Enemies of Enemies...

The Nationalist Ghadar

FEELING LIKE A NATION. THINKING LIKE A STATE

It is a truism for theorists of nationalism (and even for common observers of the world) that the rhetoric of nationalism, and the emotionality of patriotism, intensified them to a pitch of influence and emotional power sufficient to absorb and bear the weight of all the other yearnings for social and economic emancipation and cultural transformation that had been on the rise over the past half-century. This was not overlooked by any of the main adversaries, who happily stoked insurgencies within one another's imperial possessions: the British cultivated the Arabs against the Ottoman Turks even as the Germans cultivated the Indians and Irish against the British, and the Moroccans against the French. Afterward at Versailles, the language of self-determination then drove not only the hopes but the subsequent bitter disillusionment of anticolonial movements, leading directly to the postwar upsurges of nationalist activity not only in India but in China, Egypt, and Ireland.

For the duration of the war, the strategy of the independence movement abroad, while still oriented toward armed revolt, was for all practical purposes anchored in the military and diplomatic logic of interstate power relations. Tactical realpolitik prevailed. It was a time for action, not for philosophizing. Thinking was about strategy and tactics, not about philosophy of liberation or analysis of oppression. Accordingly, propaganda was aimed more toward incitement to action than ideological persuasion, and tailored to whatever needed to appeal to those one was trying to arouse, at least within the bounds of assuming a common immediate (though not necessarily ultimate) goal. Indeed, this pragmatism had always been characteristic of the Ghadarite approach; their philosophy of revolutionary praxis was by definition one of action, without which it made no sense.

However, now these tactics presumed nation-state units as actors. Internationalism was relevant here less as a principled ideal than as a geography of organization involving long-distance alliances, epic travels, and many covert crossings of lines. The revolutionaries worked through the German consulate system, with its outposts around the Pacific Rim, and sought to constitute themselves formally as a sovereign nation with diplomatic recognition. With damning accusations of anarchism continuing unabated, it seemed imperative to claim legitimacy by declaring oneself a government or authorized government representative—even if this meant only a few individuals wielding fancy letterhead and official-looking seals—capable of contacting world leaders and expecting to receive a hearing. By 1914 the India that the overseas revolutionists had in mind was clearly a secular, federated republic, though discussion of its future social and economic character remained deferred.

The revolutionaries abroad were well aware of predictions that Germany and Britain (and the United States and Japan, for that matter) were sliding glacially toward war. Indeed they were counting on it. But they had thought it would be
much later, certainly not a mere nine months after the Ghadar's debut. They had expected to have several years in which to mature the tasks of planning, educating, raising consciousness, preparing the ground. But with the conflagration unleashed in Europe, the Ghadar leadership saw a "golden" opportunity that, even if premature, could not possibly be refused.

THE BERLIN INDIA COMMITTEE

As the machinery of great power politics ground toward a seemingly inevitable collision, Germany had already been looking to the "Orient" as a field to draw on for opposition to its rival juggernaut, Britain. The referent for this vast and mysterious entity was, as convenient, either India or the so-called Islamic world—a significant elision adopted no less by Bolshevik Russia, or by Japanese, Indian, Egyptian, and Chinese Pan-Asianists themselves, than by German strategists. But strategy aside, Germany already had a venerable tradition of Orientalist scholarship and political interest, producing such distinguished figures as Baron Max von Oppenheim, who had a long history of archeological study and diplomatic service in Egypt and the Middle East, and Dr. Herbert Mueller, a Sinologist who had studied in China between 1912 and 1914. Mueller recalled that as early as 1904 at Berlin University he had "been interested in the political emancipation movement in, what we called, "The Orient" at that time and I soon had many friends amongst nationalists and revolutionaries from Egypt, Turkey, Kurdistan, Persia, India, China and Korea."

These strategists had determined that supporting Indian and/or Pan-Islamist anti-British unrest (between which there was understood to be significant overlap, although the two were obviously far from identical) was an important part of conducting their war. In Germany and the Next War, published in October 1911, General Friedrich von Bernhardi indicated the German hope that the Hindu population of Bengal, "in which a pronounced revolutionary and nationalist tendency had showed itself, might unite with the Muhammedans of India and that the cooperation of these elements might create a very grave danger capable of shaking the foundations of England's high position in the world." Plainly, despite the tendency to take the East as a single unit, German Orientalists at least were aware of the disparate religious, regional, and cultural affiliations within the Oriental world. Otherwise they could hardly have spoken of linking them up as a desirable new development, even if this goal was hindered by failure to fully understand the content and context of the differences among them, or their priorities. Nevertheless, the slippage or overlap of categories (along with the nature of the Indian national revolutionaries' relationships to Egyptian and Japanese movements) opened a door through which leftist, national liberationist, and Pan-Islamist streams of anticolonial activity could flow in and out of each other in the 1920s.

By spring 1915 the German Foreign Office (Auswirtiges Amt, or AA) had gathered most of the significant Indian radicals then active in Europe to form the Indian National Party or Berlin India Committee (BIC). Indeed, both the Yu- ngantar group and Dacca Anusilan Samiti had already approached Germany by 1911 on behalf of the Bengali movement, while Virendranath Chattopadhyaya had arrived in Berlin from France in 1914 to represent the international revolutionaries. Other important participants from all quadrants of British India included Champkaraman Pillai, Bhupendranath Dutt, M. P. T. Acharya, Ajit Singh, and disenfranchised aristocrat Mahendran Pratap. Representing the North Americans were Muhammad Barakatullah, Taraknath Das, Bhagwan Singh, and Har Dayal. Har Dayal was still presumed to exercise significant influence over the transatlantic movement, and one of the main reasons the Foreign Office wanted him was that they were very keen to incorporate the American Ghadarites. The California group was identified as a particularly valuable addition to the team, since they already had a well-developed infrastructure, mobilized support base, extensive propaganda machinery, and other situational factors such as the presence of large German and Irish immigrant populations in the United States, the latter of whose contingent of anti-British militants Germany was similarly interested in supporting. An article in the Berliner Tageblatt published 6 March 1914 and entitled "England's India Trouble" depicted a very gloomy situation in India, due to which "secret societies flourished and spread and were helped from outside. In California especially, it was said there appeared to be an organized enterprise for the purpose of providing India with arms and explosives." As usual this was not altogether wrong, if exaggerated and not altogether right either.

In addition to the Indian committee, Berlin hosted similar Persian and Turkish groups. Indian activist Jodh Singh explained: "The object of the first named is to free Persia from European influence in general and create ill feelings against the British, in particular, and to assist the Indians in obtaining a republic. The object of the Turkish Society is practically the same." Members of both groups also attended BIC meetings. But the BIC at first had little direct contact with the AA itself, communicating mainly through Oppenheim and Mueller, although Chatto and Har Dayal had clearance to attend meetings of the Foreign Office where "Indian matters" were discussed. But while the German goal for India was to foment unrest that would destabilize Britain, integrating "all revolutionary organizations of America and Europe... under the control of the German authority," the better to effectively coordinate and "deploy schemes through other centres of authority in distant countries," the BIC's own stated goal for
itself was first and foremost “establishing a republican government in India by
any means.” As self-appointed “Supreme General Staff of the Indian Revolu-
tion” the committee was supposed to be an independent body, with the Indians
making their own decisions about what to do. Its members insisted that they
must “represent India while negotiating with Germany on a footing of equality
on the basis of mutual interest and not as a subordinate power begging for help,”
observed an intelligence report, and “seem to have continuously guarded them-

In 1915 the AA established the Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient (News Agency
for the Orient) to produce news and pamphlets in various languages for distribu-
tion to soldiers in Europe and the Middle East. The Germans hoped the members
of the Berlin India Committee would serve as propagandists, translators, and
compilers in this effort. By mid-1916, British intelligence had compiled a list
of eighty-two papers and pamphlets “published by German agencies or by societies
subsidised by Germany” in languages including English, French, German, Dutch,
Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Malay, Tartar, Chinese, and
four or five Indian vernaculars. But “the production of anti-British literature
was only the first item in an agenda that the DCI compiled after the fact, in
1920.” Also on the list were “attempts to commit assassinations in England and
allied countries, especially Italy,” and “an attempt to endanger the lines of com-
munication through the Suez Canal.” Meanwhile, some BIC members were
tapped for additional training in explosives and sabotage, while others visited
the captured troops in an attempt to “win Indian [POWs] from their allegiance,”
a task to be directed by Barakatullah.

After Berlin the second major headquarters was in Istanbul, headed first by
Har Dayal and later by the BIC’s Dr. Mansur Ahmed. The Istanbul office was to
be the hub for coordinating efforts in Egypt, Persia, and Mesopotamia. Plans for
importing the revolt to India were deployed along the three major approaches
to the subcontinent: over land from the northwest across Persia to the Afghan
frontier, from the northeast across Siam to the Burmese frontier, and by sea
from the Dutch East Indies. Each of these three strategic initiatives was dele-
gated primarily to a different segment of the Indian revolutionaries abroad: the
northern route to the Persian Gulf and Europe-based nationalists, the
northeastern land route to the California Ghadarites, and the southeastern sea
route to the domestic Bengalis. However, there were multiple connection points
among the campaigns, and many individuals played a role in more than one
area.

We will return later to the western approach, pausing here only to note one of
the fruits of the German mission across Persia to Afghanistan; namely, the estab-
ishment of a self-designated Provisional Government of India in Kabul. Nirode

Barakatullah calls this provisional government in exile Barakatullah’s “brainchild,”
claiming it was his suggestion that creating a piece of land and achieving diplomatic
recognition—was the very definition of freedom. Indeed, as Gobind Behari Lal put it,
the real significance of the Berlin group was that “these Indian revolutionaries
made a country in exile representing a free India.”

For now let us concentrate on the two entangled projects to India’s east during
1915: one a gunrunning operation between Batavia and Calcutta; the first half of 1915;
the other, initial preparations for a Siam-based invasion across India’s Bur-

THE EASTERN FRONT

The BIC’s East Asian initiatives were the ones most closely associated with the
Californian branch of the movement abroad, second only to the initial mutiny
attempt, which preceded any German role. East Asia was strategically important
from the perspectives of both California and Berlin, due to the large number of
Sikh and Muslim troops stationed in Burma and Malaya as military police, or as
watchmen in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other British treaty ports of China.

There were also significant numbers of Indian laborers in the Philippines. Well
before the war, in 1913, G. D. Kumar sailed from San Francisco for Manila, where
he informed Tarak Nath Das in a letter that he was “going to establish a base
[the factory] near China, Hong Kong, Shanghai. It seems that Barakat-

These cities, emerging as “subsidiary bases in the Ghadar
network,” were to serve as recruitment centers (garnering as many as six or
seven hundred new activists), propaganda distribution points, and intermedi-
ary links between San Francisco and India. When C arrived in San Francisco
in late 1914, several missions were already in the works: to Shanghai via Ja-

Meanwhile, Bhagwan Singh nurtured a secret society in Shanghai until a few
 emissaries arrived from California to formalize a Ghadar branch there. When
C arrived in late spring or summer 1915 on the island of Sulu “in a small boat
laden with range-finders and other military equipments and maps," his destination was the Dutch East Indies.\textsuperscript{29} Sent back to the Philippines after an arrest (for "trying to leave by an unopened port"),\textsuperscript{30} he then proceeded to build Manila into one of the strongest Ghadar organizing centers in East Asia. In May 1915 the British consul at Manila wrote to the viceroy that Bhagwan Singh had turned up there accompanied by his friend Dost Mahommed, who was employed there as a watchman. Bhagwan Singh meanwhile had no apparent occupation other than propaganda work, distributing pamphlets to his countrymen, addressing small meetings, and collecting money for the cause. Many Ghadar issues had been posted from Manila into India, "wrapped well inside local papers and addressed not to the intended recipients, whose correspondence might be examined, but to unsuspected and inactive sympathizers, who would arrange for the transmission."\textsuperscript{31} Those watching his movements reported him a frequent visitor to both the headquarters of the Indian Association of the Philippines and the local German consulate, which provided him with money.\textsuperscript{32}

The German consul in Shanghai was supposed to be the anchor point for all Far Eastern operations, supervising the consulates in Bangkok, Batavia, and Persia.\textsuperscript{33} In Hong Kong, the Ghadar of 29 August 1915 reported: "The American paper Gaelic [sic] ... says that [there] the soldiers of the Indian army are trying to create a disturbance and that the soldiers are disobedient and turbulent to their officers. ... They took all the Germans away to the south shore so that they could not have any intercourse with the Hindus. Later a telegram was received from Shanghai that somebody had thrown a bomb at the Governor of Hong Kong, and ... escaped leaving no trace. Well done."\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{The Batavia-Calcutta Scheme}

Rash Behari Bose, Bhagwan Singh, and Abani Mukherjee had formed an independent council that sketched out a seaborne arms importation plan that they then presented to the German representatives in China (though they declined an invitation to a reception at the German consulate in Peking "owing to the fear of arrest").\textsuperscript{35} A letter from the British consulate in San Francisco to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., reported a plan "devised by Indians and financed by Germans" to ship fifty thousand rifles monthly from "a Pacific Coast port, not necessarily San Francisco," to a German-owned plantation in the Philippines, where the guns would be concealed inside hollowed-out teak logs or in plugged floating boilers for the next leg to Singapore via British North Borneo. There was no evidence that this ever got beyond the proposal stage.\textsuperscript{36}

Simultaneously, Berkeley alum J. N. Lahiri arrived in Bengal from Europe in March 1915 bearing the separate offer of German aid to the circle of revolutionaries around Jatin Mukherjee. The Bengali Yugantar group then set up a fake import business in Calcutta called Harry & Sons to serve as a front for
remittances and arms shipments. The scouts selected Dili on the island of Timor as the delivery point, and in April they sent a young emissary called Narendranath Bhattacherji—the future M. N. Roy, hee going by the alias of Charles A. Martin—to Batavia as point man, at the BIC's suggestion. Jatin's cousin (and Dhan Gopal's brother) Jadu Gopal Mukherjee would then complete the cargo delivery inside Bengal. Confident that there were easily enough revolutionaries active in the province to take and hold the area—provided the British sent no reinforcements—they planned a three-part division of the shipment and delegated the operations to groups at Calcutta, Hata, and Balasore. Each was to blow up the principal bridges on one of the three main railways. The Calcutta group was also assigned to seize the arsenals around the city, take Fort William, and sack the town, while the German officer slated to arrive with the gun shipment raised and trained an army in East Bengal.

But the entire ambitious program depended upon the arrival of the promised arms. The DCI was tracking the voyages of several ships, of which the most important were the Henry S. Annette Larsen, and Maverick. A large part of the prosecution's case in the San Francisco trial rested on the details of these voyages. The German ambassador in the United States, Count Johan von Berstorff, wrote to Berlin in September 1914 announcing that he had found a German firm in San Francisco called Jeebsen & Company that was willing to transport guns to India in a neutral ship. Military attaché (and chief German intelligence officer in the United States) Franz von Papen then passed along a report from New York that the American branch of the German arms dealer Krupp had managed to procure twenty thousand Spanish-American War vintage U.S. Army rifles equipped with cartridges, plus two hundred to three hundred automatic pistols; or, in other words, "eleven wagon-loads of arms and ammunition" to be loaded onto the chartered schooner Annette Larsen in San Diego. The Annie Larsen would take the cargo as far as the Socorro Islands off the Mexican coast, where it would rendezvous with the Maverick, a repurposed tanker ship purchased from the Standard Oil Company. A German agent in San Francisco arranged with Ram Chandra to get a team of Indians aboard, laden with Ghadar literature and equipped with false identities. The weapons would be submerged in the oil tanks for the voyage to Batavia, where Bhattacharji would meet them, and the German consul would reveal further instructions. Unfortunately, through a series of mishaps the ships failed to make their rendezvous. The Maverick made for Java anyway, in hopes of saving it from being searched by a British cruiser, and the weapons were seized when the Annie Larsen redocked in Aberdeen, Washington.

The testimony of supercargo John B. Star-Hunt, later a crucial witness in the San Francisco trial, offers us a glimpse of the voyage of the Maverick. The cover story Jeebsen had given when hiring the ship was that the Annie Larsen was carry-

The ship's multicultural crew included five mysterious "Persian waiters" claiming the names of Jehangir, Khan, Dutt, Deen, and Shamsher. Jehangir seemed to be the leader; Star-Hunt said that his real name was Hari Singh, though he didn't know the others. Star-Hunt described Hari Singh as "tall, big black mustache, no beard, clean-shaven... very quiet and reserved in his manner; his age was hard to say, but I would say about forty years; he had evidently left India many (ten) years ago; he... did not speak English like an educated man, but read a lot of his own literature." Then, recounted Star-Hunt, "when we were a couple of or three days out of Hilo," where they had stopped to take on fuel and supplies, "this man, Hari Singh, during a conversation referred once more to the literature he had destroyed at Socorro and said that it was the product of many of his countrymen who were in America and that he himself had contributed to it." Under the nom de plume Faqir, Hari Singh indeed was one of the main contributing poets to Ghadar-di-Gunj. Star-Hunt continued:

[Hari Singh] claimed to have the whole of [the literature] by heart and could repeat it without mistake... He said that during the many years of his exile from India he had at various times written a good deal against the British rule in India. He gave me to understand that formerly he belonged to the Indian Army. He said that his home was in the far interior of the country, inhabited by ignorant classes, and that if he could only succeed in getting to them he could easily incite them to revolt against the British Government by promising to provide them with arms and ammunition. He... said that he knew the place we were bound for very well, and so did the other four, and that he could be of great assistance after we got there.

At the appointed time as the ship neared Java, Star-Hunt finally read the top-secret letter from Jeebsen that he had carried on his person all the way across the Pacific. It revealed the ship's true mission and gave instructions on how to proceed if encountering British warships or merchants: Act natural and confident; invite inspection; tell them the ship was being brought to Batavia to be sold or chartered for the China coast oil trade. The cases of rifles were submerged in one of the tanks, and the cases of ammunition placed in the other, though these were to be kept dry unless as a last resort. But under no conditions must the steamer or
its cargo fall into British hands—better to sink the ship if the cargo was discovered and there was no escaping capture. A friendly boat was supposed to meet them at Anjer, but if for any reason they didn't make this rendezvous they were to proceed to Bangkok. And if there was no meeting there, they must press on to "Kurraeeh." The password was "King George." On the Sindhi coast the Maverick would be met by numerous small friendly fishing crafts [sic] together with the five blacks [sic] aboard would attend to the unloading and loading of the cargo. Two of the blacks should go ashore immediately on arrival and proceed in land to notify our arrival to the 'people.'... The remaining three blacks and the friendly natives would assist in burying the cargo." Pick and shovels had been stowed on board. Even if no fishing boats met them, the two crypto-Ghadarites would still go ashore to notify someone, conceal and mark the cargo for later, and the ship would retreat to a neutral port.

In the end, Dutch destroyers escorted the Maverick to Batavia in July, searched it, and found it empty. Hari Singh and two of the others returned to San Francisco; the other two went to Bangkok, were arrested and sent to Singapore. Meanwhile, as those on the other end waited in vain for the shipments, things began to fall apart piece by piece. A Chinese man named Ong Sin-Kwai [sic], trusted friend and former assistant of Emil Heilrich, chief German agent in the Dutch East Indies, had been delivering messages and money to Indians in Penang and Calcutta. Despite being "fitted out as a trader to sell batik and to buy gunnybags," he was taken ashore at Singapore, questioned, imprisoned, and threatened with being shot. He carried the Calcutta addresses written in invisible ink, ten thousand guilders in cash and ninety thousand more in checks. He didn't crack, though Heilrich said in a letter that his friend had "returned in a deplorable state." He was allowed to return to Batavia with a promise to get his hands on more German money.

Then the British managed to procure the German telegraph and mail codes and began intercepting their communications. Even more damaging, several operatives turned approvers. In August 1915 Harry & Sons was searched, resulting in a raid of Universal Emporium, another branch of the fake trading company. The Indian leadership was a heavy blow to the Bengali revolutionary movement. And "Martin" had disappeared. In October, two more Chinese rounds of ammunition had been hidden in the center of bundles of planks, which a German cracking the case was the discovery of a notebook on the person of Abani, a German called Nielsen had instructed them to deliver to Calcutta. But the clincher was the discovery of a notebook on the person of Abani, another gunrunning ship. The notebook was full of German and Indian names and addresses, including Nielsen's, where Rash Behari Bose was living at the time; and it indicated a scheme, now surely impossible, to wage war from bases in Tokyo and Shanghai.

A final subsidiary aspect of this eastern Indian Ocean wing of the Indo-German collaboration was a proposal to divert a few nearby German ships, crept with as many Germans as possible from Sumatra, to the Andamans. After a quick stop to pick up machine guns and ammunition cached in the Nicobars (where they had been predeposited by a German ship and also disguised as lumber), they would free the political prisoners at Port Blair, who by now included a good number of Bengali Swadeshi movement activists as well as a fresh batch of returned Ghadarites, and, it was thought, "men of the mutinous Singapore regiment," of whom we shall hear more later. The freed prisoners would then destroy the wireless station and form a rebel army to raid Rangoon, reinforcing those who were supposed to be massing in Burma. This group would be in charge of the Germans in Siam and the Dutch East Indies would be conscripted to join the insurrectionary force. This too never came to pass.

The Siam-Burma Scheme

There were great hopes for the potential of Burma as the third major prong of the BIC's global strategy, since aside from its location on India's northeastern frontier, it contained a small military garrison and a mostly Punjabi military police force likely to be sympathetic. Moreover, a section of the Siam Northern Railway was under construction near the Siam-Burma border, where Punjabi Sikh contractors and laborers worked closely with German civil engineers. The frontier between Siam and Burma was a thousand-mile-long stretch of thinly populated jungle, with local inhabitants largely "Indian and Mohammedan," and thus an attractive region for smuggling arms or seditious literature. When the activists arrived from the United States, they chose "places near the British frontier" such as Paknambo, where a gang of 100 Indians was reported to be engaged in the manufacture of bombs under the supervision of two Germans; or Bandar, located on a section of the Southern Railway staffed by Germans, where Ghadar consignments arrived weekly. Indian residents in Siam were soon receiving a fortified diet of Ghadar's "improved" version of the German fortunes of war, plus German-produced magic lantern shows.

Although the British consul at Bangkok had claimed that sedition was nonexistent in Siam before 1914, throughout late 1914 and early 1915 British observers noted a significant increase in Ghadar literature entering the country, as well as "an alarming increase in the import of sporting guns, rifles and ammunition, nearly all of which found their way to a mere eleven Malay dealers in the bazaar." Then a secret message arrived on 2 August from the minister in Bangkok...
to the secretary of the Foreign and Political Department in Simla saying that the Siamese police had arrested three seditionists, from whom "considerable Hong Kong, Siamese and American currency bonds and many papers, books and clottings were seized." They were identified as Shiv Dayal Kapoor, Thakur Singh, and a third, who despite bearing a Persian passport issued in New York under the name Hassan Zade nevertheless "talks English well and Hindustani fluently, and has all the appearances of an Indian," and is described as "age 31 years, spectacles, height 5 feet 5 inches, wavy hair, forehead bald, black eyes and brows, a small moustache."57

A few days later Balwant Singh, a laborer from Canada, was arrested along with University of California students Darshi Chenchiah and Sukumar Chatterjee. More "incriminating" evidence was found at their house, namely, a secret code in Gurmukhi containing the sentence "Look sharp, we are delayed," and a letter in English asking for information on weights of packages for transport mules. Moreover, a "Brownin pistol fully loaded" was unearthed in the room occupied by Thakur Das and Shiv Dayal Kapoor, "and a long knife under the bedding,"58

The series of cases known to the judicial record as the Mandalay Conspiracy revealed something much bigger than a local Siamese intrigue. There were German and Turkish fingers in the pie, and those pesky Ghadarites were in it too—none of which can have been much of a surprise by that time. C made a statement in San Francisco titled "Object, Organization, and Fate of the Expeditions," which explained that "the main German object in the East is to bring about a successful revolution in British India and thus hasten the desired and expected collapse of the British Empire."59 Within that larger goal he enumerated an ambitious list of items: to foment trouble in China, Siam and the Shan states in order to distract the Allies' attention, to train and arm Indians in Siam, and so prepare a force to invade Burma, to co-operate with the Ghadar Party, organize a separate organization in fomenting sedition, to assist Indians in India in organizing the preliminaries of a revolt, and in arranging the reception in India of the necessary money and arms." His list entitled "Principal Organizers of the Expeditions" included Heramba Lal Gupta (then designated BIC liaison to the United States), Ram Chandra and Godha Ram of the Ghadar Press, and German-Americans Albert Welde and George Paul Boehm. He also named seventeen more who joined in Siam, one in Singapore, and three in Burma.

Gupta had met with Boehm in Chicago in March 1917 and asked the retired military officer whether he would be interested in training and commanding a force of ten thousand Indians in Burma to be ready when the gun shipment arrived on the Maverick. This force, in collaboration with the Burma military police (having been "seduced" to the cause by Ghadar literature), would take control of the country. Then, even if that failed to spark an insurrection in India, Burma could still serve as a northeastern base of operations, much like Afghanistan in the northwest. German agents in the United States and Mexico would supply the weapons and money via the Far East.

The details of this plan came to light through, besides C, informers A, Z, and X. A was Boehm; Z may have been Shiv Dayal Kapur or Sukumar Chatterjee.61 X, a German Secret Service agent, had in his possession detailed maps of the island, a German Secret Service agent, had in his possession detailed maps of the island, graphs of the jail, and lists of officials, troops, police, and notable persons, photographs, "which he said [were] written out for him in Berlin; the handwriting, writing, writing,担忧 out to be remarkably like that of Bhupendra Nath Dutta."62

Boehm laid out his clues with the care of a detective story, including a notebook sketch of a ship with horizontal signal lights; color drawings of coded flags; slips of paper inscribed with destinations, arrival times, and number of revolutions; and twin notations found in the possession of Boehm and Kapur when arrested in Bangkok in August.

But perhaps it might be most helpful to tell this rather convoluted story through the perspective of the eyewitness whose testimony the case largely rested on. Within a couple of days after Hassan Zade's arrest, it was confirmed that he was indeed an Indian, and that his name was Jodhpur Singh Mahajan. The British ambassador had had him confronted with a local resident of Persian origin, with whom he proved "unable to carry on any conversation."63

Born around 1884 near Rawalpindi, Jodhpur Singh had been educated in Amritsar and then employed by railroad contractors in Lahore, Calcutta, and Assam. After only a couple of months on the job, he absconded with a five-hundred-rupee check his boss had given him to deliver, cashed it, ran away to Chittagong, and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore. He arrived in Vancouver and then sailed for Canada via Penang and Singapore.
their work.” The movement matriarch also invited him to write something for the journal. “I already had notions of Home Rule for India,” he admitted, “and Madame Cama’s letters influenced my imagination further.” But in ensuing correspondence he demurred, saying that while he was indeed a patriot in full sympathy with their cause, he was too busy working at present to write.

In October 1910 he sailed for Rio de Janeiro, where his intention was to set up a business serving the large number of Indian emigrants in Brazil. “Later I began to think that it would be a good idea if I could only get them together and give them a general education, so that others would not be able to reproach Indians for being ignorant and uneducated.” He and Niranjan Singh, a medical student newly arrived from Calcutta with a similar goal of improving the lot of Indians there, together approached the Brazilian government to facilitate immigration. But the response was not satisfactory. So Jodh Singh continued working for an overseas branch of his German employer, Siemens and Halske, and then for a string of other companies over the next four years.

Then, in February 1915, he received a fateful letter from someone calling himself “Mizra Hassan Khan” who wanted to meet him. He agreed to meet at Khan’s hotel. The strange Persian claimed he had gotten Jodh Singh’s name from Madame Cama. He was looking for a job; could Jodh Singh help? Jodh Singh agreed to do his best. When they met again a few days later Khan asked if he had heard of Ajit Singh. “I said I had read in The Ghadar paper of certain Ajit Singh who had come to Paris from Persia.” The stranger then revealed that he himself was none other than that illustrious exile.

At this point Jodh Singh had been reading the Ghadar for about two months. After encountering it among the Rio de Janeiro Sikhs, he was interested enough to write to San Francisco asking to be listed as a regular subscriber. He also took up a collection from his Indian friends to send the Yungtaran Ashram a donation of $25. Apparently Ajit Singh was sufficiently satisfied of Jodh Singh’s sympathies and capabilities that not long afterward he tendered a proposal. Would Jodh Singh be interested in taking on a very important task? The catch was its urgency; he would have to resign from his job and leave immediately. Jodh Singh hesitated, wary of forfeiting the back pay owed him if he didn’t give a month’s notice. But Ajit Singh reassured him he would be taken care of financially. He could reveal no particulars of the job yet, but if they could meet in Berlin, all would be explained.

A fortnight later Jodh Singh was crossing the Atlantic on “Mizra Hassan Khan’s” passport.19 Chatto and Har Dayal received him in Berlin. Although Ajit Singh failed to arrive as he had said he would, over the next month Jodh Singh did meet with the “principal leaders of the society known as the Indian Revolutionary Society,” including Dr. Hafiz, Dr. Prabhakar, Dr. Mansur, and Barakatullah. He attended a few of the meetings as well. “I remember one in particular... attended by many Germans, Persians, Turks, and Indians.” With Oppenheim presiding, “Har Dayal spoke at great length. The burden of his speech was that the German Government was ready to give financial help and that everything should be done to promote the object of the Ghadar party, that reliable men should be sent to various places for getting Indians together and filling their minds with notions of independence and a republican form of government.”

Jodh Singh was issued yet another passport (Ali Hassan this time, a name Jodh Singh was used in Turkey by Heramba Lal Gupta’s U.S. replacement Chandra Kanta Chakravarty) plus ship and rail fare to cross an ocean and a continent. On the way he was instructed to meet with Gupta in New York. Incidentally, when he disembarked there in late April, the German consulate first gave him the address of the Gaelic American, and he rang up Gupta from there to come meet him at the press. But when Jodh Singh passed on his messages, Gupta persuaded him that he might be more needed in Siam than at the Ashram. So Jodh Singh agreed to wait around in New York for a few more days to meet Wehde, the mission’s financier. They met for dinner at a German restaurant, conferring in that language—which Jodh Singh had picked up along the way, plus English and Portuguese. He met Wehde again in Chicago, where he was introduced to Boehm, Sternek, and Wehde’s friend Jacobsen, whom “seemed to be a great friend of Dr. Hafiz,” whom Jodh Singh knew from Berlin. But Jacobsen made no bones about his country’s interest in the matter, and it was not a commitment to anti-imperialism: “He said if the Indians were successful Germany would have a free hand in the Indian trade.”

Once in San Francisco Jodh Singh “called on Ram Chandra at the Ashram, gave him the message from Har Dayal, and informed him of the change in my plans,” backed up with a letter from Gupta to that effect. Through the eyes of the newcomer we glimpse the second phase of the operation: Ram Chandra “took me down to his place in Valencia Street, and showed me the Ghadar Press, where they print incendiary literature, and took me a few times to the exhibition to meet some Indians working there and whom Ram Chandra was inviting to join the revolutionary movement.” The visitor learned “that the affairs of the Ashram were managed by four Indians, besides Ram Chandra, who was, of course, the leading spirit. ... [The others] are all young men who look more like labourers than students.”

Ram Chandra also wanted to give Jodh Singh some Ghadar publications to take with him, but he refused: what if he were searched? The editor then gave him an “open letter addressed to Bhagwan Singh in Manila,” asking him to start a press in Siam and Batavia, and saying that some money was on its way to India.
as well as preachers to Shanghai and Nanking, "as there is great demand for
them." Unfortunately this letter too was seized, said Jodh Singh, who noted that
the fact that Ram Chandra had already sent about a dozen letters to Bhagwan
Singh, none of which seemed to have been received, which probably indicated
that their enemies were on the alert.

In the meantime, Ghadar members Sohan Lal Pathak and Haranam Singh
Sahri had arrived in Bangkok in January 1915 bearing still more letters from San
Francisco, to start making arrangements in Burma. Pathak had worked for sev-
eral years as a peddler in Siam, then made his way to a pharmacy course at Con-
vallis University in Oregon by way of Hong Kong and Manila, just in time for the
rise of the Ghadar movement. Sehri had been deported from San Francisco for
illegal entry while attempting to get arms for the Komagata Maru passengers.
Since then he had been waiting at Yokohama, fearing to disembark in a British
port lest he be arrested. Joined by five others, they crossed the Burmese border in
late February or March and set up a base in Rangoon "for the accommodation
and meeting place of the Ghadar Society" through which they hoped to smuggle
arms, literature, and fighters between Siam and India. Then they traveled around
the Sikh temples of Burma advocating their cause. They also set up a facility at
Pakho for mechanical duplications of Ghadar publications, which were then sent
to Burma through a confederate named Chalia Ram, aka Prince Charlie. Three
new conspirators arrived that spring bearing messages and money from the Ger-
man contacts in Shanghai. In June a "large parcel of seditious literature" was
seized in Myawaddy on the Burma-Siam border, which included two hundred
copies of Ghadar in Urdu, Gurmukhi, and Hindi, plus a thousand locally pro-
duced leaflet copies. "One was a poem from the Ghadar, followed by a short piece
of original composition, and the other, which was entitled 'A Message of Love
to the Military Brethren,' was 'a scurrilous attack on the British Government and
the English.'

But this was a hiccup; more reinforcements were on their way from California.
As Jodh Singh prepared for his departure amidst a flurry of meetings and trans-
actions, letters and contacts were exchanged, and arms and money stowed or re-
ceived at the consulate. Some confusion was already apparent; whether this was
a matter of fatal incompetence or cunning subterfuge remains unclear. Nor was
Jodh Singh told that the anonymous Bengali he had seen at the Ashram was his
intended cohort Sukumar Chatterji until both were on board the Tenyo Maru,
though Chatterji "was evidently looking out for me." He and his companion Chen-
chiah, said Chatterji, were also going to Manila, and Jodh Singh "was to help them
with money." Sensibly enough, Jodh Singh replied that he "knew nothing about
Chenchayya and, as I had no advice, I could not do anything for them. Subse-
quently, he himself came and saw me, but he did not tell me his purpose, nor did
I tell him mine." According to Z, their assignment was to "do the preliminaries
and recommend places and forests where all these operations are to be carried
on... survey places and submit photos for approval," gleaning information from
German railway officers on the line and their Punjabi overseers and surveyors.
Only when the ship docked in Manila did it become clear in Jodh
Singh's account that he and Chatterji were each aware of the other's role in a
mission that was not until the German consul at Manila (who also knew
Chenchiah) was able to wire Boehm in San Francisco that they were
nostalgia about Chenchiah was indeed part of the plan and should be
paid. (Jodh Singh gave him $100.)

And the confusion only increased; Jodh Singh saw hints of an ominous degree
of disorganization. Boehm "complained that no details regarding the Siam ex-
pedition were settled when he came and that he had to do everything himself."
where was Boehm? It turned out he and Wehde were aboard the Henry S, which was "wandering about the Malay Archipelago in an aimless way,"73 The Henry S was supposed to bring five hundred of the five thousand revolvers in the shipment from Manila to Bangkok, and the rest to Chittagong.74

Moreover, though they didn’t know it yet, Sukumar Chatterjee had turned approver.75 Nevertheless, for the moment the team continued with the attempt to import mutiny across the northeastern border, or to rouse it among the troops stationed throughout East Asia. Some split up into several parties to cross into Burma, laden with "firearms, ammunition, explosives and instructions for making bombs... and Ghadar literature," with which they managed to induce three members of the Military Police Reserve Battalion at Pyaawwe to join them in their quest to "deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India."76 In August two parties totalling twenty-two Indians and one American named Charles W. Allen, "all more or less connected with the Ghadr movement," were caught on the border and interned; the American was deported. The others scattered and headed for Siam. Those accused of infringing Siamese neutrality were deported to Singapore. Arrests and seizures continued throughout the summer and fall. Narayan Singh, who had come across the frontier from Siam, where he was working on the railway, was captured in a coffee shop in Maymyo five days later, carrying a copy of the Ghadr and a fully loaded pistol, which he tried to use against the police. Boehm was arrested in September in Singapore while en route from Batavia to Shanghai. Sohan Lal Pathak was arrested in August at Maymyo, "in the act of attempting to incite soldiers of the Mountain Battery of Artillery to murder their officers and mutiny and distributing Ghadr literature to them," and then hanged under the rules of the Defense of India Act.77 Jodh Singh was detained in the Bangkok jail for about two weeks in early August, and then shipped to Singapore. The ministry at Bangkok telegraphed Simla in late October with the assurance "Operations continue with good results against revolutionary Indians in northern Siam." Eight Browning pistols, three thousand rounds of ammunition, and several Sikhs had been taken into custody, including the granthi of the Chiemgai gurdwara, "which place was an important centre of this movement."78

The Mandalay Conspiracy trial began in December 1915, with two additional special tribunals the following spring, and a supplementary case in the summer of 1917. Although Jodh Singh and his codefendants agreed that they would "defend ourselves as far as we could and not make any confession," in the end nine were hanged, and seven transported for life.79 Jodh Singh turned approver and was not sentenced. Though we cannot know the precise circumstances of his actions, it was highly probable that he, like other approvers, was subject to torture or death threats. In any case we have not heard the last of him.

The Hindu-German Conspiracy

The war did more than warp discourse and shape tactics; overshadowing the landscape, it also changed the material conditions in which the revolutionaries functioned under both British and American regimes, especially the practices of the empire related to policing, and to military personnel. In the preface to Ker’s report, Director of Criminal Intelligence C. R. Cleveland frankly acknowledged that the war was proving quite convenient in making feasible enhanced powers of surveillance, policing, and punitive action against any “politico-criminal activity.” Indeed, he commented, “the Great War has helped us a great deal in this activity.” Cleveland explained: “At the beginning of the war we were severely embarrassed by the breakdown of the law courts in Bengal, which had proved handicapped by the special war powers with the most telling effect against the plotters, and our system of intelligence, prevention and punishment improved tremendously. One result of this was to give a great impetus to non-criminal political agitation which is now at a high level.”80

The war thus served as an excuse for a crackdown on all kinds of radical and subversive activity and allowed an expansion of the state’s legal use of force and special powers. The Ingersoll Ordinance passed in September 1914 gave port officers secret instructions that every returning Indian, “whether labourer, artisan, or student, was to be regarded with the greatest suspicion and even as a potential revolutionary.” Those who rang alarm bells, whether confirmed revolutionaries or “reasonably suspected to be of revolutionary affiliations,” should be intercepted and detained or interned.81 This was the fate of over three thousand would-be Ghadr mutineers.82 Even more sweeping, the Defense of India Act, passed in March 1915 just after the mutiny, allowed for detention without charge and special tribunals without a jury for political cases.

The Sedition Committee Report of 1918 then made recommendations, largely based on its summary of the wartime activities of the revolutionaries abroad, to retain the Defense of India Act provisions into what looked to be an equally restive postwar period. This was the “Revolutionary and Anarchical Crimes Act,” commonly known as the hated Rowlatt Act after the justice heading the committee. In a letter to local governments and administrations on 19 April 1919, the secretary to the government of India counseled that a resolution be read to the troops explaining the act’s object and scope in order to quell rumours and grumbling. “You, who have seen something of the world,” they were to be told, “and
who have helped to win the Great War, know the principle for which the Sikh
has fought, to promote liberty and to stop the oppression of the weak. You know
the Sikh would never pass an unjust and repressive law, such as this new Act
is falsely represented to be." Surely they had heard of that nefarious plot supplied by
German gold.\textsuperscript{83} Such plots must be crushed. But loyal subjects had nothing to
fear; the new law was aimed only at criminal force by outlaws "ready to rob, loot
and murder peaceful citizens"—namely, innocents and Europeans—in their goal
to "overthrow the King's government." Demonstrations against this legislation
led to the Amritsar massacre, which then catalyzed the intensification of the in-
dependence struggle in the 1920s.

But natives of the subcontinent found themselves on the administering end
of the state's monopoly of force as well. Indian troops such as those addressed in
the message above were the backbone of Britain's campaigns in Mesopotamia and
Egypt, while the Western Front rested on the muddy backs of Indian noncom-
batant laborers in France.\textsuperscript{84} One result of such experience of the war was to
douse the tendency to think about violence and blood sacrifice as ennobling and puri-
ifying (which had been typical of Swadeshi militance, Sarejilian revolutionary
syndicalism, and turn-of-the-century anarchist and nationalist propaganda by the
need). It also put an end to any conception of the West as vanguard of progress,
giving the lie to its claim to a civilizing mission by revealing the "advanced" in-
dustrial world's annihilating savagery; and that of the United States as the cradle
of liberty, poised as it now was to become a world economic and military power
on the ruble of the older empires.

The United States' nationalist rhetoric had therefore also been significantly
amplified in the course of the war, which was followed by an internal and radical
countervailing character corresponding to its new projection of power out-
1917–18, and the treatment of radical immigrants thereafter. It had always been
the working, and existing U.S. law contained no specific restriction on anything
orators, and Mexican, Russian, and Polish groups, had all undertaken mobiliza-
tions to overthrow their home governments from U.S. soil; and that indeed there
was still tacit acceptance of such a thing within the national self-image.

The United States' declaration of war abruptly negated Ghadar's legality. Even
after the passage of the Espionage and Sedition acts in 1917, the violation would
still have to be against the U.S. government and war effort, not against the British
per se. But if German collusion could be proven in the Indians' attempts to ship
arms from U.S. soil for use overseas in a conflict against an ally, then they could
be indicted on violation of neutrality—or rather, conspiracy to violate neutral-
ity. Thus without proof of a German role in ships leaving U.S. ports, and a link
between those ships and seditious movements elsewhere, there was really not
much of a case. With the Mandalay and Lahore Conspiracy Case statements now
incontrovertible evidence. And so it was the German connection.

The BIC first sent Heramba Lal Gupta to the United States in early 1915 as its
designated liaison. Gupta was already familiar with the country, having paid a
visit seven or eight years earlier "to study trade questions with a view to helping
in the beginning of the Indian nationalist movement," and had helped coordinate
some of the meetings of the Indian National Congress in New York. He went to Berlin at the beginning
of revolution in 1917, when he was equipped with ample funds and instructions to put in
motion a plan for moving men and arms in significant numbers to India, main-
taining mailing addresses for the purpose in New York, Massachusetts, and
Chicago, the latter under the name of Gomez, c/o Jacobsen.\textsuperscript{87}

In addition to his work in the United States, Gupta had been advised to start
recruiting in the countries of British Guiana, Trinidad, British East Africa, Java,
and Sumatra. Trinidad was even named as a potential spot for an independent
Hindustani republic.\textsuperscript{88} Gupta in fact became fixated on the idea of rousing
the Indian labor force in the West Indies, but this didn't bear much fruit, despite
Bhagwan Singh's efforts in the region.\textsuperscript{89}

Gupta was also asked to focus on Japan, where a number of Ghadar agents
were already active. When the BIC was reorganized in 1916, Gupta relocated
there and was replaced as Berlin-America liaison by Chandrakanta Chakravarty,
who proved to be as controversial a figure as Ram Chandra, and if anything
trusted even less in all quarters. He was continually requesting additional funds
from Germany, little of which ever seemed to reach the activists in California, for
the stated expenses of travel, guns, propaganda, and so on. Intelligence corre-
spondence often described him as "oily" and "slippery," though nevertheless "a
very dangerous man," and made much of his living situation, in flamboyantly
exotic Oriental splendor, with German doctor and close friend Ernst Sekunna.\textsuperscript{90}

By zeroing in on this pair, intelligence gatherers were able to connect the dots to
the German official (and designated United States arms coordinator) Franz von
Papen; his secretary, Wolf von Igel; and Franz Bopp, the German consul in San
Francisco, and thence to the San Francisco Ghadar group.

Even before U.S. President Wilson's declaration of war was made public, the
assistant attorney general had authorized U.S. attorney John Preston to arrest
Ram Chandra and his cohorts Chakravarti and Sekunna in New York, and their
German collaborators, for a total of 105 indictments, of which 35 were Indians.
The trial began on 12 November 1917 and dominated sensationalistic news
headlines for months until it closed in April 1918. The scale of the trial was unprece-
dent: the San Francisco Chronicle reported that in the end it cost the British government $2.5 million and the United States government $450,000. More than two hundred secret agents and other international personages were called as witnesses. In addition, sixteen defendants—ten Indian, six German—turned approver, and stipulations on admissible evidence regarding hearsay were relaxed so their testimony could be used against each other.

The basics of the case, as presented in a note by the Northern District Court of California, First Division, clarifying charges in the case of U.S. v. Ram Chandra et al., were these: three violations of the neutrality law, for providing or preparing means for a military expedition against the territory or dominions of any foreign prince or state, colony, district or people with whom the United States was at peace; twenty-eight counts of conspiracy to violate neutrality laws, including the recruiting law prohibiting enlistment to fight in a foreign army against a nation with which the United States was at peace, and the military expedition law prohibiting organization of such a campaign against such a nation. Defining conspiracy, stipulated the court, required two things: first, two or more people planning together to commit any offense against the United States or to defraud the United States in any manner or for any purpose; and second, one or more people carrying out any act to effect the object of the plan. Consumption of said object was irrelevant and did not constitute a valid defense against the charge of conspiracy. On the neutrality violations, the immediate precedent was Mexico. Similar charges had been used against Huerta and Orozco during the revolution, but the trials weren't completed, due to the death or flight of the principals. The law against launching military expeditions had also been previously used against Irish Fenians circa 1866–67 and Cuban insurrectionists in the 1890s. But those trials were unpopular with the American public, and obtaining convictions had proven difficult.

In mapping out the basic structure and program of the alleged conspiracy, the prosecution identified three centers of Indian organizing in the United States—San Francisco, New York, and Chicago—all in contact with each other and with German consul agents. San Francisco was easiest to get a handle on, "for all they had to do was to get into touch with the Ghadar Party. Most activists anywhere in the country going to or from India would pass through the strong and well-organized center, usually with a stop at the Yugantar Ashram."

The network's worldwide activities were coordinated via Berlin and included "elaborate and far-reaching machinery" in several categories that replicated the categories in the lists given in the Lahore and Mandalay trials: (1) propaganda; (2) dispatch of recruits; (3) dispatch of arms; (4) dispatch of money; (5) military enterprises in bording countries (i.e., Burma; Afghanistan); (6) suborning of captured Indian soldiers; (7) "inтриг in China and Japan, designed to secure the assistance of political parties and, if possible, of the government in those countries."

Note that the evidence in the case triumphantly summarized above by the government advocate encompassed all activities of all branches of the revolutionary movement abroad, regardless of the type or degree of participation of the California group in particular.

Yet claiming complete separation would be as misleading as attributing all to Germany. And regarding the "degree of autonomy," the juridical nature of the evidence (and a heavily partisan historiography) affects interpretation, given that the case for the prosecution was based on maximizing evidence of German involvement, and the defense on minimizing it. Furthermore, one of the great benefits of the conspiracy approach, from the prosecutorial perspective, is that weaving plausible relationships is enough; proving individual agency for any specific act that can be woven into the net is unnecessary so long as the agent in question can be woven into the same net. I do not intend carelessly to replicate this tactic. However, if a historian, not a prosecutor, is assessing a movement, not a party, then it is appropriate to acknowledge the scale of the literature's influence, the scope of the partnerships, and the fact that many individuals of all religious and regional origins who participated in various German-backed projects had individual histories of involvement in Ghadar or close working ties with those who did. The web of revolutionaries abroad crossed and recrossed at multiple points; no thread could ever be completely disentangled from the others.

Nearly two years after the first Mandalay trial, Jodh Singh was summoned from India to San Francisco to testify as a government witness, as he was "a Hindoo of more than ordinary intelligence and had a competent knowledge of the conspiracy," having been central to the events "detailed in these stories." But when his turn came in the stand, he laid stipulations before the government that before giving his evidence he wanted certain pledges of leniency for the defendants. Had this after all been his intention from the start, in agreeing to testify? John W. Preston, the prosecuting U.S. attorney, refused the conditions; Jodh Singh refused, in that case, to talk. He was removed from the stand, arraigned as a defendant for his role in the Simla-Burma mission, and detained for the duration. The report commented laconically: "It was one of the dramatic incidents of the celebrated trial."

But the most dramatic incident of all came right at the end. As the case proceeded, with the community under intense pressure and public scrutiny, the factional animosity and mutual recriminations escalated. On the very day the judgment was to be announced, 23 April 1918, Ram Singh of the Bhagwan Singh faction managed to smuggle a pistol into the courtroom, tucked inside his turban; an accomplice had passed it to him in the hall when he went out to get a drink of water. Just as Ram Chandra was "about to testify concerning the subversive activities of the organization," Ram Singh shot him point-blank as a traitor. The avenger was shot dead a few seconds later where he "stood calmly with the gun in his hand," by a quick-reacting U.S. Marshal.
Fifteen surviving Ghadarites were found guilty, along with nineteen accomplices. They got prison terms ranging from a few months up to almost two years, the heaviest being twenty-two months for Taraknath Das, twenty-one for Santosh Singh, and eighteen for Bhagwan Singh. To the British the sentences seemed absurdly light. But they were put on probation upon their release with the warning that if they returned to producing propaganda, they would be subject to deportation and delivered to the dubious mercies of the "hated British Government as you term it," and this, they were well aware, would be when their real punishment would begin. The campaign against deportation would be the first priority of the Friends of Freedom for India, formed after the war.

As for Jodh Singh, he had been confined to Alameda County Jail while awaiting sentence, but before it could be announced, the "subject . . . went hopelessly insane." With the ruin of his once-sharp mind, he was described as a ghost of his former self. Harish K. Puri suggests he may have been subjected to torture before arriving in the United States to testify. By court order he was transferred in March 1918 to the California State Hospital for the Insane in Talmage and remained there for the next three and a half years. The government kept tabs on him through the hospital authorities; their physicians' opinion was that while his mind was irretrievably gone, "his physical condition is such that he will probably live to a ripe old age." (He was now in his early thirties.)

Back in Rawalpindi Jodh Singh's father, Sardar Singh, had learned of his son's fate from Lajpat Rai and initiated correspondence to the Ghadar office to locate him. "Dear Countryman," wrote Sardar Singh, "My anxiety about my dear son is adding to the infirmities of age. You will earn my heartfelt gratitude and good wishes if you very kindly [help me in tracing his whereabouts]."

The government had no objection to relinquishing custody, since they foresaw paying the hospital $30 a month for the upkeep of this public charge for years to come, and plainly he was no longer any threat. A passport was secured from the British government, and Judge Van Fleet, who had presided at the Hindu-German Conspiracy trial, gave the order that the Marshal was to deliver the subject to his father's custody on board ship. "Sardar Singh has informed this office that he sails for India with subject September 3, 1921, and this information has been conveyed to the U.S. Marshal," his file confirmed. "Case closed." I do not know how long "the subject" lived, or if he ever regained his mind.

... and Friends

The Republican Ghadar

SELF-DETERMINATION

Though the Germans were willing to fund schemes and initiatives, they lacked a nuanced understanding of the goals of their various benefactors. In an alliance formed of statist thinking, they were in starkest terms the enemies of the enemy. But the partisans of two other major national liberation struggles whom the Germans were supporting, running along timelines roughly parallel to India's, were genuine friends. The Indians gravitated easily toward alliances with Irish republicans in the United States and Egyptian nationalists in France. What is most striking about these interactions is their strong sense of solidarity by analogy, identifying their brothers in mutiny as ideological kin based on their shared political aspirations and structural positioning vis-à-vis the British Empire. Even while impelled by the immediate goal of their own national liberation, they saw themselves as counterparts to, even implicitly identified with, other national struggles that seemed to resonate in common cause with their own. They were, in a sense, speaking the same dialect of the language of nationalism: aiming for citizenship within a democratic republic, a prerequisite for which was collective political emancipation.

Again and again the three groups turned up in the same contexts. Delegates from all three countries were present at the International Congress on Subject Peoples held at the Hague in August 1907, where a proposition was introduced "that claims of subject nations for the management of their own affairs ought to be recognized, and the Indian and Egyptian representatives . . . spoke in support of it." With the war came German sponsorship, both Irish and Egyptian activists...