the Swaraj Party along with Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. For details, please see under 'Political Parties & Groups' above.

#### *1924: Atatürk Abolishes Caliphate*

The Khilafat Movement lost its raison d'être when the forces of the young, dynamic, revolutionary military officer Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, leader of the Turkish National Movement in the Turkish War of Independence, overthrew the Ottoman rule, abolished the role of Khalifa/Caliph, and established a modern, secular republic in independent Turkey in 1924.

#### *Failure of Gandhi's KNCM*

The above itself proves that Gandhi's was a wrong cause. It is said that Gandhi supported the Khilafat Movement to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. But, why bring about Hindu-Muslim unity on the foundations of

regressive, fundamentalist, feudal, backward-looking Islam—which the Muslims of Turkey under Atatürk themselves got rid of—and promote pan-Islamism at the cost of nationalism?

Gandhi's move was effectively opportunistic. He thought that by lending support to and leading the Khilafat Movement he would become a leader of Muslims too, and outmanoeuvre Muslim leaders like Jinnah. In that sense, Gandhi's move had a strong element of personal ambition.

As was bound to be, Gandhi's opportunistic move resulted in multiple failures. Rather than Hindu-Muslim unity, it ultimately resulted in deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations. Many Muslim leaders who were with Gandhi in the Khilafat Movement turned anti, and joined Muslim League. In a way, the movement laid the foundation of future Pakistan. Premature termination of the movement by Gandhi on the incident of Chauri Chaura led not to less, but more, violence, and communal riots.

#### Aug-Sep 1921 : Moplah Anti-Hindu Attacks

In the terrible Moplah Anti-Hindu Attacks in the Malabar region of Kerala, the Muslims butchered the Hindus, and perpetrated indescribable atrocities on them: rape, loot, killings, forcible conversions, and driving them out of their homes. Sir Sankaran Nair wrote: "For sheer brutality on women, I do not remember anything in history to match the Malabar rebellion..."

The women of Malabar, led by the senior Rani of Nilambur, petitioned the Vicerine Lady Reading: "...Your Ladyship is not fully appraised of all the horrors and atrocities perpetrated by the fiendish rebels of the many wells and tanks filled up with the mutilated, but often only half dead bodies of our nearest and dearest ones who refused to abandon the faith of our fathers; of pregnant women cut to pieces and left on the roadsides and in the jungles, with the unborn babe protruding from the mangled corpse; of our innocent and helpless children torn from our arms and done to death before our eyes and of our husbands and fathers tortured, flayed and burnt alive; of our hapless sisters forcibly carried away from the midst of kith and kin and subjected to every shame and outrage which the vile and brutal imagination of these inhuman hell-hounds could conceive of; of thousands of our homesteads reduced to cinder mounds out of sheer savagery and a wanton spirit of destruction; of our places of worship desecrated and destroyed and of the images of the deity shamefully insulted by putting the entrails of

slaughtered cows where flower garlands used to lie, or else smashed to pieces; of the wholesale looting of hard earned wealth of generations reducing many who were formerly rich and prosperous to publicly beg for a piece or two in the streets of Calicut, to buy salt or chilly or betel leaf—rice being mercifully provided by the various relief agencies. These are not fables...”

Wrote Ms Annie Besant: “It would be well if Mr. Gandhi could be taken into Malabar to see with his own eyes the ghastly horrors which have been created by the preaching of himself and his ‘loved brothers’ Mohammad and Shaukat Ali...” [Reference is to the Khilafists and Khilafat Movement.] Wrote Dr BR Ambedkar in ‘Pakistan or the Partition of India’: “...The blood-curdling atrocities committed by the Moplas in Malabar against the Hindus were indescribable... Any person could have said that this was too heavy a price for Hindu-Moslem unity. But Mr. Gandhi was so much obsessed by the necessity of establishing Hindu-Moslem unity that he was prepared to make light of the doings of the Moplas and the Khilafats [Muslim leaders] who were congratulating them...”

Handing out infuriating prescription for the Hindus to die “bravely”, Gandhi stated: “...I see nothing impossible in asking the Hindus to develop courage and strength to die before accepting forced conversion. I was delighted to be told that there were Hindus who did prefer the Moplah hatchet [axe] to forced conversion. If these have died without anger or malice, they have died as truest Hindus... Even so is it more necessary for a Hindu to love the Moplah and the Mussalman more, when the latter is likely to injure him or has already injured him... Hindu help is at the disposal of the Mussalmans, because it is the duty of the Hindus, as neighbours, to give it...”

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## Interesting Timelines : 1923–1927

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### 1923: Jabalpur & Nagpur Satyagraha

#### Jabalpur National Flag Hoisting

In March 1923, the Jabalpur municipality passed a resolution to hoist the national flag over the Town Hall. The District Magistrate prohibited the same. When the flag was nevertheless hoisted, the police not only took it off, but trampled upon the national flag. In response, the District Congress Committee launched a satyagraha. Defying the prohibitory orders, a procession carrying the national flag aloft was carried out led by, among others, Pandit Sunderlal and Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, the renowned poetess of the popular song on “Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi”.

#### Nagpur Satyagraha

Nagpur Agitation of April 1923 was inspired by the above happening in Jabalpur. On 13 April 1923, the anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy, the Central Provinces (C.P.) Government prohibited a peaceful procession with the national flag from entering Civil Lines in Nagpur, its capital. When the participants attempted to go forward with the flag into Civil Lines, the police beat them up and even flung many into open drains.

Charles Clarke, Commissioner of Nagpur, who lived in Civil Lines, had decided the flag would not be carried past his house, and decided to teach “law-breakers” a lesson, even threatening to shoot those who dared to march past his house with the national flag.

The Nagpur District Congress Committee, led by Jamnalal Bajaj, decided to violate the restrictions; and beginning 1 May 1923, volunteers walked with the flag towards Civil Lines each working day. They were arrested. Each day a fresh group of volunteers courted arrest.

#### *Sardar Patel's Winning Role*

The struggle appealed to Sardar Patel, and from June 1923 onwards he began sending batches of volunteers from Gujarat to Nagpur. The volunteers began pouring in from other states too. Tamil and Karnataka groups also joined in.

The struggle and arrests went right through May, June and July, and into August. The volunteers were dumped into Nagpur jail, and when that

overflowed, into Akola jail. Those arrested included teachers, lawyers, businessmen, zamindars, and people like Vinoba Bhave and Ravishankar Maharaj. While Vinoba Bhave was made to crush stones under the hot sun in jail; Ravishankar Maharaj had to grind kilos of grain on the chakki each day. Prisoners not fulfilling daily quotas were severely punished. Food contained dirt and pebbles, and was hardly eatable. Toilet and sanitary conditions were terrible. The conditions they were subjected to were so terrible that about ten percent of those arrested, unable to withstand the rigours, opted out by apologizing.

Jamnadal Bajaj was arrested at the end of June 1923, and was handed a stiff 18-month rigorous imprisonment. Stung, the CWC asked Sardar Patel to take charge of the struggle, which he did with effect from 10 July 1923. With Sardar at the helm, the struggle became much more organised and intense. Sardar's brother Vithalbai also came over to help in the struggle.

Finally, the CP Governor Sir Frank Sly reached an agreement with the Patel brothers: Vithalbai and Vallabhbai. The national flag was allowed to be carried through the Civil Lines on 18 August 1923. The struggle was then called off, and all the prisoners were released.

### 1923: Patel's Successful Borsad Satyagraha

In September 1923 the government announced a levy of Rs 2.5 lakhs on the residents of Borsad taluka as its expense on special anti-dacoity police posted there: each person over 16 years of age was to pay two rupees and seven annas towards the sum. Sardar Patel and his colleagues uncovered evidence of the police being in cahoots with the dacoits; and that the villagers who had shown exemplary courage in resisting the dacoits or in informing the police were severely victimised.

Sardar Patel and his team organised the villagers for agitation against the levied tax. After a protracted struggle, which Sardar had organized superbly, the government was forced to give in. Patel had this to say in the meetings he addressed during the agitation: "We are not beggars that we cannot afford to throw away two or three rupees. But the government wants to take that much money after calling us associates of dacoits. If the Government admits that its authority has vanished and its finances are poor, we shall be quite prepared to take over the administration... The reason assigned is that the people do not provide information or evidence. Let us see how far this is true. Babar has to his credit 22 murders. Not one of the

victims was a rich man. He did not murder them for the mere fun of it. They were informants. If after 22 such informants were murdered the Government seriously argues that the people do not give information, shall we ask how many policemen were murdered?"

Gandhi was full of praise for Sardar Patel's leadership. He noted "Vallabhbhai's magnificent organizing and administrative" skills, and his ability in having "collected around himself a band of devoted workers of like mind and ability". Gandhi also admired the Borsad effort for social change, terming it as more valuable.

### 9-11 September 1924 : Kohat Anti-Hindu Attacks

The 1924 Kohat riots were major anti-Hindu attacks in British India. During 9–11 September 1924, over 155 Hindus and Sikhs were killed by Muslims in the Muslim-majority Kohat (not very far from Rawalpindi) in NWFP. The entire Hindus and Sikh population had to flee the town to save their lives.

Even earlier, for many years, the local Muslims were in the habit of abducting Hindu women, married as well as unmarried, and converting them to Islam. Upon complaint, even if the court decided in favour of the Hindu husband, the Muslims would not agree to returning the wife, considering her connection with her Hindu husband illegitimate, and claiming it as their religious duty not to let the woman who had been converted to Islam to go to her Hindu husband!

What was Gandhi's remedy? A zero-effect 21-day fast in October 1924, and an irrelevant advice: "I can only suggest solutions of questions in terms of Swaraj. I would, therefore, sacrifice present individual gain for future national gain. Even if Mussalmans refuse to make approaches and even if the Hindus of Kohat may have to lose their all, I should still say that they are able to live at peace with the latter without the protection of the British bayonet..."

### 9 August 1925 : Kakori Train Robbery

Kakori Train Robbery (16km from Lucknow) to loot government treasury was carried out by HRA (see above) led by Ram Prasad Bismil. Team included Ashfaqulla Khan, Roshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiri, Chandrashekar Azad, Manmathnath Gupta, and others. There is a memorial to the Kakori conspirators at Kakori established in 1983.

17–19 December 1927 : Ram Prasad Bismil and Others Hanged

Revolutionaries Ram Prasad Bismil at Gorakhpur jail, Ashfaqulla Khan at the Faizabad Jail, and Roshan Singh at Naini Allahabad Jail were hanged for the Kakori Train Robbery (see above) on 19 December 1927. Lahiri was hanged on 17 December at Gonda Jail.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1929–1933

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### 1928: Patel's Successful Bardoli Satyagraha

The government of the Bombay Presidency, rather than providing succour to the people of Bardoli in Gujarat severely affected by floods and famine since 1925, raised land revenue by 30% in 1927. Petitions from civic groups had no effect.

When the villagers expressed their resolve not to bend down to injustice and face the worst, Patel agreed to back them. Patel organised villages under a set of leaders and volunteers, and also planted informers within the government departments to know in advance their various moves. Villages were grouped into 18 sectors, each under a sector-commander. Under each sector-commander were sets of volunteers designated as 'sainiks' (soldiers). It was all on a military pattern. Peasants of all castes and religions participated in the satyagraha.

At the advice of Patel, and aided by his group of leaders and volunteers, the farmers had prepared themselves for all eventualities, hiding their precious belongings with their relatives staying in other unaffected parts of Gujarat; and had also arranged for supplies and logistics from supporters and sympathisers outside. In other words, it was a well-planned, well thought-out, and well-organised agitation.

A "war"-bulletin, *Larat-ki-Patrika*, was published and circulated on a daily basis to keep everyone informed and geared up, and it was eagerly lapped up by the villagers. To keep up the morale, Sardar Patel had also arranged for Bhajan Mandalis (groups of musicians) to go around villages each night to sing national and religious songs. The Bhajan Mandalis also included story-tellers to regale the audience with interesting and inspiring anecdotes and short-stories. To keep track on what was happening on the ground, and to boost morale of the villagers, Sardar Patel used to visit villages in the night, returning to his headquarters only at daybreak. Notable in the struggle was the participation of women, which Patel encouraged. Their bravery inspired their men to be even more committed.

As expected, the Government left no stone unturned to crush the agitation. Bands of Pathans mobilised by the government from India's northwest terrorised the farmers, and aided the Tax inspectors in forcibly

seizing property, including cattle. Auctions of confiscated properties began to be organised. But, hardly anyone from Gujarat came forward to buy. Some greedy ones who showed up faced social boycott. To break the morale, the administration locked up about 17,000 agitators with some 40,000 seized buffaloes in a disease-prone, smelly, small, insanitary hell of a place for over three months.

There was heavy criticism of the government action all over. Ultimately, in 1928, the government had no alternative but to offer certain terms of settlement to Sardar: terms included cancellation of revenue for the year, scale-back of the 30% rise in taxes, and return of confiscated lands and properties. However, Sardar Patel rebuffed the same, considering them inadequate. But, Gandhi agreed to government's terms, and therefore Sardar acquiesced.

The resounding success of the agitation made Patel a national hero. The women of Bardoli bestowed the title 'SARDAR' (Chief or Leader) on Patel.

What was noteworthy about the Bardoli Satyagraha was that it was the first successful practical implementation of the Gandhian non-violent technique involving the rural masses on the ground. What was even more noteworthy was that it was not Gandhi who made that Gandhian technique successful through the rural masses, but it was Sardar!

### 3 February 1928 : Simon Commission

The Mont-Ford Reforms of 1918 and the GoI Act of 1919 had envisaged their review after 10 years. Accordingly, the Simon Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, was set up in 1928. It comprised seven British Members of Parliament of the UK, including the Labour leader Clement Attlee (1883-1967) who was subsequently the British Prime Minister between 1945 and 1951. The Commission was tasked with reporting India's constitutional progress, and for suggesting further constitutional reforms.

Outraged at the exclusion of Indians from the Commission that was to determine India's constitutional future, the Indian National Congress (INC), at its December 1927 meeting in Madras, resolved to boycott the Commission. The Simon Commission, upon its arrival in Bombay on 3 February 1928, was greeted with strikes, protests and black flags. The

protests were repeated in each major city the Commission visited, accompanied by the slogan “Simon go back!” A faction of Muslim League, Hindus and Sikhs, however, cooperated with the Commission. An All-India Committee for Cooperation with the Simon Commission was established.

The Commission’s two-volume report published in May 1930 proposed, inter alia, abolition of diarchy and the establishment of representative government in the provinces; *retention of separate communal electorates until tensions between Hindus and Muslims dies down. The Simon Commission ultimately led to the Government of India Act 1935, which established representative government at the provincial level; and is the basis of many parts of the current Indian Constitution. In accordance with the GoI Act 1935, the first elections were held in the Provinces in 1937 that brought Congress Governments in power in most of the Provinces.*

17 November 1928 : Lala Lajpat Rai Martyred

The protests against the Simon Commission at Lahore on 30 October 1928 were led by Lala Lajpat Rai. There was a lathi-charge, and the police singled out Lala Lajpat Rai for brutal treatment, leading to his untimely, unfortunate death on 17 November 1928.

1928: Motilal Nehru Report

On 10 August 1928, much ahead of the release of the Simon Commission's report, Motilal Nehru and his group came out with their Nehru Report to establish that Indians could arrive at a consensus, and could write their own constitution. The report outlined a new dominion status constitution for India within the British Commonwealth, and provided for internal self-government. Most of the Muslim League leaders, including Jinnah, rejected the proposals.

In the annual Congress session at Calcutta in 1928, while most leaders were fine with the dominion status for the time being, some were in favour of complete swaraj. As a middle way, Gandhi proposed that a period of two years be given to Britain to concede to the proposals in the Nehru Report and the dominion status; and if those were not granted, the Congress would fight and settle only for complete independence.

1929–30: Nehru’s Unjust Anointment as Congress President

Sardar Patel deserved to become the Congress President in 1929. He had led the Bardoli Satyagraha (please see details above) of 1928 whose

resounding success had made him a national hero, and had earned him the title *Sardar*. The Bardoli Satyagraha was the first successful practical implementation of the Gandhian non-violent technique involving the rural masses on the ground. Nehru lacked such credentials. He didn't have any significant practical achievements to his credit—he was more of a talker. Besides, Sardar Patel was much senior to Jawaharlal, and a larger number of PCCs (Pradesh Congress Committees: legal bodies to choose Congress President) had recommended him for the Presidentship over Jawaharlal. Yet, Gandhi asked Patel to withdraw! Gandhi thereby tried to establish an unjust pecking order where Jawaharlal came before Patel. Netaji Subhas Bose had subsequently written: “The general feeling in Congress circles was that the honour should go to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.”

Jawaharlal's father Motilal had a major role to play in Jawaharlal's undeserved elevation. Motilal was the Congress President in 1928. He desired that his position should be inherited by his son. Subsequent to Patel's Bardoli win, Motilal wrote to Gandhi on 11 July 1928: “I am quite clear that the hero of the hour is Vallabhbhai, and the least we can do is to offer him the crown [make him President of the Congress]. Failing him, I think that under all the circumstances Jawahar would be the best choice.” Motilal actively canvassed for Jawaharlal with Gandhi.

The presidentship of the Congress in 1929-30 was particularly important for several reasons. It was implied that the person who became president was likely to be Gandhi's successor. He was also to declare the goal of the Congress as “purn swaraj” or “complete independence”.

Congress presidentship used to be for one year, and rarely was anyone given two terms. However, Jawaharlal was granted a second consecutive term in 1930, thanks to Gandhi!

1930: CV Raman gets Nobel

CV Raman (7 Nov 1888–21 Nov 1970) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930 for his work ‘Raman Effect’ on light scattering. He was awarded Bharat Ratna in 1954.

18 April 1930 : Surya Sen & Chittagong Armoury Raid

Surya Sen led revolutionaries carried out the famous Chittagong Armoury Raid. Please see details under ‘Notable Personalities/ Revolutionaries/ Surya Sen’ above.

## 1928–31 : Lahore Conspiracy Case, etc.

### 17 December 1928: Saunders' killing

The death of Lala Lajpat Rai (please see above) in the brutal police lathi-charge was avenged by Shahid Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Jai Gopal and Sukhdev by killing Assistant Superintendent of Police JP Saunders in Lahore on 17 December 1928.

### 8 April 1929: Assembly Bombing

On 8 April 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw a bomb at the government benches in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi, and raised slogans. There were no casualties—none were intended. As the smoke from the bombs had filled the Assembly, they could have escaped in the confusion had they so wished. Instead, they stayed shouting the slogan “Inquilab Zindabad!”, and threw leaflets. Both surrendered. Bhagat Singh was awarded life sentence.

### 1929: Further Arrests

The bomb factories in Lahore and Saharanpur set up by HSRA (pl. see details above under ‘Revolutionary Groups’) were discovered in 1929, and many more members of HSRA including Sukhdev, Kishori Lal, Rajguru, and Jai Gopal were arrested. Saunders murder case was re-opened based on substantial evidence, and statements by their associates, Hans Raj Vohra and Jai Gopal.

### Jun-Oct 1929 : Memorable Hunger Strike by Revolutionaries

Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, and many others were earlier arrested for the main *Second Lahore Conspiracy Case*. They all were in Central Jail Mianwali in Lahore. Jatin Das was arrested and jailed in Lahore on 14 June 1929 under the *Supplementary Second Lahore Conspiracy Case*.

The conditions of Indian prisoners in jails was terrible: their uniforms were not washed for several days; rats and cockroaches roamed their kitchen area; reading and writing materials were not provided to them. That was in sharp contrast to the British prisoners, and the top Gandhians, who were treated very well in jails. Additionally, being political prisoners, they expected to be treated like one, rather than as common criminals. They demanded equality with the jailed Europeans in food standards, clothing, toiletries, and other hygienic necessities, as well as access to books and a daily newspapers. Unlike for the top Gandhians (who had a relatively good

time in jails reading and writing books and articles, and experimenting with nutrition), the British refused classification of Bhagat Singh and group as “political prisoners”. They also protested against their subjection to forced manual labour. To force the issue they began hunger strike. The strike gained wide popularity across the nation, with the media popularising it. The jail authorities tried enticing those on hunger strike with delicious food, and when that failed, with force-feeding.

Viceroy Lord Irwin advanced the date of the Saunders Murder Trial that came to be known as the *Second Lahore Conspiracy Case*. Bhagat Singh and 27 others were tried. Bhagat Singh, still on hunger strike, had to be carried to the court handcuffed on a stretcher.

Incidentally, responding to appeals, Bhagat Singh finally ended his hunger strike on 5 October 1929 after an unimaginably overlong period of over three months!

#### Jatin's Famous Fast & Martyrdom

The condition of the revolutionary Jatindra Nath Das (Jatin Das), who was arrested on 14 June 1929 under the *Supplementary Second Lahore Conspiracy Case* and who too had been on a hunger strike along with Bhagat Singh and group, deteriorated and became critical. Jail authorities recommended unconditional release, but the government refused. He was martyred on 13 September 1929 in Lahore jail after a *63-day hunger strike*.

Durga Bhabhi (Durgawati Devi, a revolutionary, and wife of another revolutionary Bhagwati Charan Vohra) led his funeral procession from Lahore to Calcutta by train, with thousands thronging the railway stations on the way to pay homage to Jatin. His funeral procession in Kolkata was about two-mile long.

#### Gandhi's Convoluted Reaction

While everyone paid rich tributes to Jatin Das for his exemplary sacrifice for a common cause through his hunger-strike, conspicuously, the serial hunger-striker Gandhi, who one would have thought would surely write glowingly about it, chose to keep silent; and in subtle ways, tried to look down upon Jatin's noble act, as would be clear from his following letters:

Gandhi's letter of 22 September 1929 to Mahadev Desai: “...As yet I cannot write anything about Jatin. I am not surprised that what may be called our own circle fails to understand me. Personally, I have not the least

doubt regarding the correctness of my view. *I see no good in this* [Jatin's] *agitation...*" Gandhi's letter of 9 October 1929 to Raihana Tyabji: "...Now about Jatin Das. I have been deliberately silent because I have not approved of the fast..." Gandhi's letter of 18 October 1929 to Rajaji: "...I am wholly against hunger-strikes for matters such as Wizia and Jatin died for... Do you not agree with my judgment of the hunger-strikes and with my consequent silence?..."

Did Gandhi feel jealous? 63 days of fast by Jatin! In comparison, Gandhi's longest fast was for only 21 days—one-third that of Jatin's.

Also, anyone other than Gandhi running away with credit for a hunger-strike for a good cause, that Gandhi felt was his patent and copyright, deserved to be faulted on manufactured pretexts like "not moral", or "not the right cause"! Morally right, or the right causes were like Gandhi coercing Dr Ambedkar into the Poona Pact through his fast unto death!! There were other instances where Gandhi dissuaded a prospective hunger-striker when he saw that it could bring in lots of publicity to the latter, and instead proposed that at an opportune moment he [Gandhi] himself would undertake the trouble to force the issue! The problem with labels like 'Mahatma' is that they allow even selfishness, cleverness and jealousies to be cloaked in sophistry and convolution.

February 1931 : Azad Met Nehru

Chandrashekhar Azad met Nehru secretly at Nehru's residence 'Anand Bhavan' at Allahabad to know if Gandhi and the Congress would do something in the ongoing Gandhi-Irwin talks to save Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev from gallows. However, Nehru-Gandhi did nothing.

27 February 1931 : Chandrashekhar Azad Martyred

Chandrashekhar Azad shot himself with his last bullet at the Alfred Park in Allahabad, after he was surrounded, and had valiantly defended himself and his colleague. An informer had tipped the police. Incidentally, as described above he had met Nehru earlier at 'Anand Bhavan'.

23 March 1931 : Bhagat Singh & Others Martyred

Bhagat Singh had become famous all over India as the *Second Lahore Conspiracy Case* against him and others progressed. On 7 October 1930, the tribunal delivered its judgement. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were sentenced to be hanged. Kundan Lal and Prem Dutt received rigorous imprisonment of 7 and 5 years respectively. Kishori Lal, Mahabir Singh,

Bijoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma, Gaya Prashad, Jai Dev and Kamalnath Tewari were sentenced to transportation for life. Ajoy Ghosh, Jatindra Nath Sanyal and Des Raj were acquitted.

On 23 March 1931, Shahid Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were executed by the British.

No Effort by Gandhi or Congress to Save Bhagat Singh & Co.

It was unfortunate that despite requests to make saving of Shahid Bhagat Singh and others a condition in the on-going negotiations between Gandhi and Viceroy Irwin, the Gandhi–Irwin Pact signed on 5 March 1931 remained silent on the matter, and Gandhi and the Congress did effectively precious little to save the braves. There were no demonstrations, no hartals, no satyagraha and no fasts organised by the Congress Party or Gandhi.

Revolutionary Sukhdev, who had not pleaded for himself and his colleagues, wrote an open letter to Gandhi after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact: "... Since your compromise (Gandhi-Irwin pact) you have called off your movement and consequently all of your prisoners have been released. But, what about the revolutionary prisoners? Dozens of Ghadar Party prisoners imprisoned since 1915 are still rotting in jails; in spite of having undergone the full terms of their imprisonments, scores of martial law prisoners are still buried in these living tombs, and so are dozens of Babbar Akali prisoners. Deogarh, Kakori, Machhua Bazar and Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners are amongst those numerous still locked behind bars. More than half a dozen conspiracy trials are going on at Lahore, Delhi, Chittagong, Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere. Dozens of revolutionaries are absconding and amongst them are many females. More than half a dozen prisoners are actually waiting for their executions. What about all of these people? The three Lahore Conspiracy Case condemned prisoner (Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru), who have luckily come into prominence and who have acquired enormous public sympathy, do not form the bulk of the revolutionary party. Their fate is not the only consideration before the party. As a matter of fact their executions are expected to do greater good than the commutation of their sentences..."

The above letter had no effect on Gandhi.

The British India Viceroy Lord Irwin recorded in his notes dated 19 March 1931: "While returning Gandhiji asked me if he could talk about the case of Bhagat Singh, because newspapers had come out with the news of

his slated hanging on March 24th. It would be a very unfortunate day because on that day the new president of the Congress had to reach Karachi and there would be a lot of hot discussion. I explained to him that I had given a very careful thought to it but I did not find any basis to convince myself to commute the sentence. It appeared he found my reasoning weighty.”

From the above it appears Gandhi was bothered more about the embarrassment that would be faced by the Congress with Bhagat Singh’s hanging than by the hanging itself.

The British “justice” system could allow the British mass-murderer of Jallianwala Bagh to get away scot free, and the British could even generously reward him for that brutality; but people like Bhagat Singh who protested against those brutal acts deserved to be hanged; and Gandhi’s abstruse artefact (was it deliberately abstruse to allow for self-serving flexibility!) of “non-violence” was comfortable with such a position!

The executions took place on the eve of the annual convention of the Congress party at Karachi; and Gandhi faced black flag demonstrations by angry youths who shouted “Down with Gandhi!”

Thanks to his daring and commitment to free India, by the time Bhagat Singh was hanged in 1931, he had become highly popular all over India, and had risen in political stature to a level higher than all other leaders in India. Bhagat Singh Day was observed throughout Punjab on 17 February 1931. In states as far away as Assam and Andhra Pradesh, innumerable folk songs grew about him; and rural craft works celebrating his bravery became popular.

#### Gandhi’s Comments on Bhagat Singh

Gandhi wrote in *Young India* the following after Bhagat Singh’s martyrdom: “This mad worship of Bhagat Singh has done and is doing incalculable harm to the country. Caution has been thrown to the winds, and the deed of murder is being worshipped as if it was worthy of emulation. The result is brigandage and degradation.”

Apparently, Gandhi could not stomach Bhagat Singh’s popularity. He only wanted himself to be revered, and his words and opinions taken as gospel truth!

1930: Congress Call for “Purna Swaraj”

It is worth noting that the Congress called for full independence only as late as 1930! The flag of India was hoisted at midnight on 31 December 1929 on the banks of the Ravi river at Lahore by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Purna Swaraj Declaration, or the Declaration of the Independence of India, was promulgated by the Indian National Congress on 26 January 1930; and the Congress called upon Indians to observe 26 January as the Independence Day. Although with the transfer of power to Indians by the British on 15 August 1947, 15 August became the official *Independence Day*. The new Constitution of India declaring India as a republic took effect on 26 January 1950, making 26 January the *Republic Day*.

### 1930: Dandi March & Salt Satyagraha

The government had levied tax on the manufacture and sale of salt, an item used by all—rich and poor. To Gandhi breaking the Salt Law appeared to be a fit case for peaceful civil disobedience, to gain publicity, and to mobilise masses: everyone could participate in it—scoop salt at the coast, or just sell and buy salt without paying tax.

To gain maximum Indian and international publicity, Gandhi planned a long 390 km march from his Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to the coastal Gujarat village of Dandi near Navsari, where his group planned to produce salt at the coast without paying tax. 78 people began the march with Gandhi on 12 March 1930, and arrived at Dandi after a 24-day walk on 5 April 1930, breaking the Salt Law at 6.30am the next day on 6 April 1930. Many people had joined the group along the way. The march turned into a grand media event.

Gandhi had appointed Sardar Patel as the Grand Commander for the march. Dandi and the Salt Route were Patel's choice. Sardar did a fine job, delivering fiery speeches along the route, and mobilising and inspiring people.

Gandhi marched triumphantly ahead with host of processionists, making speeches along the way. The villages they passed through were festooned as if participating in a festival. Many villagers joined the march along the way. The procession gradually grew from under a hundred to a few thousand by the time they hit the destination.

After making salt at Dandi, Gandhi continued further along the coast, producing salt and addressing meetings.

### 21 May 1930: Dharasana Salt Works

But, before the planned satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south of Dandi, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4–5 May 1930. However, Manilal, Gandhi's second son, and Sarojini Naidu led 2500 satyagrahis to *Dharasana Salt Works* on 21 May 1930. As they approached the Works, they were mercilessly hit by lathis and boots on heads and body, at the instructions of 6 British officers, by about 400 Indian constables posted there. No blows were returned. About 320 were injured. It was a “brave act” as per Gandhi's vocabulary; but pointless nevertheless. What was the gain? Nothing. Get mercilessly beaten up for nothing!

### 1930: Qissa Khwani Bazaar Massacre & Garhwali

The Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God), led by Frontier (Seemant) Gandhi Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was a Pashtun organisation committed to overthrowing the British rule through non-violent methods. On 23 April 1930, Ghaffar Khan was arrested after a speech urging resistance to the foreign rule. After more Khudai Khidmatgar leaders were arrested, a large number of Khudai Khidmatgar members gathered at Qissa Khwani Bazaar (also called Kissa-Khani or Story-tellers bazaar) bazaar in Peshawar to protest.

A few British armoured cars speeded into the bazaar killing several. The gathered members protested, though peacefully, and offered to disperse if they could gather their dead and injured, and if the British troops left the square—which the British troops refused.

Deciding to disperse the mob, the British Commanding Officer ordered the 2/18 Garhwal Regiment to fire. But to his utter surprise, the Garhwalis, known otherwise for their loyalty to the Raj, defied the authority, refused to fire, and argued that they would not fire upon the unarmed civilians. This infuriated the British official to the extent that he immediately fired upon the Jamadar (a petty official) of the Garhwali regiment. The bullet missed its target and hit his horse which died on the spot.

The Garhwalis were disarmed, arrested and sent to Abbottabad. Later on, 17 of them were court-martialled in Bombay and sentenced to various terms of harsh imprisonment. Chander Singh Garhwali, the group leader, was sentenced to transportation for life; Narain Singh, for 15 years, and the rest, 15 in number, were given 3 to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. Thanks to the post-independence Nehru-Gandhi Dynasty era that laid the

concrete foundations of India's misery, brave Chander Singh Garhwali remained neglected and forgotten till his death—he actually deserved a Bharat Ratna. Belatedly, a postage stamp was released in his honour in 1994.

The British, after withdrawing the Garhwal Rifles, brought-in alternate force (City Disturbance Column), and ordered troops to open fire with machine guns on the unarmed crowd. The Khudai Khidmatgar members willingly faced bullets, responding without violence. Many were killed and wounded. The British violence continued for six hours turning the bazaar red with blood.

According to the Government-appointed the Sulaiman-Pankridge Enquiry Committee, 33 were killed and 33 wounded, but this was not the final figure, according to the same report. The Congress Inquiry Committee chaired by Vithalbhai Patel put the figures between 200 and 300 killed, and many more wounded.

#### Gandhi's Shameful Stand

Now comes the interesting, or rather the baffling, part. One would have expected Gandhi to congratulate Garhwal Rifles and Chander Singh Garhwali, their group leader, for refusing to fire into the non-violent unarmed protestors. But, no. Gandhi, instead, argued: "*A soldier who disobeys an order to fire breaks the oath which he has taken and renders himself guilty of criminal disobedience.*" In sharp contrast, the same Gandhi, in the 1942-Quit India specifically called upon the soldiers to "*refuse to fire on our own people.*" AK Hangal, the late actor, was witness to the above ghastly massacre, as a school student then in Peshawar. He wrote in his autobiography 'Life and Times of AK Hangal': "Strangely, Gandhi had opined that Garhwali should have actually obeyed orders and fired, as a disciplined soldier. I could never understand this line of reasoning."

If only someone had countered Gandhi asking what exactly was the "Disobedience Movement" that he had been championing? Asking government and other employees to engage in civil disobedience—was it not asking them to go against their oath of office? Breaking law—was it not unlawful?

Gandhi, the Hindu-Muslim unity advocate, even ignored the fact that the Garhwal Rifles comprised all Hindu soldiers, while the protestors were all

Muslims. The Hindus, the Garhwali soldiers, at considerable risk to themselves, had saved many Muslims from death and injuries.

### 1930–31: First Round Table Conference (RTC-1)

As per the recommendations of the Simon Commission Report of May 1930, three Round Table Conferences were organized by the British Government during 1930–32 to discuss the constitutional reforms in India. The First Round Table Conference was inaugurated in London on 12 November 1930. The participants were: 16 delegates from the 3 British political parties; 16 delegates from the Princely States; and 57 Indians from the Muslim League (Aga Khan III as their leader), the Hindu Mahasabha (BS Moonje and MR Jaykar), the Indian Liberal Party (Tej Bahadur Sapru, CY Chintamani and Srinivasa Sastri), the Sikhs represented by Sardar Ujjal Singh, and the Depressed Classes represented by Dr BR Ambedkar, etc. The Indian National Congress was not represented as many of its leaders were in jail for the Salt Satyagraha.

Wide-ranging matters relating to the Federal Structure, Provincial Constitution, Minorities, Defence, Burma, NWFP, Sindh, and so on were discussed. The idea of an All-India Federation was accepted, as the Muslim League always opposed a strong Centre, where it would be in a minority. A separate electorate for the Depressed Classes as demanded by Dr BR Ambedkar was also considered. However, in the absence of the Congress there could not be much progress. The Conference ended on 19 January 1931.

10 February 1931: The New Capital New Delhi Inaugurated

New Delhi was inaugurated by the Viceroy Lord Irwin on 10 February 1931 as the new capital.

### 1931: Gandhi-Irwin Pact

*26 January 1931:* Gandhi released from Yerwada jail, consequent to the *Salt Satyagraha* of March-April 1930. Other CWC members also released from jail.

*17 February 1931:* Gandhi-Irwin talks began.

*5 March 1931:* Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed off. There was no provision in it for clemency to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress did nothing to save them, as has been detailed earlier.

26–31 March 1931: Gandhi-Irwin Pact endorsed in the Karachi Session of the Congress.

Under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the British acceded to no major demand of the Congress. It was effectively a failure of Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha: his second major movement. Although it brought in lots of publicity for Gandhi, and gave a psychological boost to the freedom movement, the net real results of the Salt Satyagraha were zilch—*Salt Laws remained intact*.

Before the start of the Salt Satyagraha on 12 March 1930, Gandhi had put forth the following Eleven Point Demand on the Viceroy (stated below in brief), and made it clear that if the 11 points were ignored, the only way out was civil disobedience:

- (1) Prohibit intoxicants.
- (2) Change the ratio between the rupee and the sterling.
- (3) Reduce the rate of land revenue.
- (4) Abolition of salt tax.
- (5) Reduce the military expenditure.
- (6) Reduce expenditure on civil administration.
- (7) Impose custom duty on foreign cloth.
- (8) Accept the Postal Reservation Bill.
- (9) Abolish CID.
- (10) Release all political prisoners.
- (11) Issue licenses of arms to citizens for self-protection.

*No Demand for Complete Independence.* Conspicuous absence in the above Eleven Point Demand is that for Complete Independence, especially when the Congress had grandly promulgated the Purna Swaraj Declaration, or the Declaration of the Independence of India, only a few weeks back on 26 January 1930!

*None of the above 11 points were accepted by the Viceroy.* While all the above 11 points put forth before the start of the agitation on 12 March 1930 were ignored by the Raj, Gandhi, in consultation with his colleagues, put forth the following six revised points to the Viceroy on 17 February 1931 as his condition for calling off the agitation:

- 1) Release all political prisoners giving them clemency.

- 2) As a policy, peaceful volunteers for freedom movement not to be prosecuted.
- 3) Return properties confiscated from political volunteers.
- 4) Re-appoint all the government servants dismissed for their political participation.
- 5) Grant freedom to picket the government offices, and the shops dealing in foreign goods. Grant freedom to make salt from the seawater.
- 6) Order an enquiry into the unlawful activities the police perpetrated on the people.

As would be seen from the above, while almost all of the original 'Eleven Point Demand' for which the agitation was started disappeared, 5 of the above 6 demands were a consequence of the agitation (clemency to the agitators). The only demand that remained was the almost inconsequential and harmless demand number-5: "Grant freedom to picket the government offices, and the shops dealing in foreign goods. Grant freedom to make salt from the seawater." Even this watered-down demands were not fully agreed to by the Viceroy.

What then was agreed through the Gandhi–Irwin Pact? Just these two: (1) Permit peaceful picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops. (2) Permit free collection or manufacture of salt by persons near the sea-coast. *Mind you, NO withdrawal of salt tax. Salt laws remained intact.* Just that those living near the sea could make salt—which they had anyway been doing, it being near impossible to keep a watch on thousands of miles of coast.

Vallabhbhai was heartbroken at Gandhi's failure to obtain the restoration of sold lands of the peasants by the British. *The Patidars of Kheda considered the Pact a betrayal—it was the Pact, and not the Police lathis, that broke their backs! Several newspapers in London gloated on the victory of the Viceroy. It was said that only Gandhi could have made such an agreement (being such a huge come-down), and only he could have got away with it!*

March 1931 : Karachi Congress; Sardar Patel as President

The AICC session at Karachi was held in March 1931, at which Sardar Patel was appointed the President of the Congress (a tenure of one year) for the first (and only) time.

Gandhi faced a hostile climate at the Karachi Congress on account of his failure to save Shahid Bhagat Singh and associates. Notable at the Karachi Congress was the presence of Abdul Ghaffar Khan (who came to be known as the Frontier Gandhi) from NWFP, and his *Khudai Khidmatgars* (God's Servants), popularly called Redshirts, on account of the brick-red colour of their shirt.

*Patel established a landmark at the session by insisting that its proceedings be conducted in Hindi, the country's proposed national language after independence.*

The Indianisation was initiated by Gandhi and Patel in the Ahmedabad Congress of 1921.

### Sep–Dec 1931: Second Round Table Conference (RTC-2)

The Second Round Table Conference (RTC) held during September–December 1931 (7 September 1931 to 1 December 1931) was also attended by the Congress, after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact that ended the Salt Satyagraha.

Although the Congress could have (and should have) sent 20 delegates to the Conference (the Muslim League had 16 delegates), Gandhi chose to be the sole official representative, even though it was a severe handicap: There were so many varied issues to be discussed—too much for anyone person to handle. The Congress could not represent itself in many committees and sub-groups, as Gandhi was the only representative, who also happened to be busy in public relations, earning international publicity for himself. Why did Gandhi choose to be the only Congress representative? Was it to protect his turf? Publicity and projection only for self! Don't let competition grow!

During the Conference Gandhi contended that the Congress alone represented political India; that there should be no separate electorates or special safeguards for Muslims or other minorities; and that the Depressed classes, being part of Hindus, could not be treated as a "minority". However, the other participants like the Muslim League and Dr BR Ambedkar dismissed Gandhi's contention.

At the end of the conference the British government undertook to produce a Communal Award for minority representation, with the provision that any free agreement between the parties could be substituted for the award.

Gandhi returned to India virtually empty-handed.

### 1932: Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), Phase-II

Lord Willingdon, who had succeeded Lord Irwin as the Viceroy of India in 1931 was determined to teach Congress a lesson, and wipe it out. He ignored many of the provisions of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, and went against its spirit. Raj officials started acting tough and brutal on revenue recovery all over India. Any resistance was mercilessly suppressed. The Viceroy issued an array of ordinances giving the authorities unlimited powers. It was as if a “Civil Martial Law” had been promulgated. There were no civil liberties. The authorities could detain people and seize their property at will.

Gandhi returned after attending the Second RTC at London on 28 December 1931; and on that day, the CWC decided to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), which we now refer to as CDM Phase-II, Phase-I being the Salt Satyagraha.

Within a week, Gandhi and Patel were arrested on 4 January 1932. Soon after all the CWC members were put behind bars. Many Congress organisations were banned, their funds confiscated, and offices seized. Leading Congress-persons were rounded up. Processions were lathi-charged or fired-upon. Freedom fighters found to indulge in even minor violence were severely thrashed, jailed, and flogged. Press censorship was imposed. Ordinances ruled the day.

Arrested under a regulation that permitted detention without trial, with no fixed sentence, Gandhi and Patel were lodged at Yerwada jail in Poona. Gandhi was released after about 16 months in the summer of 1933, while Patel was released after over 30 months in July 1934.

The movement failed to build a tempo, and was crushed within a few months. Officially, the CDM was suspended in May 1933, but was finally withdrawn in May 1934.

### Aug–Sep 1932: The Communal Award & Gandhi–Ambedkar Poona Pact

The British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald made the ‘Communal Award’ on 16 August 1932 granting separate electorates in British India for the Forward Caste, Lower Caste, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, and Depressed Classes (Dalits).

Depressed Classes were assigned a number of seats to be filled by election from special constituencies in which voters belonging to the Depressed Classes only could vote.

The Akali Dal was critical of the Award as it provided for only 19% reservation to the Sikhs in Punjab compared to 51% for the Muslims and 30% for the Hindus. The Award was also unfair to Bengali Hindus, but Gandhi took no objection to the same. Hindus were under-represented vis-à-vis Muslims, making it impossible for the Hindus to ever come into power democratically. Although Hindus comprised almost half (44.8%) of the total population of united Bengal, they were assigned only 32% (80) of the total legislative seats (250).

BR Ambedkar strongly supported the Award for the Depressed Classes, but Gandhi went on an indefinite fast from 20 September 1932 against the same at the Yerwada jail where he was lodged, even though Gandhi was a willing signatory to the requisition by the members of the Minorities Committee to the British Premier empowering the Premier to finally decide on the matter. Gandhi opposed it on the grounds that it would disintegrate Hindu society; and was effectively an attack on the Indian unity and nationalism. Treatment of depressed classes as a separate political entity would lead to the untouchables remaining untouchables in perpetuity, and the question of abolishing untouchability would get undermined. What was needed was rooting out of untouchability. As if much was being done in that direction—beyond tokenism!

In response to Gandhi's letter threatening fast British Premier Ramsay MacDonald was in his element: "As I understand your attitude, you propose to adopt the extreme course of starving yourself to death not in order to secure that the depressed classes should have joint electorates with other Hindus, because that is already provided, not to maintain the unity of Hindus, which is also provided, but solely to prevent the depressed classes, who admittedly suffer from terrible disabilities today, from being able to secure a limited number of representatives of their own choosing to speak on their behalf in the legislatures which will have a dominating influence on their future."

To save Gandhi's life, a number of leaders—including Rajaji, Rajendra Prasad, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rabindranath Tagore, Tej Bahadur Sapru—were jolted into action against the prevailing orthodoxy. A call was given

to open temples to the untouchables; and an ‘Untouchability Abolition League’ was formed. Tremendous pressure was brought upon Ambedkar to give up on the separate electorate. Letters threatening his life cascaded upon him. A section turned abusive. Leaders from all over India rushed to Bombay and Pune to pressurise Ambedkar, and make Gandhi give up his fast.

It was indeed shocking that the Congress and other leaders who had otherwise remained indifferent to the plight of the untouchables, or had kept the issue at a low priority, should have been forced to act only under threat of a separate electorate of Ambedkar!

The great freedom fighters, including Gandhi, seemed to have cared little for the freedom of the depressed classes. Even now, in 2017, their status leaves a lot to be desired. Shows that there were fundamental defects in the way the freedom struggle was executed; and those defects have persisted post-independence too.

Finally, Gandhi negotiated an agreement with Dr BR Ambedkar—the Poona Pact—on 24 September 1932 to have a single Hindu electorate, with Untouchables having seats reserved within it. The Poona Pact was accepted by the British Government as an amendment to the Communal Award.

While the British Communal Award provided for the depressed classes (a) 71 reserved seats to be filled by persons belonging to the Untouchables by election from special constituencies in which voters belonging to the depressed classes alone could vote; and (b) double vote, one to be used through separate electorates only for the depressed classes and the other to be used in the general electorates; the Poona Pact (a) abandoned separate electorates for the depressed classes, (b) more than doubled the reserved seats for the depressed classes from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures, and (c) provided for 18% of the total seats for the depressed classes in the central legislature.

Dr Ambedkar had, however, made it very clear that the Poona Pact was accepted only because of Gandhiji’s “coercive fast”. Ambedkar was afraid that if something happened to Gandhi on account of the fast, mobs might take revenge on dalits all over India—there could be pogroms directed against Dalits and a massacre—and he didn’t wish to take such a big risk.

Notably, Maulana Azad and other nationalist Muslims enthusiastically approved of the Communal Award, as it was loaded in favour of the

Muslims. However, Madan Mohan Malviya and his colleagues wanted the Congress to disown the Communal Award; and when the Patna AICC on 16 May 1934 (attended also by Gandhi) expressed merely its neutrality on it, they resigned from the Congress.

#### 1932: Third Round Table Conference (RTC-3)

The Third Round Table Conference was held in London between 17 November 1932 and 24 December 1932. The Muslim League (Muhammad Ali, Agha Khan, Fazlul Haq, Jinnah, etc.) and others attended it. The British Labour Party refused to attend it; and the Indian National Congress too remained absent.

However, the RTC's outcome was highly significant and path-breaking. Its output was the White Paper issued by the Government, on the basis of which the Government of India Act 1935 took shape under the supervision of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare. And, it is this act on which the Indian Constitution of 1950 derives significantly.

#### November 1932: Name 'Pakistan'

In November 1932 Chaudhary Rahmat Ali proposed "Pakistan" constructed as an acronym: "P" for Punjab, "A" for Afghania representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, "K" for Kashmir, "S" for Sindh, and "stan", for Baluchistan. *East Bengal did not figure in this!*

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## Interesting Timelines : 1934–1938

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### Government of India (GoI) Act 1935

The British Parliament passed the Government of India Act in August 1935. The GoI Act 1935 introduced, inter alia, larger autonomy, direct elections, reorganisation of provinces, provision for ‘Federation of India’ incorporating the British India and the Princely states, federal court, establishment of RBI, etc.

Background for the GoI Act 1935 included the Mont-Fort Reforms of 1918, the GoI Act of 1919, the Simon Commission Report of 1928, the First Round Table Conference (RTC-1) of November 1930, RTC-2 of Sep-Dec 1931, the Communal Award of 1932, and the RTC-3 of Nov-Dec 1932.

The salient features of the Act were as follows:

(1) Grant of much larger autonomy to the provinces of British India. However, the British Provincial Governors retained reserve powers, and a right to suspend elected government.

(2) Introduction of direct elections, increasing the franchise from 7 to 35 million people. Provincial assemblies were to include more elected Indian representatives. Those gaining majority could form elected governments.

(3) Partial reorganisation of the provinces: (a) Sindh separated from Bombay; (b) Bihar and Orissa split into separate provinces.

(4) Burma completely separated from India.

(5) Provision for the establishment of a ‘Federation of India’ incorporating the British India and the Princely states. This could not be given effect to as many Princely states were against it; and the Congress desired Unitary, and not Federal, Government. The proposed federal legislature was a bicameral body consisting of the Council of States (Upper House) and the Federal Assembly (Lower House).

(6) It provided for the establishment of a Federal Court to adjudicate inter-states disputes and matters concerning the interpretation of the constitution.

(7) Establishment of Reserve Bank of India.

(8) Communal electorates as per the Act of 1919 were retained, and further expanded.

(9) The supremacy of the British Parliament remained intact.

### 1934-37: Elections

Gandhi had taken a decision in 1934 not to boycott elections—reversing his decision of “No Council Entry” of 1922 (pl. see under Swaraj Party). Soon after release from jail in July 1934, Patel devoted himself to the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly, playing the leading role in selecting and financing candidates. He became the chairman of the party’s Central Parliamentary Board, and also its main fund-raiser.

In the Central Legislative Assembly of 145, 41 seats were for the nominated, unelected members, leaving 104 for elected members. Out of that 104, 8 seats were reserved for Europeans, and 11 for landlords and others, leaving a net of 85 seats. Out of them, the Congress won 44 of the 49 general seats, and 17 of the reserved seats—a total of 61 out of a possible maximum of 85, almost 72%. However, given 41 unelected seats, the Congress could not have a majority.

In the 1936-37 provincial elections in 11 provinces, the Congress won an absolute majority in 5 (UP, Bihar, Madras, CP (Central Provinces) and Orissa), and emerged as the largest party in 4 (Bombay, Bengal, Assam and NWFP). The Congress ministries were formed in a total of 8 provinces.

### Result of Provincial Elections 1937

<i>Province</i>	<i>Total Seats</i>	<i>General Seats</i>	<i>Congress</i>	<i>Muslim League</i>	<i>Muslim Independent</i>	<i>Others</i>
Assam	108	40	35	9	14	50
Bengal	250	48	50	40	43	@117
Bihar	152	71	98	0	15	39
Bombay	175	99	88	20	10	57
CP*	112	64	71	0	14	27
Madras	215	116	159	11	0	45
NWFP	50	9	19	0	2	29
Orissa	60	38	36	0	0	24
Punjab	175	34	18	1	0	#156
Sind	60	18	7	0	0	53
UP*	228	120	134	27	30	37
<i>Total</i>	<i>1585</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>715</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>634</i>

\*CP=Central Provinces, \*UP=United Provinces  
@ Mostly Proja Party, #Mostly Unionist Party  
(Source: “India Today” by R. Palme Dutt, Page 522)

Rebuff to Jinnah by Nehru that proved costly.

Before the elections, the Congress did not expect to get enough seats to form a government on its own in UP. That was because of the other parties in the fray who had strong backing of landlords and influential sections. So as to be able to form a government, it had planned for a suitable coalition with the Muslim League. So that the Muslim League got enough seats for a coalition to be successful, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai of the Congress—who had been private secretary of Motilal Nehru, and after his death, a principal aide of Jawaharlal Nehru—had persuaded, jointly with Nehru, several influential Muslims, like Khaliq-uz-Zaman, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan who had the potential to win, to fight the elections on behalf of the Muslim League, as Muslims fighting on behalf of the Muslim League had better chances of winning. They fought and won.

But, after the elections, when the Congress found it could form the government on its own, without the help of the Muslim League, it began to put unreasonable conditions. To Jinnah’s proposal of inclusion of two Muslim League Ministers in the UP cabinet, Nehru, who was the Congress President then, and was also looking after the UP affairs, put forth an amazing, arrogant condition: the League legislators must merge with the Congress! The humiliating condition amounting to the death warrant for the Muslim League was naturally rejected by Jinnah.

In Bombay, with the Congress Chief minister designate BG Kher willing to induct one Muslim League minister in the cabinet in view of lack of absolute majority of the Congress, and the fact that the Muslim League had done well in Bombay in the Muslim pockets, Jinnah sent a letter in the connection to Gandhi. Gandhi gave a strangely mystical and elliptically negative reply: “My faith in [Hindu-Muslim] unity is as bright as ever; only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness, and in such distress, I cry out to God for light.” Jinnah then wanted to meet Gandhi; but Gandhi advised him to rather meet Abul Kalam Azad, by whom he said he was guided in such matters.

Rebuffed and humiliated Jinnah then decided to show Congress-Nehru-Gandhi their place. The incident led other Muslim leaders also to believe

that a majority Congress government would always tend to ride rough-shod over the Muslim interests. It is claimed that, thanks to the above, the badly hurt pride of the Muslims led them to move away from the Congress and quickly gravitate towards the Muslim League, and ultimately to separation. The membership of the Muslim League dramatically rose after the incident. The humiliated Muslim League aspirants Khaliq-uz-Zaman and Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan whose ambitions were thus thwarted by the Congress and Nehru thereafter became the pillars of Muslim reaction and played a critical role in swinging the Muslim opinion in favour of partition and Pakistan.

It was unwise of the Congress, Nehru and Gandhi not to show a little generosity towards the Muslim League. Reportedly, Sardar Patel and Pant were willing for a coalition with the Muslim League as per the pre-election understanding, but Nehru, in his “wisdom” and hubris, and as Congress President, decided to act arrogant.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1939–1942

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### Jan-1939: Gandhi vs. Subhas: Presidential Election

Subhas Bose, who had been the Congress President for a year, desired another one-year term at the end of 1938. Subhas felt the German threat to Britain in the Second World War was an opportune time to exploit its vulnerability and launch an all-out mass disobedience movement to kick out the British. However, the Gandhian approach was to be generally soft towards the British.

Gandhi didn't favour a second term for Subhas. Subhas was adamant, and a contest ensued: Subhas vs. Pattabhi Sitaramayya of Andhra PCC. Sitaramayya was backed by Gandhi. Gandhi went to the unseemly extent of asking Patel, Rajendra Prasad and several other CWC members to issue a statement favouring Pattabhi Sitaramayya! Subhas rightly objected. He held the senior leaders guilty of moral coercion, and pointed out it was unfair on the part of the CWC members to take sides in an organized manner.

Despite the open support of Gandhi, and other senior leaders, Subhas was re-elected by 1580 to 1375 votes on 29 January 1939.

Gandhi didn't take the defeat gracefully. He began machinations to somehow oust Subhas or make it difficult for him to function. In this, Gandhi used his colleagues and followers. He made 12 of the 15 CWC members resign from the CWC to make it difficult for Subhas to run the organisation.

At the 52nd annual session of the Congress in March 1939 at Tripuri, near Jabalpur, on the banks of Narmada, an unbelievably fantastic resolution was passed calling upon the President [Subhas] "to appoint the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of [a person who was not even a member of the Congress, having resigned from it long ago] Mahatma Gandhi"!

Subhas was seriously unwell, but he attended the session on a stretcher. He demanded that the Congress should deliver an ultimatum of a six months to Britain and in the event of its rejection a country-wide struggle for 'Poorna Swaraj' should be launched. However, his advice went unheeded. His powers as President were sought to be curtailed through various means, including the above resolution.

Refusing to implement the Tripuri directive, Subhas resigned in April 1939. He announced formation of the Forward Bloc within the Congress in May 1939.

Although what was done to Subhas by Gandhi was obviously unjust and immoral, from the national angle it was God-sent: perhaps God desired that in the interest of India's independence! Thanks to the injustice meted out to Subhas, he took a radically independent path that ultimately led to India's independence.

October 1939 : Anti-Hindu Riots in Sindh

Dr Choitram Gidwani, Vice President of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee, telegrammed Gandhi in October 1939: "Riots, loot, incendiarism in Sukkur district [Sindh] villages. Hindus mercilessly butchered. Women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send enquiry committee immediately to see situation personally..."

Gandhi's response, which can only be termed as irresponsible: "Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis (is) to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, i.e. armed defence of the life and property. God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in..." Why be a leader if you can't come to the rescue of your people? If you can't train them to defend themselves? And, if you can't set up an organisation with wide-spread branches meant to defend people from communal and other acts of violence.

1940 : Udham Singh Avenges Jallianwala

Sir Michael Francis O'Dwyer was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala massacre. He unjustly and shamelessly endorsed General Reginald Dyer's Jallianwala Bagh carnage! Revolutionary Shahid Udham Singh avenged the Massacre by shooting O'Dwyer in Caxton Hall in London on 13 March 1940. On 31 July 1940, he was hanged at Pentonville Prison in Barnsbury, London and buried within the prison grounds.

## Congress, Britain & WW-II

### 3 September 1939: Declaration of WW-II

Viceroy Linlithgow announces that India, along with Britain, had joined the WW-II. The Congress (INC) resented not having been consulted in the matter.

### Oct-1939: Congress Conditions

The Muslim League whole-heartedly supported the Raj, and gained favour and ascendancy over the Congress.

The Congress put forth conditions to the Raj for its support in WW-II. The Raj treated the conditions of the Congress as blackmail, and refusing to agree to them, offered minor concessions, that excluded freedom after the war.

## Nov-1939: Resignation of Congress Ministries

In view of the British declaration of war (in WW-II) on behalf of India without consulting the Congress it was decided at the CWC meeting at Wardha on 22-23 October 1939 not to co-operate with the British in the war, and that the Congress Provincial Governments would resign by the month-end in protest. The move was spear-headed by Nehru and the leftists.

The hard-won (thanks mainly to the efforts of Sardar Patel) Congress ministries in the provinces since 1937, under the strict vigilance of Patel, had begun to perform better than expected. To guide and coordinate the activities of the provincial governments, a central control board known as the Parliamentary Sub-Committee was formed, with Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Rajendra Prasad as members. A number of measures in the interest of the general public had been taken. Many Congress ministers set an example in plain living. They reduced their own salaries. They made themselves easily accessible to the common people. In a very short time, a very large number of ameliorative legislations were pushed through in an attempt to fulfil many of the promises made in the Congress election manifesto.

Emergency powers acquired by the provincial governments through the Public Safety Acts and the like were repealed. Bans on illegal political organizations such as the Hindustan Seva Dal and Youth Leagues and on political books and journals were lifted. All restrictions on the press were removed. Securities taken from newspapers and presses were refunded and

pending prosecutions were withdrawn. The blacklisting of newspapers for purposes of government advertising was given up. Confiscated arms were returned and forfeited arms licenses were restored. In the Congress provinces, police powers were curbed and the reporting of public speeches and the shadowing of political workers by CID agents stopped. Another big achievement of the Congress Governments was their firm handling of the communal riots.

The success rankled both with Jinnah, and the British: they never wanted the Congress to get popular. Besides, it reduced the British dependence on the provinces under the Congress rule to mobilise resources for the WW-II. Both for the British and for Jinnah the Congress Ministries' resignations were therefore "good riddance".

It was like giving up all the gains of the 1937-elections; and passing them on to the then defeated Muslim League. This self-emasculation by the Congress not only greatly weakened it and drastically slashed its bargaining position, it threw the Congress into wilderness, and led to the rise of the Muslim League, separatism, and ultimately partition.

Jinnah couldn't help calling it the 'Himalayan blunder' of the Congress, and was determined to take full advantage of it. Jinnah and the Muslim League went to the extent of calling upon all Muslims to celebrate 22 December 1939 as the "*Deliverance Day*"—deliverance from the "misrule" of the Congress. Thanks to Nehru's blunder, the stars of the Muslim League began to rise.

Patel and Gandhi were not in favour of non-cooperation with the British in the war, and of the ministries resigning. It was a big blunder—a political suicide. The responsibility for this great act of folly rested with Nehru and his socialist supporters.

### March 1940 : League's Lahore Resolution

In its three-day general session in Lahore on 22–24 March 1940 the All-India Muslim League (AIML) passed a resolution authored by Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan and others, and presented by Fazlul Huq, the then Prime Minister of Bengal, the portions of which read: "...That geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North

Western and Eastern Zones of (British) India should be grouped to constitute ‘independent states’ in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign...”

This resolution that clearly hinted at Pakistan came to be known as the Lahore Resolution.

#### 1940–46: Congress Descent & League Ascendency

Once the Muslim League’s agenda became explicitly divisive after the Lahore Resolution of March 1940, it gained ascendency in popular Muslim perception on the hope of a separate country. Nothing like hate and divisiveness for a destructive agenda!

The Muslim consolidation under the above hate and divisive agenda got coupled with the following four major factors that led to Muslim ascendency, and ultimately the Partition and Pakistan: (1)Resignation of the Congress from the Provincial Ministries they were ruling in 1939 at the insistence of Nehru and the left, leaving the field open for the Muslim League. (2)Misreading of how the WW-II would unfold by Gandhi and the Congress, making them adopt the wrong strategy of opposition and non-cooperation with the British during the WW-II, turning the British hostile towards the Congress, and to the interests of India and the Hindus. (3)With all the top Congress leaders in jail for a couple of years between 1940 and 1946, even as the Congress hold suffered, the Muslim League came up, as was obvious from the 1946 election results. (4)The Muslim League strategy of full co-operation with the British, and being dog-like, paid them rich dividends.

#### July 1940–1941

##### July 1940 : Rajaji’s Proposal

Rajaji felt the Congress and the Indians must help Britain in its time of distress when it was fighting with its back to the wall. His proposal, in brief: give India freedom after the war, and establish a representative government forthwith. Sardar Patel backed Rajaji's proposal, while Nehru and Gandhi (Patel went against Gandhi for the first time) opposed it; yet, it was carried. At the AICC meet at Poona at the end of July 1940, Nehru reversed his stand, and voted for Rajaji’s resolution, which was finally ratified by 95 votes to 47. However, the proposal was rejected by the British in August 1940.

### October 1940: Selective Individual Disobedience

Denied a fig leaf by the British, the Congress was left with little alternative but to show its displeasure in some way if it had to survive as an organisation fighting for India's freedom. Yet, the Congress was careful not to annoy the British further by launching some mass movement. The safer way was to go in for *selective individual disobedience* to show its displeasure. However, even that severely limited and harmless defiance was under the cover of the Congress praising Britain and the British people for their bravery and endurance in the face of danger and peril; and vociferously assuring the British that the Congress had absolutely no ill-will against them.

The Satyagrahis courted arrest during 1940; and by the end of the year their number grew to about 700. Vinoba Bhave was the first Satyagrahi, who was arrested on 21 October 1940.

### May 1941

The number of arrests of those undertaking *selective individual disobedience* rose to about 15,000.

### August-September 1941

Interest in Satyagraha had died down, and many in the Congress in the provinces started actively considering return to offices in the provinces!

### 23 December 1941: Congress Reviews its Stand

Taking cognizance of the changed world situation in the wake of the Pearl Harbor, the CWC meeting at Bardoli in Gujarat recognised India could not be defended non-violently against a Japanese invasion. (—A profound realisation! As if against an invader other than Japan, quixotic non-violent means would have worked!) At the persuasion of Rajaji, subject to the declaration of freedom for India, the CWC offered cooperation with the Allies. Gandhi did not oppose, but made it clear that he would not lead a Congress ready to join a war. In other words, the CWC yielded on non-violence.

At the AICC meeting in Wardha in January 1942 the Bardoli proposal of 23 Dec 1941 was ratified in the hope that the British authorities would do something positive for India.

### 1940-42: Netaji Subhas Escapes

Subhas Chandra Bose advocated a campaign of mass civil disobedience to protest Viceroy Linlithgow's decision to declare war on India's behalf without consulting the Congress. Failing to persuade Gandhi or the Congress, he organised mass protests in Calcutta, and was arrested in July 1940. Released after a 7-day hunger strike, his house was put under CID-surveillance.

However, in a daredevil act, Bose managed to escape on 19 January 1941 along with his nephew Sisir Bose. Remaining incognito, he reached Germany via Afghanistan, Russia and Italy. The feat required tremendous guts, intelligence, cunning, and risk-taking ability. But, that was Bose, a leader like no other in India.

Over Radio Berlin, Indians heard Bose for the first time after about a year in March 1942 confirming his taking of help from the Axis Powers for Indian independence.

With the Indian public, particularly the youth, gaga over the daring of Subhas, Nehru, who used to show himself off as a combative youthful leader, felt jealous, and tried to demonstrate his “principled” anti-fascist position by claiming on 12 April 1942 that he would even fight Subhas on the battlefield. People would have wondered why Nehru never showed that dare against the real enemy, the British.

While Nehru felt deeply jealous of Bose, Gandhi genuinely admired Bose’s dare and his tremendous feat.

### March-April 1942 : Cripps Mission

Following the successful Japanese navy attack on the Pearl Harbor situated in the US territory of Hawaii on 7 December 1941, the Japanese blitzkrieg triumphantly rolled through the Wake Island (then under the US), the Philippines (then under the US), Malaysia (then under the British), Indonesia, Singapore (then under the British), and then Burma (Myanmar, then under the British). Rangoon fell on 7 March 1942. With that, the attack on India seemed imminent.

Looking to the critical situation, the US President Roosevelt and the Chinese Generalissimo Chiang urged the British PM Churchill to make a reconciliatory move towards the Congress to gain co-operation in the ongoing war. Churchill was reluctant, but once Rangoon fell, he was forced

to make a move. He announced a mission to Delhi under the Leader of the House, Sir Stafford Cripps.

Sir Richard Stafford Cripps (1889–1952) arrived in Delhi on 22 March 1942 along with his team. Cripps was a Labour MP, the leader of the House of Commons, and a member of the British War Cabinet. He had brought with him a new constitutional scheme approved by the British Cabinet. In return, the British sought co-operation in the war-efforts. The team spent three weeks in India in March and April 1942, and had prolonged discussions with the concerned parties. Nehru and Maulana Azad were the official negotiators for the Congress.

Cripps announced his proposals in the form of Draft Declaration on 30 March 1942: (1) Right away, India could have a national government composed of representatives of the leading political parties. (2) Formation of a post-war Constituent Assembly whose members would be chosen by provincial legislatures or nominated by the princes. (3) India to be granted full Dominion Status after the war, with the right of secession from the Commonwealth. (4) Secession clause: Once India became a Dominion after the war, every province would have the right to secede and obtain a status equal to that of the Indian Dominion.

If one examines the above, and what India got in 1947 (Dominion Status), the only objectionable clause appears to be the fourth-clause, the secession-clause. Both the Congress and the Muslim League had problems with it, but in an opposite sort of way. Jinnah termed the secession clause as an implicit recognition of Pakistan; but rejected the proposal, as what he wanted was an explicit recognition of the right of the “Muslim nation” to separate. Gandhi, and many other Congress leaders expressed their disapproval of the proposal principally on account of the secession clause. The British had perhaps put the clause to make it partially acceptable to both: No explicit Pakistan, to satisfy the Congress; and a possibility of Pakistan through the secession-clause to satisfy the Muslim League, and serve their [British] own selfish intentions too.

Gandhi had called Cripps’s offer “a post-dated cheque”, to which someone added “on a failing bank”. Why? Looking to the way Japan was trouncing the British and the US in SE-Asia, and was in Burma, at India’s doors, the Congress was elated Japan was doing their work of evicting the British. They had already written-off the British! Hence the term “the

failing bank”, and the “post-dated cheque” that was bound to bounce as the British would not have anything to give anyway. Such a faulty reading of the likely scenario was thanks to Gandhi, Nehru & Company’s naivete on military and international affairs! Rather than considering the offer seriously and negotiating on the secession-clause; driven by hubris thanks to Japan’s military success, and over-confident they had an upper hand, and that the British were in dire need of their co-operation, they acted difficult and unreasonable. Had they made sensible negotiation on the secession-clause India could have got the self-government five years earlier, and there would perhaps have been no partition and Pakistan. Attlee had commented: “It was a great pity that eventually the Indians turned this down, as full self-government might have been ante-dated by some years.”

Nehru and Company (Maulana Azad, etc.) were most vehement in their rejection of the Cripps Plan, and it was their inflexibility, along with that of Gandhi, that carried the day. Surprisingly, the irritant was not the secession clause (Had they indirectly and implicitly conceded Pakistan? During the discussions, Nehru and Azad had even clarified that they could not “think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will”). Nehru had two objections. *One*: the proposed new cabinet to be installed right away of the Congress and other politicians would not have the final authority, and that the Viceroy would not just be a constitutional head, but would have a veto. In war-time, could the British have left things to quibbling and sissy Congress politicians!? In this context it is worth noting that it was principally Nehru who ensured Mountbatten as the first Governor General of Free India after independence, and allowed him to take crucial decisions, including that on Kashmir—which proved disastrous for India! *Two*: The defence would remain in the charge of the British Commander-in-Chief. Nehru wanted full control over the armed forces. The British handing Defence Ministry to the Congress politicians during the war-time was unthinkable. Did the Congress politicians have any knowledge and expertise in defence matters and war? What happened post-independence in J&K and in India-China war is well-known! Further, post-independence Free India indeed had a British Commander-in-Chief. How did Nehru accept that as PM of Free India? In short, among the main leaders responsible for the failure of the Cripps Mission was Nehru. Unsuccessful, Cripps left India on 12 April 1942.

Another view is that the Cripps Mission was forced on the British by the US to get the Indian cooperation during the war. Forced into it, Churchill and Viceroy Linlithgow deliberately introduced the secession clause to ensure the Mission was aborted. In any case the terms could have been better and reasonably negotiated by Nehru and Azad who were entrusted with the responsibility; because it was not as if India got better terms in 1947—the secession did happen!

#### Apr-1942: CR's Formula on Pakistan

C Rajagopalachari (aka CR or Rajaji) interpreted the CWC's clarification during the talks with Stafford Cripps in 1942 that they could not “think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will” as acceptance of ‘the principle of Pakistan’. Patel and several others totally differed with such an interpretation.

Rajaji's rationale for his proposal or formula was the following. Rather than making futile attempts at adjustments with the Muslims, the Muslim League, and other Muslim parties to somehow maintain a fragile unified Central Government, Rajaji felt it was better to let the Muslim-majority areas secede to form Pakistan so that the Congress could form a strong Central Government for the rest of India. As per the CR's formula, at the end of WW-II a commission be appointed to demarcate the districts having a Muslim population in absolute majority and in those areas plebiscite be conducted on all inhabitants (including the non-Muslims) on the basis of adult suffrage. That is, as per the CR's formula, the areas that could form Pakistan were not to be on the provincial basis (that is, the provinces like Punjab or Bengal could not decide as a whole whether to go to Pakistan or not), but on district-by-district basis.

Rajaji's purpose was also to bring forth the contradictions in Jinnah's stand (Provincial vs. Communal basis of partition) that could have made Muslims rethink on their Pakistan demand. CR's Proposal to accept the Muslim League's claim for separation of the Muslim-majority areas was put up to the AICC on 24 April 1942 by the Congress legislators of Madras, guided by Rajaji. However, the AICC rejected the proposal 120 to 15. Thereupon, Rajaji began canvassing the proposal with the general public. That was violation of the Congress discipline. While he didn't mind Rajaji's free expression of his views, Gandhi did mention to Rajaji: “It will be most

becoming for you to sever your connection with the Congress and then carry on your campaign with all the zeal and ability you are capable of.” Rajaji resigned both from the Congress and the Assembly, but stubbornly stuck to his views.

However, when Gandhi engaged Jinnah in talks in 1944, the basis of his talks was the CR Formula. The ultimate Partition and Pakistan too was close to what CR had proposed back in 1942.

### August-1942: Quit India Movement

*July 1942:* With the British having been routed in SE-Asia, the Japanese almost next door in Rangoon, and Axis powers doing relatively well, Gandhi misread that the tide was in favour of the Axis Powers. Getting irrelevant, not having led a mass movement for a decade, and with leaders like Netaji Bose getting popular, Gandhi insisted in CWC at Wardha for “Quit India”. Nehru, who had in protest made the provincial ministries resign in 1939, was now opposed to Gandhi’s idea. Why? Soviets had since joined on the side of the Allies.

*7-8 August 1942:* Quit India Resolution was passed by the AICC at its meeting at Gowalia Tank in Mumbai, and Gandhi launched the Movement on 8 August 1942.

*9 August 1942:* Almost all the top Congress leaders were arrested.

*August-September 1942:* By and large, ‘Quit India’ fizzled out by the end of September 1942. The speed with which the administration was able to suppress ‘Quit India’ surprised the world media—it meant that the hold of Gandhi and the Congress on the masses was not as formidable as was made out to be. With that the British faith in Viceroy Linlithgow stood enhanced for he had stood his ground and not bowed to the pressure from Gandhi and the Congress.

*End 1942:* ‘Quit India’, like the two major, previous, once-in-a-decade Gandhian Movements (1920-22, 1930-31), had miserably failed. Logically, that was expected. If you don’t do any planning and preparation, if you do no hard work, and instead, you just issue a call for “Quit India”, how can you, and why should you expect it to succeed. You don’t even anticipate the crackdown, and make no plan to go underground to be able to direct the movement. You just get arrested soon after the call, and waste away precious time in jail. You claim to be leaders, but sitting in jail you

somehow wish the people would do the needful to deliver freedom. What wishful thinking!

*9 August 1942 to 15 June 1945:* Sardar Patel, Nehru and others were arrested and detained in Ahmednagar Fort Jail, along with many others. Many Congress leaders began to wonder if it was wise to have gone in for Quit India.

*10 February–3 March 1943:* Gandhi went on fast protesting against the British insinuation that the Quit India violence was plotted by him. The Raj did not bother. It was indeed hoping Gandhi would succumb to his fast. Reportedly, it was even ready for his cremation on the grounds of the Aga Khan Palace, Pune.

*22 February 1944:* Kasturba Gandhi expired at the Aga Khan Palace where she was jailed along with Gandhi.

*6 May 1944:* Gandhi, who had been ill, was released from jail.

About two years after the “Quit India” call, when Gandhi was released, there was no sign of the British packing up and quitting India. In fact, while the British Raj remained unaffected, and the strength of the Muslim League and Jinnah multiplied, the position of the Congress took a nose dive. It was as if the Congress had “Quit” the national scene.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1944

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### May 1944 Onwards: Gandhi's Major Come-Down Moves

After release from jail on 6 May 1944 Gandhi went in for physical recovery. While recuperating in the hill-station of Panchgani Gandhi began planning on how to get the Congress up from its down and out status—the net result of its own making!

After consultations with Rajaji at Panchgani Gandhi wrote to Viceroy Wavell that subject to the formation of a national government responsible to the Central Assembly he would advise the CWC that the Congress must withdraw “disobedience”, and should fully cooperate with the war efforts. Gandhi's offer to the British was a huge come down from the “Quit India” demands. Yet, the Viceroy spurned the offer! Showed how little the Raj cared for the Congress or Gandhi.

#### Sep 1944: Gandhi's Parleys with Jinnah

Spurned by the British, Gandhi commenced parleys with Jinnah. In just one month in September 1944, Gandhi visited Jinnah's home 14 times! This time Gandhi offered to Jinnah what he [Gandhi] was totally opposed to earlier.

Gandhi wanted the Congress and the Muslim League to jointly demand a national government from the Raj—the mutual understanding being that the contiguous Muslim-majority areas could secede upon gaining independence, if the majority adult population of those areas so desired. That amounted to conceding Pakistan—what Rajaji had proposed way back in April 1942.

Jinnah, however, rejected the offer for several reasons: (a)Pakistan on offer was not big enough. It excluded the Hindu-majority areas of Punjab and Bengal. (b)Gandhi's offer of Pakistan was post-independence, while Jinnah desired Pakistan prior to independence, or simultaneously with it, and under the aegis of the British, for he didn't trust the Congress. (c)Gandhi's offer tended to dilute Pakistan's sovereignty by stipulating a written agreement on Hindustan–Pakistan alliance.

Those like Patel, Azad, Nehru and others who were in Ahmednagar jail then were unhappy with Gandhi's moves, when they came to know of them.

### Side-lining of Gandhi

After the release of Gandhi from prison on 6 May 1944, his role in the freedom movement and transfer of power gradually dwindled. As long as Gandhi was soft on the British (before 1942), the British gave him due importance, and even helped his projection as a Mahatma. However, after Quit India he almost became like a persona non grata for the British. That lessened his stature and clout in the Congress too. Besides, the British found him to be too complex and unreliable a person to do further business with. The British therefore turned to Sardar Patel and Nehru.

### 1943–44: British Gift—The Great Bengal Famine

The Bengal Famine of 1943-44 was totally man-made, rather British-made, in which 3.5 million Indians perished. It exposed the callousness, total disregard for Indian life, cruelty beyond compare, and lamentable administrative incompetence of the British. Even as people were dying, food was exported from India abroad to feed the army engaged in World War II. Although, food production was higher in 1943 compared to 1941, owing to the British empire taking 60% of all harvests and ordering Bengal to supply a greater proportion of the food for their army to fight the Japanese, the demand exceeded the supply. The highest mortality was not in very poor groups, but among artisans and small traders whose income vanished when people spent all they had on food and did not employ cobblers, carpenters, etc. The famine also caused major economic and social disruption, ruining millions of families.

When appraised of the Bengal Famine crisis, Prime Minister Winston Churchill cruelly commented that as far as he was concerned “the starvation of anyhow underfed Bengalis is less serious than...” and that Indians would anyway “breed like rabbits”. In response to the telegraphic request from India for food shipment for famine, Churchill heartlessly responded: “Is Gandhi still alive?”

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## Interesting Timelines : 1945–1946

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15 June 1945: Release of Nehru, Patel, etc.

Nehru, Sardar Patel and others, arrested during Quit India 1942, were released from prison.

25 June 1945 : Shimla Conference

Shimla Conference was convened to discuss the Wavell Plan for Indian self-government. The plan was rejected by the Congress and the League.

Both Wavell and Jinnah were acting to a script. Churchill had advised Jinnah to stand firm to get his Pakistan, which the British too desired. Jinnah had remarked: “Am I a fool to accept this [plan] when I am offered Pakistan on a platter.”

### Bose, INA Trials & Mutiny

18 August 1945: False Claim of Netaji’s Death

It was claimed that Netaji Subhas had perished in a plane crash in Taipei. Sarat Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Netaji, had stated in 1947: “Subhash is alive and Jawaharlal knows it.” What is surprising is that neither Nehru, nor Patel nor Rajaji nor Gandhi or any other top Congress leader endeavoured to find out the facts on Netaji’s death, or made an effort to trace him! Why?

November 1945—May 1946 : INA Red-Fort Trials

Members of the INA (Indian National Army) were tried for “waging war against the King-Emperor”. The trials unleashed massive patriotic fervour. Immense public pressure forced the then British Army Chief to commute the sentences. For details, please read ‘Bose(s) & INA/ Indian National Army’.

February 1946 : Mutiny in the Indian Army

INA trials triggered unrest in the Indian armed forces. Mutiny broke out in the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) covering ships and shore establishments throughout India from Karachi to Bombay and from Vishakhapatnam to Calcutta.

Rebellion among the naval ratings in RIN (Royal Indian Navy) started at Bombay on 19 February 1946. Thrilled by the INA fight and trials, they wanted to contribute their strength towards India’s freedom. The insulting

behaviour of the senior British military officers had also contributed to the disenchantment of the Indian military staff. The British commanding officer of the HMIS Talwar used to call his Indian men 'black niggers' and 'coolie bastards'. The naval ratings took over HMIS Talwar and signal school, and hauled down the Union Jack. The NCSC (Naval Central Strike Committee) was set up, and several ships which were seized began flying the flags of the Congress and the Muslim League. The mutiny quickly spread to other ships, and over 7000 sailors joined in. Some of the warships seized threatened to fire at the British barracks, and at British community bastions on the seafront. On 21 February 1946 there was an exchange of fire between the loyal troops and the naval ratings on mutiny. At some places, Indian army men began ignoring orders from the British superiors. In Madras and Pune, the British garrisons had to face revolts.

In the second half of February 1946 members of the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) went on a hunger strike for their grievances. RIAF personnel at Allahabad, Delhi, Karachi, Madras, and Pune also revolted.

Another Army mutiny took place at Jabalpur during the last week of February 1946. It lasted about two weeks. It was suppressed by force. Later, many were court-martialled and sentenced. A number of them were dismissed.

Many workers, students and members of the general public took to the streets in protest. The mutineers began to receive significant militant support from the general public. By 19 February 1946 over 3,00,000 mill-workers and dockers of the naval dockyard went on strike.

Planning to take their agitation forward by teaming up with the Indian political parties, they approached the Congress leader Aruna Asaf Ali who happened to be then in Bombay. Aruna Asaf Ali, however, was not of much help, and directed them to Sardar Patel.

However, with no support forthcoming from the political parties, and totally cornered, the naval ratings were left with no options. As a last resort, they approached Sardar Patel, who telling them there ought to be discipline in the navy, advised them to surrender! In tears, the NCSC President MS Khan conveyed Sardar Patel's message to his colleagues on 22 February 1946. By then the mutiny was in its fourth day. Sardar Patel had, however, assured them that if they surrender, the Congress would do all it could to ensure there was no victimisation, and that their legitimate demands were

met. Muslims among the naval ratings then desired to know what Jinnah had to say. It later turned out that Jinnah's advice was no different from that of Patel. The mutiny terminated on 23 February 1946. Over 230 lost their lives and over a thousand were injured in the mutiny and the associated rioting in Bombay.

The British Commander-in-Chief Field Marshall Claude Auchinleck recorded: "It is no use shutting one's eye to the fact that any Indian worth his salt is a nationalist... Wholesale defections and disintegration of the Indian Army was possible."

What is noteworthy is that the Bose, INA, and the above contributed far more to gaining independence for India than the Gandhian movement of over three decades.

#### End 1945—1946 : Elections

Elections to the Central and the Provincial Assemblies were scheduled at the end of 1945, and were to extend into 1946. The franchise for the elections was still limited to about 10% of the population for the Provinces, and less than 1% for the Centre. Sardar Patel was not in favour of elections at that juncture for several reasons: many Congress leaders and cadres were still in jails; Patel and others were released from jails only in June 1945, and have had little time to prepare for elections; electoral rolls were not revised, leaving many young out of the fold.

The Congress did manage to get considerable Muslim votes a decade earlier in the 1936 elections. However, in the 1945-46 elections, it was almost a clean sweep by the Muslim League in Muslim areas. The Muslim League decidedly commanded the Muslim vote, except in NWFP, thanks to the Seemant Gandhi Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Muslim League got all the 30 Muslim seats (100%) in the Central Assembly, and 427 of the 507 Muslim seats (84%) in the 11 provinces.

Many factors led to such favourable results for the Jinnah's Muslim League: resignation of the Congress ministries in 1939, leaving the field open for the British and their collaborators, the Muslim League; "Quit India" call of 1942 that amounted to the Congress quitting the political scene for the next 3 years; growing Raj-League bonhomie at the expense of Raj-Congress relationship; Islam-in-danger cry; hope for creation of Pakistan; perception in the Muslim mind of Jinnah as a powerful leader,

what with Gandhi repeatedly knocking at his doors, and Viceroy Wavell [deliberately, and as per a well laid-out British plan] capitulating to his conditions in the Shimla Conference. The results further boosted Jinnah's stature, and he became even more aggressive, uncompromising, intransigent and intractable in his unreasonable demands.

### Election Results

The Congress won 56 seats in the Central Assembly and 930 in the provinces, thanks to the non-Muslim vote which was firmly with it.

In Sind, out of a total of 60, the Congress had won 22, and the Muslim League 27 seats. In Punjab, out of a total of 175, Muslim League won 75, Unionists 21, Congress 51, Sikhs 21, and independents 7. In Bengal, out of a total of 250, Muslim League won 115, Other Muslims 3, Congress 62, Other Hindu Parties and Scheduled Castes 31, Krishak Proja Party 5, Communists 3, Christians and Anglo-Indians 6, and Europeans 25.

The overall position could have been much better had Azad, as President of the Congress, not acted dictatorial, and heeded Patel's advice.

### 1945–46: Azad's Blunders in Sind, Punjab and Bengal

In Sind, out of a total of 60, the Congress had won 22, and the Muslim League 27 seats. Patel had brought several non-Muslim League Muslims to his side, notably the Chief Minister Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Maula Bux, and his brother Allah Bux; and was confident of managing a majority of 35 seats out of 60. Azad, however, was involved in his own pointless exercise in Sind of aligning with the Muslim League to form a ministry, against the advice of Patel, and without the approval of the CWC. He undid the work of Patel; and ultimately it was the Muslim League which formed the ministry in a coalition that excluded the Congress.

Similarly, Azad messed up both Punjab and Bengal. As the Congress President, and as a Muslim, he had ruled that it would be he who would deal with, and take final decisions on, the Muslim-majority provinces. The magic that Patel could weave in 1937-elections, he could not do in 1945-46, thanks to Azad trying to be one up. Azad's secret machinations vis-à-vis the Cabinet Mission Plan (please see details later below) that favoured the Muslim-dominated Groupings so disturbed Gandhi that he was compelled to ask for his resignation from the post of the Congress President.

Post 1945, with the increasing hopes of the imminence of India's independence, all patriots looked forward to having a strong, assertive, competent, decisive, no-nonsense person as India's first prime minister, who would bring back the lost glory of India, and turn it into a modern, prosperous nation. Iron Man Sardar Patel was the clear choice, being a cut much above the rest.

Based on the ground-level practical experience since 1917, it could be said with certainty in 1946 that Nehru was no match for Sardar for the critical post of the prime minister. Of course, Nehru as PM in practice confirmed beyond a shred of doubt that it should have been Sardar, and not him, who should have been the first PM of India. For details, please read the author's other books 'Nehru's 97 Major Blunders' and 'Foundations of Misery: The Nehruvian Era 1947-64', available on Amazon.

As per the laid down procedure in practice for many decades, only the Pradesh Congress Committees (PCCs) were the authorised bodies to elect a president. There were 15 such PCCs They were supposed to send their nomination to the Congress Working Committee (CWC). The person who received maximum nominations was elected as President. There being 15 PCCS, at least 8 PCCs had to nominate a specific individual for him or her to gain the majority to become president. In 1946, the last date of nominations for the post of the president was 29 April 1946.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) met on 29 April 1946 to consider the nominations sent by the PCCs. *12 of the 15 (80%) PCCs nominated Sardar Patel; and 3 PCCs out of the 15 (20%) did not nominate anyone. It therefore turned out to be a non-contest. Sardar Patel was the only choice, and an undisputed choice, with not a single opposition.*

What was noteworthy was that on 20 April 1946, that is, nine days before the last date of nominations of 29 April 1946, Gandhi had indicated his preference for Nehru. Yet, *not a single PCC nominated Nehru!*

Looking to the unexpected (unexpected by Gandhi) development, Gandhi prodded Kriplani to convince a few CWC members to propose Nehru's name for the party president—an illegal method, against the Congress constitution. Finding this development queer, shocking and unexpected, Sardar Patel enquired with Gandhi, and sought his advice. Gandhi counselled Sardar to withdraw his name! Patel complied promptly, and didn't raise any question. That cleared the way for Nehru. The

“democratic” Nehru didn’t feel embarrassed at his and Gandhi’s blatant hijacking of the election, and shamelessly accepted his own nomination.

Wrote Maulana Azad, who had always favoured Nehru over Patel, in his autobiography, ‘India Wins Freedom’, published posthumously in 1959: “... [then] it seemed to me that Jawaharlal should be the new President [of Congress in 1946—and hence PM] ...I acted according to my best judgement but the way things have shaped since then has made me to realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life...My second mistake was that when I decided not to stand myself, I did not support Sardar Patel.”

This is what Rajaji, who had then been pro-Nehru and anti-Patel, had to say two decades after the death of Patel: “Undoubtedly it would have been better if Nehru had been asked to be the Foreign Minister and Patel made the Prime Minister. I too fell into the error of believing that Jawaharlal was the more enlightened person of the two.”

#### March—June 1946 : Cabinet Mission Plan

*26 March 1946:* A British Cabinet Mission, formulated at the initiative of PM Clement Attlee, arrived in India. It comprised Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and AV Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Viceroy Lord Wavell too was associated with it.

*12 May 1946:* British Government’s Cabinet Mission published “*Memorandum on States’ Treaties and Paramountcy*” that envisaged bringing the political arrangements between the Princely States and the British Crown to an end, and for the rights surrendered by the States—defence, foreign policy and communications—to the British to revert to the States when a new fully self-governing or independent Government or Governments come into being in British India. Thus, with the withdrawal of paramountcy, the Princely States were to become independent.

562 independent Princely States! That would have meant ominous prospects of civil wars, military takeovers, and total chaos—more terrible than what happened during the partition! That may well have been the objective of the British. Else, why could they not have so arranged that the Princely States too had to go to the successor state (or states) of British India.

The Paramountcy could have been inherited by the succeeding state(s). But, British wanted it to lapse, and create difficulties for India. They wanted India to remain divided into as many parts as possible. Thankfully, Sardar Patel frustrated the British design.

*16-May-1946:* The Cabinet Mission unilaterally proposed a “*16-May-1946 Cabinet Mission Plan*”, that was announced by PM Attlee in the House of Commons. Broad provisions: (1)Independence to a UNITED dominion, which would be a loose confederation of provinces. NO Pakistan. (2)Defence, currency & finance, communications and foreign affairs with the Centre, rest of the powers with the provinces. (3)British paramountcy over the Princely States to lapse, making them independent. (4)*A Constituent Assembly* to frame the constitution. (5)Provincial Legislatures to be grouped as (A)*Group-A*: Madras, UP, Central provinces, Bombay, Bihar & Orissa; (B)*Group-B*: Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Baluchistan; and (C)*Group-C*: Assam and Bengal; effectively making two (B and C) of the three groups Muslim-majority. The British-Muslim League trick was to let both Group B and Group C go to Pakistan, leaving only Group A for India (Sardar Patel tackled this later).

*16-June-1946:* “*16-June-1946 Cabinet Mission Plan*” for the *Interim Government* comprising 14 members representing major political parties: 6 Congress, 5 Muslim League, 1 Indian Christian, 1 Sikh, and 1 Parsee.

Muslim League accepted both the 16-May-1946 and the 16-June-1946 Cabinet Mission Plans. However, Gandhi and the Congress didn't accept either. Jinnah was on the seventh heaven, looking forward to be invited to form the government.

*25-June-1946:* Sardar Patel risked his all and took a private, personal initiative to negotiate the matter with the British. He ultimately persuaded the CWC, against Gandhi's advice, to accept the 16-May-1946 Plan, while rejecting the 16-June-1946 Plan, to thwart the Muslim League from getting inflated share of power, and forming the government.

*7 July 1946, Nehru's Blunder:* After the AICC ratification of the CWC's acceptance of the *16-May-Plan*, Nehru remarked at the AICC: “We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly.” At a press conference 3 days later he declared that the Congress would be “completely unfettered by agreements”, and that

“the central government was likely to be much stronger than what the Cabinet Mission envisaged.”

### 1946: Muslim League’s Direct Action (Riots)

*30 July 1946:* Jinnah contended with the British that Nehru’s remarks (pl. see above) of 7 July 1946 and later amounted to “a complete repudiation” of the 16-May-Plan, and therefore he expected the British government to invite him, rather than the Congress, to form a government.

In the absence of any action in that respect from the British government, Jinnah took the extreme step: he got the Muslim League to revoke its acceptance of the May-16-Cabinet-Mission-Plan, and gave a sinister call for the launch of “direct action to achieve Pakistan”. Asking the qaum to observe 16 August 1946 as Direct Action Day, Jinnah said on 30 July 1946: “Today we bid goodbye to constitutional methods. Throughout, the British and the Congress held a pistol in their hand, the one of authority and arms and the other of mass struggle and non-cooperation. Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it... *We will have either a divided India, or a destroyed India.*”

The result was the *Calcutta Carnage*, the *Great Calcutta Killings*, the worst communal riot instigated by the Muslim League, that left 5,000 to 10,000 dead, 15,000 injured, and about one lakh homeless! In Bengal, HS Suhrawardy was heading the Muslim League–dominated government then.

Nehru’s indiscretion (remarks quoted above) put paid to the scheme of united India, precipitated Jinnah’s call for Pakistan, and resulted in the ghastly Direct Action. Patel was aghast both by Nehru’s blunder, and by Jinnah’s momentous decision. Patel wrote to DP Mishra: “*Though Nehru has been elected (President) for the fourth time, he often acts with childlike innocence... but we must not allow our anger to get the better of ourselves... His Press conference [was an] act of emotional insanity...*” Maulana Azad called Nehru’s act “*one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history.*”

## 2 September 1946 : Interim Government

Nehru, who had since become the Congress President, was invited by Viceroy Wavell on 12 August 1946 to form an Interim Government. It was formed on 2 September 1946. It comprised 7 Congressmen (Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajaji, Rajendra Prasad, Sarat Chandra Bose, Jagjivan Ram and Asaf Ali), 2 non-Congress Muslims (Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Ali Zaheer), and 3 from other minorities (Baldev Singh, John Mathai and CH Bhabha). Nehru kept the External Affairs ministry, while Sardar headed Home and Information & Broadcasting.

Rather than acting against the League for inciting [Calcutta] riots, Viceroy Wavell invited the Muslim League to join the Interim Government at the Centre. The Muslim League, keen to get into power, joined the Interim Government on 15 October 1946.

Upon League's entry Sarat Chandra Bose, Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Ali Zaheer left the ministry; and five Muslim League members became ministers, which included Liaqat Ali as Finance Minister, and Jogendra Nath Mandal, a Scheduled Caste Hindu from Bengal (perhaps in revenge of the Congress retaining a Muslim, Asaf Ali).

With the joining of the League, trouble started, and the government's functioning was badly hampered. Indeed, the very purpose of Jinnah for the Muslim League to join the government was to "*wreck it from within*"!

A League nominee in the government, Ghaznafar Ali Khan frankly admitted: "*We are going into the Interim Government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan... The Interim Government is one of the fronts of Direct Action campaign.*"

Ministries and departments controlled by the League became like Muslim jagirs, so much so that it was as if every Muslim officer had become a guard of the League.

Refused Home Portfolio by Patel, the League snatched Finance, a critical portfolio, and made Liaqat Ali its head. *The aim of the Muslim League, encouraged and aided by the British, was to achieve Pakistan by sabotage inside the government, and by Direct Action (riots), disorder, and chaos outside.*

## Oct–1946: Noakhali Anti-Hindu Killings

The Muslim League's Direct Action (anti-Hindu attacks) in Calcutta from 16 August 1946 onwards was extended to Noakhali district in the Chittagong Division in East Bengal in October 1946. The Muslim community perpetrated a series of massacres, rapes, abductions and forced conversions of Hindus, desecration of temples, and looting and arson of Hindu properties in October–November 1946. The carnage came to be known as the Noakhali genocide.

What happened in Noakhali was far worse than the Calcutta carnage that preceded it! About 5000 Hindus were killed, hundreds of Hindu women were raped, thousands of Hindu men and women were forcibly converted to Islam, and about 75,000 survivors had to be sheltered in temporary relief camps, even as about 50,000 Hindus remained marooned in the affected areas under the cruel Muslim surveillance, needing permits from the Muslim leaders. Even Jiziya, the Muslim protection tax for Dhimmis, was levied on Hindus.

Gandhi camped in Noakhali for about four months to restore peace and communal amity. But, he failed. Muslim League leader AK Fazlul Huq, addressing a rally in February 1947, claimed that Gandhi's presence in Noakhali had harmed Islam enormously, and had created Hindu–Muslim bitterness. Rather than feeling ashamed of their acts, the Muslims resented Gandhi's stay in Noakhali, and gradually their opposition to Gandhi assumed vulgar forms—they began to dirty Gandhi's route. A goat that Gandhi had brought along with him was stolen by Muslims—they killed, and ate it.

Gandhi himself admitted later that the situation in Noakhali was such the Hindus should either leave or perish! The question is what did the Congress as an organisation, and Gandhi as its top leader do for over three decades that they couldn't even raise capable, well-organised, well-funded, and well-equipped self-defence units across the country to save innocents, considering the recurrence of such cases? Leadership is not mere talking. It has a responsibility for the safety of people. Gandhi's advocacy of non-violent resistance to violence was not only absurd, irrational, and illogical; it was actually a case of shirking leadership responsibilities.

Dec–1946 : Constituent Assembly

Elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA) were held. CA met for the first time on 9 December 1946. It elected Dr Rajendra Prasad as the President, and formed committees to draft different sections of the Constitution. The Muslim League did not join the CA.

*21 December 1946:* A Negotiating Committee was formed by the Constituent Assembly (CA) to deal with a designated body of the Chamber of Princes on representation of the Princely States in the CA.

Later, on *29 August 1947*, the Constituent Assembly set up a Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr BR Ambedkar to prepare a draft Constitution for India.

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## Interesting Timelines : 1947

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### Feb–1947: Attlee’s “Quit India” Deadline

On 20 February 1947 the British PM Clement Attlee announced that Britain would quit India by June 1948. He also announced: “HMG will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.”

The hint was for partition and Pakistan. Former Secretary of State of India, Samuel John Gurney Hoare, 1st Viscount Templewood, commented that Attlee’s declaration was an “unconditional surrender, at the expense of many to whom we have given specific pledges for generations past, which would lead to a division of India under the worst possible circumstances” and that it would “imperil the peace and prosperity of India”.

While Patel maintained his discreet silence on Attlee’s declaration, intriguingly, Nehru termed it as “wise and courageous”, even though it was an invitation to anarchy and chaos, as became apparent very soon.

### 8 March 1947: Patel & Partition, the Lesser Evil

Having experienced the machinations of the Muslim League in the Interim Government, Sardar Patel rightly concluded it was not possible to govern the country jointly with the Muslim League then or in future. He realised the inevitability of the Partition around December 1946, and was perhaps the first tall Congress leader to do so, apart from CR (Rajaji), who had expressed such a possibility long ago in 1942. It took Congress another six months to reach the same conclusion.

VP Menon had outlined to Patel in late December 1946 a scheme of partition, transfer of power and Dominion Status to which Patel had responded positively. Partition was to save India from civil war; while the Dominion Status would ensure the British cooperation in smooth transfer of power, particularly with the military under their command.

Concluding there would not be peace in united Punjab, and no place for them, Hindus and Sikhs demanded East Punjab. Seizing the opportunity,

and as a rebuff to the League, Patel promptly agreed to the demand for partition of Punjab, and of Bengal, by implication. Other Congress leaders agreed, and on 8 March 1947 the CWC proposed the same. Jinnah and the Muslim League, who had coveted the whole of Punjab and Bengal as part of Pakistan, irretrievably lost East Punjab by their ill-thought violent communal acts. Earlier, on 4 March 1947, Patel had written to Jinnah's close friend K Dwarkadas: "*If the League insists on Pakistan, the only alternative is the division of Punjab and Bengal.*"

The above initiative for partition taken by Patel came as a bolt from the blue for Gandhi. Gandhi was not consulted. Wrote Gandhi to Patel: "Try to explain to me your Punjab resolution if you can. I cannot understand it." Responded Patel: "It is difficult to explain to you the resolution on Punjab. It was adopted after the deepest deliberation. Nothing has been done in a hurry, or without a full thought. That you have expressed your views against it, we learnt from the papers. But you are, of course, entitled to say what you feel right."

Patel's proposal was indeed the only answer to Jinnah demanding partition, for it meant he would neither get full Punjab, nor full Bengal, and not Assam either. But for Patel and the resolution he sponsored, the vicious stalemate that had gone on for too long would not have been broken. Patel had firmed up his resolve to get as much territory for India as possible, and to totally frustrate Jinnah's grand design of a large Pakistan with full Punjab, full Bengal and Assam—Jinnah ultimately got what he himself admitted: "*moth-eaten Pakistan*". Patel had also hoped that confronted with the crumbs of "*truncated and moth-eaten Pakistan*", Jinnah might still desist from demanding partition. It was like catching the bull by the horns.

Patel got the above resolution passed also to checkmate Gandhi lest he came up with some harmful appeasement move, or a move of some 'large-hearted' surrender.

Patel had grasped that continued resistance to partition and Pakistan would only mean further spread of communal strife and riots, cleavages within even the police force and the army leading to a situation that would have further favoured Jinnah's and British interests, and might have led to whole of Group-B and Group-C (that included all of Punjab, Bengal, and Assam. Assam then was all of Northeast!) becoming Pakistan.

Back in the sixteenth century, Tulsi Das had given his pearl of wisdom: “*Budh ardh tajain, lukh sarvasa jata*”—*realising that the whole would go, the wise surrender half.*

In the event, India surrendered only one-fourth, and retained three-fourth! Although Pakistan had been claiming the whole of Assam, Bengal and Punjab; India retained the whole of Assam (but for one district), while forcing partition of Bengal and Punjab.

22 March 1947: Mountbatten Arrives

Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy, arrived in India on 22 March 1947 and took charge two days later. In the course of his first speech, he said that his was not a normal viceroyalty. The British Government were resolved to transfer power by June 1948 and a solution had to be found in a few months' time.

#### Gandhi's 1-Apr-1947 Offer for Jinnah

To explore the possibility of averting partition, Gandhi had made the following proposal to Mountbatten on 1 April 1947: *Dissolution of Interim Government then headed by Nehru. Inviting Jinnah to take over. Allowing Jinnah to form a cabinet of his choice. If Jinnah ran the government in India's interest, the Congress would continue to cooperate with him, and not use its majority to thwart him. Who would decide if Jinnah was running the government in India's interest? Not Congress or Gandhi, but Mountbatten! Further, Jinnah could continue to advocate Pakistan—but peacefully!!*

Absurd proposal! But, that was Mahatma. Who gave authority to Gandhi to condemn the majority to the mercy of the minority, and the Muslim League. What were the credentials of Jinnah and the Muslim League that they could be entrusted with the fate of the majority? Why would Mountbatten decide whether or not Jinnah was running the government in India's interest? Was Mountbatten an impartial observer? Didn't he represent India's tormentors of two centuries? Wasn't Gandhi aware that Mountbatten was there to safeguard and advance the interests of Britain, and not of India? Even assuming Mountbatten was an impartial observer, was he competent to determine what really was in the interest of India? Even if he were both impartial and competent, how long was he to remain in India to act as a referee? What sort of self-respect was it if those

“fighting” for India’s freedom were to depend upon a representative of the power from whom they were seeking freedom to act as a referee and adjudicate what was in India’s interest?

Taken aback by Gandhi’s extraordinary proposal, Mountbatten sought Gandhi’s permission to discuss the proposal with Nehru and Maulana Azad in confidence. Gandhi agreed. Mountbatten didn’t include Patel with Nehru and Azad. He knew Patel would dismiss it as a fantastic nonsense.

Gandhi repeated his proposal to Mountbatten the next day on 2 April 1947. Mountbatten told him he was interested in the proposal when Gandhi asked him specifically if he supported it. Gandhi advised Mountbatten he would try to persuade the Congress to accept it, and would tour India for support.

Shortly after the above meeting, Mountbatten met Maulana Azad, who not only expressed his approval for Gandhi’s proposal, but was enthusiastic about it, and encouraged Mountbatten to get Jinnah to accept it. Maulana Azad generally used to be in favour of anything that gave more weightage and power to Muslims.

Having favoured Nehru undemocratically—overriding the 80% support of the PCCs for Patel—with the post of PM, Gandhi had expected to bring Nehru to his side. But, Gandhi should have known that a person like Nehru who unabashedly demanded to be anointed PM most undemocratically—not a single PCC had voted in his favour—for the sake of power could not be expected to yield his position to Jinnah.

As expected, Patel had firmly opposed the plan. Patel hated Muslim appeasement. Being a wise and practical person, Patel also knew that given the embittered and surcharged atmosphere there was no way Hindus would tolerate or suffer Muslim rule. On the evening of 10 April 1947. Nehru, Patel and many members of the CWC met Gandhi and told him they were opposed to his plan. Only Badshah Ghaffar Khan supported Gandhi. On 11 April 1947 Gandhi advised Mountbatten of his defeat vis-à-vis the plan, and left Delhi.

## May-1947 Onwards: Freedom & Partition

### May 1947: Mountbatten’s Initial Plan that Failed

Just over a month into his job, Mountbatten prepared a plan for Britain to quit India, and sent it to London with Ismay and Abell on 2 May 1947.

He moved to Shimla in summer, and invited Nehru there with a view to get him on his side. On 10 May 1947 Mountbatten received back his plan from London, revised and approved. Full of hope and enthusiasm, Mountbatten showed the plan to Nehru.

The outline of the plan was to transfer power to the provinces or groups of provinces for an interim period, who would then decide whether to join India or Pakistan or remain independent. Some kind of central authority would be formed to deal with overall defence. Members of the Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and Punjab would decide whether or not to partition their respective provinces. The plan also envisaged holding re-election in NWFP.

When shown, VP Menon had expressed his disapproval for the plan. Menon was against giving initial independence to the provinces or to their groups. A patriot, he had even stated that if the plan was accepted, he would resign.

Nehru's reaction to the plan was fortunately negative. Nehru opined the plan would adversely affect Central Authority, provoke civil conflict and unrest, and would give a fillip to the Balkanisation of India, resulting in multiple Ulsters. Having assured London he would bring Nehru over to his side on the plan (What was the source of his confidence?), Mountbatten faced deep embarrassment. With his buoyancy punctured, Mountbatten desperately looked for a way out.

#### 10 May 1947 : Patel Agrees to Partition

Sardar Patel was the first prominent Indian leader who agreed to go in for the partition. The initial concurrence for the Partition was on 10 May 1947. It demonstrated his decisiveness, ability to take unpleasant, but necessary decisions, and high order of statesmanship. On 11 May 1947, while Acharya Kripalani confessed, "*When we are faced with thorny problems, and Gandhi's advice is not available, we consider Sardar Patel as our leader*"; Sarojini Naidu had stated that Sardar Patel was "*the man of decision and the man of action in our counsels*". It was Sardar who convinced the rest on the wisdom of partition.

#### 30 May 1947 : Patel Refuses East-West Corridor to Jinnah

Unlike Nehru, Sardar Patel was very firm in his dealings. Writes Rajmohan Gandhi in his book 'Patel—A Life': "Returning from London on the night of May 30, Mountbatten, in his own words, 'sent V.P.Menon to see

Patel to obtain his agreement to six months joint control [with Pakistan] of Calcutta', which is what Jinnah had been pressing for. The Viceroy recorded Patel's reply: '*Not even for six hours!*' Earlier...Jinnah had demanded an 800-mile 'corridor' to link West and East Pakistan. Patel called the claim '*such fantastic nonsense as not to be taken seriously*'. It died a quick and unremembered death."

#### June 1947: VP Menon–Mountbatten Plan

VP Menon, the Constitutional Adviser and Political Reforms Commissioner to the Viceroy, came to Mountbatten's rescue, and suggested a way out for the British to transfer power. He gave Mountbatten an outline for transfer of power that he had prepared earlier, but which was not favourably seen by the authorities prior to Mountbatten.

Menon's scheme, prepared in 1946, envisaged transfer of power by the British to two Central Governments on Dominion basis, and separation of the Muslim-majority areas from India.

During December 1946–January 1947 Menon had discussed the matter with Sardar Patel. Menon had opined that a unitary India under the Cabinet Mission Plan was an illusion; and the proposed 3-tier constitution would be unwieldy and difficult to work. It was better for the country to be divided than gravitate towards civil war. Menon had suggested that the best solution was partition and transfer of power to two central governments based on the Dominion Status; the advantages being (a)avoidance of civil war; (b)peaceful transfer of power; (c)greater likelihood of its acceptance in Britain, particularly by the Conservatives like Churchill on account of the "Dominion Status", and membership of the two dominions in the Commonwealth; (d)continued services of the British bureaucracy and the British army officers during the transitional period; (e)reassurance to the Princes on continuity, and better possibility of their peaceful merger with either of the two dominions; (f)strong central governments for each of the dominions to guard against centrifugal forces; and (g)facilitation for framing a constitution unhampered by communal and provincial/regional considerations. Sardar Patel had given Menon a positive response.

Mountbatten and Nehru broadly agreed with Menon's outline of the scheme, and asked him to prepare a draft plan. Knowing that without Patel's backing the plan would be a non-starter, Menon sent an advance copy of the plan to Patel. Patel's response was expectedly positive, for the

plan had his pre-approval. On Nehru's hang-ups on membership of the Commonwealth as a condition in the plan, Patel assured Nehru that he would take care that the plan was approved by the Congress, provided the other conditions were met. Patel knew the Commonwealth-condition was put to satisfy conservatives like Churchill, and obtain their approval for the passage of the Indian Independence Bill. All that Patel wanted assurance for was that the British parliament pass a bill to grant independence to India, and that the British actually quit within two months; and importantly, while they let the paramountcy for the Indian Princely States lapse, they don't interfere or take sides on their merger with India.

Jinnah, as usual, did act difficult, and stipulated additional conditions, including the wild one like an 800-mile corridor to link East and West Pakistan; but his tantrums didn't work, and he had to ultimately agree to what Mountbatten (or rather, VP Menon) had proposed, and what the Congress was agreeable to. Why that change in Jinnah? With their goal (Pakistan) achieved, Jinnah's mentors in London like Churchill (who had propped him up to get Pakistan as it was in the strategic interests of the British) conveyed to him to not act difficult any more, as he couldn't get more than what was on offer.

Apprehensive that Gandhi may yet come in the way of the partition plan, Mountbatten personally met Gandhi to explain the position. Gandhi accepted the position.

#### 2 June 1947 : CWC Ratification of Partition Plan

The CWC ratified Patel and Nehru's acceptance of the partition plan on 2 June 1947 by 157 votes to 27, with 32 remaining neutral. Sardar Patel delivered a key note address at the CWC as under:

"I fully appreciate the fears of our brothers from [the Muslim-majority areas]. Nobody likes the division of India and my heart is heavy. But the choice is between one division and many divisions. We must face facts, cannot give in to emotionalism and sentimentality. The Working Committee has not acted out of fear. But I am afraid that all our toil and hard work of these many years might go waste and prove unfruitful. My nine months in office have completely disillusioned me regarding the supposed merits of the Cabinet Mission Plan. Except for a few honourable exceptions, Muslim officials from top to bottom are working for the League. The communal veto given to the League in the mission plan would have blocked India's

progress at every stage. Whether or not we like it, de facto Pakistan already exists in Punjab and Bengal. Under the circumstances I would prefer a de jure Pakistan which may make the League more responsible. Freedom is coming. We have 75 to 80 % of India, which we can make strong with our genius. The League can develop the rest of the country.”

3 June 1947 : Mountbatten announced the Partition Plan

On 3 June 1947, Mountbatten announced the Partition Plan: Power to be relinquished to the two Governments of India and Pakistan on the basis of Dominion Status by 15 August 1947, much earlier than the original date of June 1948. In regard to the Princely States, the plan laid down that the policy of His Majesty's Government towards the Indian Princely States contained in the Cabinet Mission memorandum of 12 May 1946 would remain unchanged—the British paramountcy would lapse, and their status would revert to what it was before.

14 June 1947 AICC Meet to Ratify Partition, backed by Gandhi

Although Gandhiji had hang-ups, most of the top leadership of the Congress had realised the inevitability of the Partition. Gandhiji had told the CWC on 2 June 1946 when it took the decision in favour of Partition that although he disagreed, he will not stand in the way; and had commented: “Today I find myself all alone. Even the Sardar and Jawaharlal think that my reading is wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon... They did not like my telling the Viceroy that even if there was to be partition, it should not be through British intervention... They wonder if I have not deteriorated with age.”

Patel had himself admitted: “For several years, Gandhi and I were in perfect agreement. Mostly we agreed instinctively; but when the time for a big decision on the question of India’s independence came, we differed. I felt that we had to take independence there and then. We had, therefore, to agree to partition. I came to this conclusion after a great deal of heart-searching and with a great deal of sorrow. But I felt that if we did not accept partition, India would be split into many bits and completely ruined.”

Gandhi’s role as a guide, or the one with a veto-power, had ended long back. Much earlier when he had expressed his wish to quit, none in the CWC had asked him not to do so. But, Gandhi had finally acquiesced to the Partition. Perhaps he also took into account the alternate consequence Patel reportedly talked of: “*It is a question of civil war or partition. As for civil*

*war, no one can say where it will start and where it will end. True, the Hindus might win in the end but only after paying an unpredictable and huge price.”*

Indeed, the Muslim League call for Pakistan could only have been resisted if the Congress was prepared for a strong, sustained retaliatory violence, and a long drawn-out communal strife in cities, towns and villages. However, that was apparently beyond the Congress leadership brought up on Gandhian non-violence. *The Congress leadership was incapable of American style civil war. If Netaji Subhas had been there, one could have thought about it.*

It is also worth noting that the Hindus and Sikhs of East Punjab and the Hindus of West Bengal had openly demanded partition. Gandhiji had himself admitted in his prayer meeting on 10 June 1947 that as “*non-Muslim India is overwhelmingly in favour of partition*”, he “*could not coerce public opinion.*”

The AICC met on 14 June 1947 to consider and ratify the CWC decision in favour of partition. There were voices against the partition. When Nehru and Patel failed to persuade some members, Gandhi intervened and appealed to members to support the CWC and its decision for partition, in the absence of an alternative. Gandhi advised that political realism demanded acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan, and acceptance of the partition-resolution moved by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. While 29 voted for the resolution, 15 voted against—notwithstanding Gandhi’s appeal to vote in favour of the resolution.

August 1947 : Radcliffe Lines

Cyril John Radcliffe (1899–1977), a British lawyer, was charged with the Chairmanship of two boundary committees that submitted partition maps on 9 August 1947 partitioning Punjab and Bengal. The new boundaries were formally announced on 14 August 1947.

14-15 August 1947

14 August 1947: Pakistan Independence Day.

15 August 1947: Indian Independence Day.

Aug-Dec 1947 : Partition of Assets

Geographical partition was not the only partition. There had to be partition and equitable distribution of cash in treasuries, bank balances, records and archives, railways, institutes, printing presses, hospitals, army,

government employees, and so on—a formidable task, with potential for massive controversies and disagreements. Formidable tasks requires formidable people. Sardar Patel was the natural choice to head the task for India. Heaviest burdens fell on him. And, tasks that others did not dare to touch, like the integration of the Princely States, were left to him to tackle.

The two main officials were HM Patel for India, and Chaudhary Muhammad Ali for Pakistan. They were overall in-charge, and guided ten expert committees looking into various division of assets and liabilities. What the expert committees could not resolve went to HM Patel and Chaudhary Muhammad Ali; what they, in turn, could not settle went to a Partition Council. The Partition Council comprised Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad, with Rajaji as alternate member. Pakistan was represented by MA Jinnah and Liaqat Ali, with Abdur Rab Nishtar as an alternate member.

The Partition Council held a number of meetings till 15 August 1947 to divide the assets. However, the work was so massive it continued till December 1947.

HM Patels words on Sardar Patel and his leadership of the Partition Council: “...farsightedness, generosity and breadth of mind... [Sardar Patel] made himself available for consultation at all hours... It was he who made decisions on behalf of India... With an almost unerring instinct he knew precisely what the right course was, and it can be said that we have gone wrong only where we somehow succeeded in persuading him against his own instinctive view.”

The Pakistan side was much impressed by Patel, his positive attitude, and his decisiveness. At the concluding session of the Partition Council, Abdur Rab Nishtar voiced his admiration for the constructive approach and statesmanship of Patel, and went to the extent of saying that the Pakistani Ministers would continue to look upon him as their elder brother!

## What Really Led to Freedom & Partition

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### What Really led to Freedom

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Was it thanks to Gandhi and the Congress that India got its freedom? The true answer is: NO!

In fact, Gandhi himself admitted: *“I see it as clearly as I see my finger: British are leaving not because of any strength on our part but because of historical conditions and for many other reasons.”* And, the “historical conditions and other reasons” were not of Gandhi’s making, or that of the Congress—they were despite them.

The last Gandhian movement was the Quit India Movement of 1942. Quit India fizzled out in about two months. After Quit India, Gandhi did not launch any movement. Is one to infer that the call to Quit India given in 1942 was acted upon by the British after a lapse of five years in 1947? That there was some kind of an ultra-delayed tubelight response? Quit India call heard after a delay of five years!

Britain hinted at independence in 1946, and announced it formally in 1947, even though there was hardly any pressure from the Congress on Britain to do so. Many of the Rulers of the Princely States in fact wondered and questioned the Raj as to why they wanted to leave (they didn’t want them to—it was a question of their power and perks, which were safe under the British) when there was no movement against them, and no demand or pressure on them to leave.

The British initially announced the timeline as June 1948 to leave India. Later, they themselves preponed it to August 1947. If the British didn’t wish to leave, and it was the Congress which was making them leave, why would the British voluntarily announce preponement of their departure?

Wrote Nirad Chaudhuri in ‘Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, Part-II’, Jaico (Page#41): “...After being proved to be dangerous ideologues by that [world] war, the pacifists have now fallen back on Gandhi as their last prop, and are arguing that by liberating India from the foreign rule by his

non-violent methods he has proved that non-violent methods and ideas are sound. Unfortunately, the British abandonment of India before Gandhi's death has given a spurious and specious plausibility to what is in reality only a coincidence without causal relationship... And finally, he [Gandhi] had no practical achievement, as I shall show when I deal with his death. What is attributed to him politically is pure myth..."

The real reasons the British left were the following:

1) *WW-II and its Consequence.*

1a) The UK was in a precarious economic condition as a consequence of the Second World War. It was hugely debt-ridden (owed 1250 million pounds to India alone), and was almost bankrupt. It was surviving on the US financial assistance. The maintenance of its colonies had become an unbearable drag on the UK exchequer. The Britain had colonised India to loot, and not to invest in it or to maintain it. The money flow had to be from India to Britain to justify continuance of the colony; and not the other way round, which had begun to happen.

1b) By the end of the WW-II territorial colonisation had ceased to be a viable enterprise, and decolonisation began. In fact, around the time India got its independence, many other colonies (like Sri Lanka, Burma–Myanmar, etc.) also got their independence, although there was not much of an independence movement in those colonies that would have forced the colonisers to leave.

1c) Militarily, administratively, financially, and above all, mentally the British were too exhausted after the Second World War to continue with their colonies.

1d) *Pressure from the US:* So as to gain full cooperation from India in the Second World War, the US had maintained a constant pressure on the UK to decolonise India since 1942. The Japanese surrender following the dropping of atom-bombs in August 1945 dramatically enhanced the US military clout. The US thereafter insisted that the Atlantic Charter be also made applicable to the European colonies in Asia (it was, after all, a question of grabbing markets for the US capitalists), and they all be freed. Clement Attlee himself acknowledged in his autobiography that it was difficult for Britain to keep sticking on to the Indian colony given the constant American pressure against the British Empire. The fact of

American help and pressure in getting independence for India is not adequately acknowledged by India.

2) *Netaji Bose, INA and Army Mutinies.*

2a) The military onslaught of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his INA hugely shook the British, and the Indian army.

2b) The Viceroy was shocked to learn of thousands of soldiers of the British-Indian army switching over to INA (to support the enemy nation Japan) after the fall of Singapore in 1942. It meant the Indian soldiers in the British-Indian army could no longer be relied upon. What was more—there was a huge support for Netaji Bose and the INA among the common public in India.

2c) The INA Red Fort trials of 1945-46 mobilised public opinion against the British on an unprecedented scale, so much so that the Congress leaders like Nehru (who had till then, and later too, opposed Netaji and INA) had to demonstratively pretend their support to the INA under-trials to get votes in the 1946 general elections.

2d) The Indian Naval Mutiny of 1946 and the Jabalpur Army Mutiny of 1946, both provoked partially by the INA trials, convinced the British that they could no longer trust the Indian Army to suppress Indians, and continue to rule over them.

2e) Comments Narendra Singh Sarila in his book, ‘The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India’s Partition’: “In South-east Asia, Bose blossomed, and,..played an important role in demoralizing the British military establishment in India. Indeed, it is a toss-up whether Gandhiji’s or Bose’s influence during the period 1945-46—even after Bose’s death—played a more important role in destabilizing British rule in India.”

2f) Stated Dr BR Ambedkar: “...the national army [INA] that was raised by Subhas Chandra Bose. The British had been ruling the country in the firm belief that whatever may happen in the country or whatever the politicians do, they will never be able to change the loyalty of soldiers. That was one prop on which they were carrying on the administration. And that was completely dashed to pieces [by Bose and INA]. They found that soldiers could be seduced to form a party—a battalion to blow off the British. I think the British had come to the conclusion that if they were to rule India, the only basis on which they would rule was the maintenance of the British Army.”

2g) The British historian Michael Edwardes wrote in his book 'The Last Years of British India': "It slowly dawned upon the government of India that the backbone of the British rule, the Indian Army, might now no longer be trustworthy. The ghost of Subhas Bose, like Hamlet's father, walked the battlements of the Red Fort (where the INA soldiers were being tried), and his suddenly amplified figure overawed the conference that was to lead to Independence."

2h) Chief Justice PB Chakrabarty of Calcutta High Court, who had also served as the acting Governor of West Bengal in India after independence, wrote in his letter addressed to the publisher of Dr RC Majumdar's book 'A History of Bengal':

"...When I was the acting Governor, Lord Atlee, who had given us independence by withdrawing the British rule from India, spent two days in the Governor's palace at Calcutta during his tour of India. At that time I had a prolonged discussion with him regarding the real factors that had led the British to quit India. My direct question to him was that since Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement had tapered off quite some time ago and in 1947 no such new compelling situation had arisen that would necessitate a hasty British departure, why did they have to leave?

*"In his reply Atlee cited several reasons, the principal among them being the erosion of loyalty to the British Crown among the Indian army and navy personnel as a result of the military activities of Netaji [Subhas Bose]. Toward the end of our discussion I asked Atlee what was the extent of Gandhi's influence upon the British decision to quit India. Hearing this question, Atlee's lips became twisted in a sarcastic smile as he slowly chewed out the word, 'm-i-n-i-m-a-l!'"*

2i) Basically, the British decided to leave because they were fast losing control on account of the various factors detailed above; and lacked the financial resources, the military clout, and, above all, the will to regain that control.

Gandhi and the Congress were among the minor reasons and non-decisive factors the British left. They served more as a transferee in the 'Transfer of Power'.

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## What Really led to Partition & Pakistan

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Was the Hindu–Muslim religious factor the real reason for the Partition and Pakistan? NO.

The real factors behind the Partition were as under:

(1) *The British Geo-Political Vested Interests.*

(1a) *Middle-East Oil & Pakistan.* The experience of the two world wars, and growing rail, road, air and water transport, and industrialisation established the criticality of oil. The largest oil reserves happened to be in the Middle-East, and therefore the Middle-East had to be secured for the UK, and the West. How to secure? You had to have the countries in the Middle-East, and those bordering them, under your power and influence. Western India, adjoining Afghanistan, fell in that category—and fitted the bill for proposed Pakistan. Muslim Pakistan was pliable, while India was not. The area nearer to the Middle-East had therefore to go to Pakistan.

Pakistan was a Muslim country, and so was the Middle-East. Being a Muslim country, Pakistan was in a better position to influence the Middle-Eastern countries, thought the British. Seen from this strategic requirement, India was dispensable, but Pakistan was critical. The US and the West went along with the UK, for they were allies, and all of them wanted to secure the Middle-East oil.

DN Panigrahi states in ‘Jammu and Kashmir, the Cold War and the West’: “Clement Attlee [UK PM, 1945-51], in his official as well as private correspondence, categorically stated that Kashmir was an issue so germane to ‘the Muslim world’ that they must support Pakistan keeping in view British interest in the Middle East. ...the western powers, including Britain, considered Pakistan ‘as a key factor in international politics by virtue of being Muslim’ and because of its proximity with the Middle East. ...Sir Olaf Caroe...an ICS officer...wrote an article on Pakistan’s potential role for Middle East defence...in 1949...his influential book, ‘Wells of Power: The Oilfields of South Western Asia, a Regional and Global Study’. He argued that Middle Eastern oil held the key to progress and to international relations in the world in the future...”

(1b) *Some Presence and Foot-hold.* Since the First World War India’s primary usefulness to Britain was less as a market for commercial

exploitation and more in the field of war and defence, and in maintaining and securing its Empire. Through India as the base, and its Indian army, Britain controlled other countries in Asia. It could ill-afford to altogether give up its two-century old Empire, without having a firm foothold at least in part of India. That's when it cooked up the idea of Pakistan. If not India, at least Pakistan would give Britain that foot-hold.

(1c) *Pakistan as an Ally in Cold War.* The West wanted to check the expansionist ambitions of communist Russia and China towards the Middle-East and the Indian Ocean. How to do that? The regions adjoining Russia and China had to be under their influence: that is, northern India bordering Russia and J&K. Pakistan was willing to be an ally of the West in their cold war with the communists, hence critical to their strategy, along with J&K; while India—with its little likelihood of cooperating with the West in military matters, and forming an alliance with them, given India's anti-West dogma, Nehruvian pro-Russia bend, and protestations of non-violence—was dispensable. The British military establishment too had become a strong proponent of Pakistan on account of its promise of cooperation in military matters.

(1d) Partition of India was actually a British-Churchillian plan; and Jinnah was but an instrument for its implementation. If Jinnah had refused to do what the British wanted, the British would have chosen another Muslim leader, and made a Jinnah of him. Shimla Conference of June 1946 was wrecked by Jinnah at the behest of Churchill and Viceroy Wavell (who was Churchill's hatchet man): Jinnah had commented, "*Am I a fool to accept this [offer], when I am offered Pakistan on a platter?*"

(2) *Vested Interests of the Muslim Elites.*

(2a) *Muslim Leaders:* Many Muslim leaders who were otherwise or initially secular, liberal or nationalistic turned communal when they weighed in the personal benefits, and the benefits for their class, they would derive by having a separate country for themselves—coupled with the encouragement of the same by the British. Jinnah was one among many such persons.

(2b) *Other Muslim Elites:* In Pakistan, the Muslim religious leadership, the rich businessmen, the landed feudal elites, and the Muslims in the bureaucracy and the army looked forward to greater power and a much brighter and richer future full of opportunities for themselves, free of

competition from the majority Hindus. The budding Muslim capitalists saw a better future for themselves in Pakistan free from the competitors like Tatas and Birlas.

(2c) *Muslims from Minority-Muslim Areas More Keen on Pakistan.* It is worth noting that till the early 1940s, the Muslim League dominated in the areas that did not become Pakistan. In the areas that became Pakistan, particularly West Pakistan, there were other Muslim political parties (like the Unionist Party), who were governing with a tie-up with Hindu parties. The call for partition and Pakistan was mostly driven by the Muslim leaders like Jinnah, Iqbal and others from UP and other areas, that did not become Pakistan, where Muslims were in a minority; and not from areas where the Muslims were in majority, like in the areas of West Pakistan. Why? *One:* Muslims didn't feel insecure in areas where they were in majority, and were practically ruling, like in Punjab, Sind, NWFP, etc. Muslims felt insecure elsewhere—at least, their leaders. *Two:* Muslim leaders from UP and other areas, where Muslims were in a minority, didn't wish to remain deprived of power.

The British, through their “divide and rule” policy, and the Muslim elite leadership, by exploiting religion, and by deliberately instilling insecurity among the Muslim masses, managed to achieve Partition and Pakistan.

How did the British ensure Pakistan was created, without allowing the blame to come on them? They actively promoted the canard that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together. British used Islam to divide India and create Pakistan; just as US later used fundamentalist Islam to drive out the Russians from Afghanistan. Each used Islam for their own selfish purpose, and created monsters that are bedevilling the world.

Not only did the British partition India, they made sure—and this was one of the main responsibilities entrusted to Mountbatten—the blame for the partition was NOT laid at their door. The blame was to be assigned to the inability of the Hindus and Muslims to live together in peace. They succeeded.

If we go by the net results of the Partition process, while the British, thanks to their iniquitous methods, outmanoeuvred the clueless Indian/Congress leadership, and managed to protect their strategic interests (by creating Pakistan, and having it on their side) that were endangered with their losing the two-century-old empire, and Jinnah and Muslims got their

Pakistan, India was a big loser—it was severed into two and was left to lick its wounds! Judging from the angle of the UK, the US and the West, Britain's Partition Strategy was very successful, and yielded excellent results for them: they secured their oil-interests; Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact, then CENTO, then entered into a bilateral pact with the US, provided air bases to them, helped spy against Soviet Union, and so on, followed by active involvement in driving away the Russians from Afghanistan—which ultimately led to the collapse of the USSR.

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