

THE GHADAR MOVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1914-1918¹

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting features in the history of the Indian nationalist movement during the first two decades of the 20th century was the prevalence of revolutionary conspiracies, which aimed to overthrow the British Government in India by violent means. It is also interesting to note that the nationalist movement was one of the most eminent themes in the Indian historiography at this time. This can be conceived from the massive studies which related to this theme.² There are two categories of scholars who dealt with this theme. The first concentrated more on the Indian National Congress, and personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru etc.³ The second concentrated their studies on the Indian people and Indian subject.⁴ Both groups shared the same objective; to free India from the British.

Besides the differences in character, the development of the Indian nationalist movement may also be divided into different phase. The first phase was the period between 1857 to 1905, followed by the second phase between 1905 to 1920, and the final phase between 1920 to 1947. During these three phases, the second was the one when, in 1905, "the Indian Revolution began" marking a new trend in the Indian nationalist movement. This new trend emerged as 'great achievement' in Indian history. It revealed that Indians did not rely solely on one method to attain independence. The Indian nationalist used a variety of method available. For example, the method as advocated by the moderates centered on the belief that the safest and the surest road to achieve the goal of independence was through the confidence and good wishes of the British electorate. On the other hand, revolutionaries such as the Bengal revolutionaries believed that in order to win their freedom, they needed to put some pressure on the British rulers through various means of violence.

However, under the weight of repressive measures imposed by the British India, the Indian revolutionary movement declined inside the country. The Indian Government employed all its available pressure to the revolutionary movement within the sub-continent. When pressure from the Government increased day after day, the Indian revolutionaries fled abroad, and again started their revolutionary work from their new bases, especially in North America and Europe. The movement made rapid strides in foreign lands, where it received the ardent support from Indians who were resident abroad. During the period of the First World War, the Indian revolutionaries in Canada and United States of America (U.S.A.) became dominant actors in the Indian nationalist movement. Under the banner of the Ghadar Party and co-operation with the Indian Committee in Berlin, the revolutionaries absorbed all the possibly aggressive and violent methods as a means of liberating India from

the British. Originally, the Ghadar Party was formed in the U.S.A in 1913.⁵ Its headquarters were in San Francisco, but branches were established in most countries where Indians lived. Branches were formed at Tokyo, Shanghai, Manila, Hong Kóng, Batavia (Jakarta), Sumatra and the Malay States. They could be found in the various parts of South East Asia (S.E.A), from Chiangmai in the north, to the remote island of Mindanao in the Philippines.

THE INDIANS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Since the beginning of the Christian era, India and S.E.A have had well established relationship. The territories of continental Asia and the offshore Philippines and Indonesian archipelagos, which lie to the south of China and east of India and which politically is referred to as S.E.A, was always a part of Indian civilization and was always attracting for Indians to migrate there.⁶ The origin of Indian immigrants to S.E.A. was from two different parts of India; namely north and, secondly, south India. These regional variations were obvious in the different linguistic groups, such as Punjabis, Sindhis, Gujratis, Bhoras, Pathans, Bengalis, Tamils; Malayalis from south India were distinguished comprising the largest proportion of the immigrants, particularly to the Malay States and Burma. Most of the Tamils were considered by the Europeans planters in Malay States and Burma as the most satisfactory type of laborer. They were malleable and worked well under supervision. Above all, they were not as ambitious and aggressive as most of their northern Indian compatriots.⁷ When the Ghadar emissaries arrived in Malay States and Burma in their mission to bolster support from Indian residents, it was usually the northern Indians, mostly Punjabi Sikhs and the Pathans who showed an eagerness to join the movement, while the Tamils largely remained uncommitted.⁸ As an eyewitness testified:

*"Indian revolutionary committees had practically given up all ideas of doing anything in southern India as they have been informed that the people of these provinces are not suitable for revolutionary purpose."*⁹

However, at the same time, the Indian Muslims in S.E.A, who also came from southern India, held a different attitude towards the revolutionary movement. Most of them not only supported the movement, but also played an active part as revolutionaries. The only explanation as to how these two different attitudes existed side by side was the influence of religion. The Indian Muslims initially got involved with the Ghadar movement through their contact with Turkish emissaries. Turkey entered the First World War in November 1914, on the side of the Germany, proclaiming it as a jihad. On the Turkish side, one of the immediate consequences of going to war was their attempt to galvanize and band together their war time's connection with the Indian revolutionaries against what they perceived as the common

enemy.

Northern India, especially the Punjabi Sikh and the Pathan not only were ambitious and aggressive outlook, but above all, their experience of being in the Indian Army made them more unpredictable than the Tamils of Southern Indian; "A number of North Indians, particularly Sikh, found their niches in the rank of military, police and watchmen."¹⁰ They also came to SEA through their own will in order to search for a better life or conversely, were invited by relatives who previously had come and settled at the region. As with the U.S.A and Canada, S.E.A also promised good economic prospects to the immigrants. Besides that, the journey to S.E.A was considerably easier and cost a lot less than the one to the U.S.A and Canada. For example, a trip from Punjab to S.E.A in 1911 only cost about Rs 12. The north Indians would begin their journey by train from Amritsar to Calcutta. From there, they would sail to the Malay States, as Calcutta was the nearest and most convenient port with a regular steam-ship operating between India and the Malay States.¹¹

There were two other routes commonly used by the Indians immigrants in their odyssey to S.E.A. The first was an overland route and the other was via the open seas. The overland route ran through Bengal, Manipore, Assam thereby reaching Siam; or it was possible to pass through southern Siam and onto the Malay States.¹² The sea route was much longer, sailing to Sumatra, Java, through the Strait of Borneo, finally reaching Borneo and the Philippines.¹³

The first Punjabi Sikh appeared in Manila almost accidentally sometimes in 1902, stopping enroute to Hong Kong. They learnt that as an American colony, the Philippines could provide them with golden opportunity to enter the U.S.A. Since then, Sikhs have maintained a slow, but steady, stream of migration to the Philippines.¹⁴ Before 1913, the Indians from the Philippines were allowed to enter the U.S.A without any further ado; but this practice was stopped due to a ruling of the American Customs Authorities. For a short time, this caused an increase in the number of Indians in Manila, who were on their way to U.S.A before the new regulations became common knowledge.¹⁵ After the new regulations came into effect, most of them decided to stay in the Philippines, while others chose to forge ahead to other new places, such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and so on.

In Siam, the Sikh was concentrated mainly in Bangkok, Chiangmai and Phuket. Most of the Sikh in Bangkok became secure in business, particularly in the clothing and textile industries. Among the premier trading companies with which most Sikhs were associated were those operated by Gian Singh, Nan Singh, I.S Bhagwan Singh, Bhool Singh, Inder Singh and Akhbal Singh Narula.¹⁶ The Sikh population in Bangkok had grown to sizeable numbers so much so as to warrant a gudwara was being built for them. In fact, two gudwaras were built, one at 565 Pahurat (a.k.a Phaurat), and the other at Rajawongee Road. By the second decade of the 20th century, the Sikh community was widely spread throughout Siam. At Chingmai, they were engaged mostly employed in the construction of the Northern Siam Railway, while at Phuket with the Southern Siam Railway. Also established were small gudwaras at Korat, Chengrai, Yala, Lampang, Paknampho, Haadyai and

Phuket.¹⁷

The largest Punjabi Sikh communities, however, were settled in the Malay States and Singapore. The first waves of Sikh immigrants to the Malay States were employed largely as policeman and army personnel. The earliest documentary evidence of Sikh emigration was found in 1872 when Captain T.C.S Speddy, of the Malayan Police brought 110 Sikh policemen from Calcutta to form the Residents bodyguard in Larut, Perak. The second wave of Sikh immigration was of an entirely different form. They came as petty contractors, merchants, money traders, shopkeepers and suchlike. They were concentrated in various parts of the Malay States, particularly Penang, Kedah, Perlis, Perak, Selangor and Pahang. In Singapore, Sikh began to arrive around 1875, and by 1912 there was a Sikh gudwara at 175 Queen Street.¹⁸

In the Dutch East Indies (Indonesian Archipelago), the presence of Sikhs increased with the introduction of the Dutch currency into Sumatra. The development brought a branch of the De Jawasche Bank to Medan at the end of 19th century. A Number of Sikhs were employed there as security guards, and other soon followed, mainly finding work as watchmen. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Sikh population in western Sumatra, particularly in Medan, had increased significantly to warrant the establishment of a gudwara there. The first be built at Medan was in 1911.¹⁹ However, the establishment of the Sikh community in Batavia had an entirely different story. Unlike the Sikhs of Sumatra, who came mostly direct from India, the Sikhs in Batavia were mostly an over flew from Malay States. It has been noted that, "Though Sikhs were concentrated in greater numbers at Medan, most Sikhs who came to Batavia originally were direct migrants from Punjab via [the Malay States] and Singapore. The earliest settlement was at Tanjung Periok, the seaport for Batavia."²⁰

Looking at this development, it is not surprising that Indian communities including Punjabi Sikhs were well-established in S.E.A during the second decade of the 20th century. For example, by the time of the First World War broke out, the Indian population in Thailand had risen to nearly 2000²¹; most of these were Sikhs. A few dozen had also settled in both Sumatra and the Philippines. Deli and Medan on the west coast of Sumatra where they mainly were concentrated. In the Philippines, Manila was where most of them lived; several dozen had also settled on the island of Palawan, Ililo and Cebu²². The Indian resident of SEA, especially Sikhs, South Indian Muslims, Pathans and Bengalis were heavily involved in the revolutionary movement to overthrow the British rule at home. It is interesting to note that with the main concentrations of Punjabi Sikhs in SEA, such as Deli, Medan, Bangkok, Chiangmai and Manila, the main branches of the Ghadar Party sprang to life. It was this level of support which proved that northern Indians were more radical and were more ambitious in their political actions that the Tamils of Southern India.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GHADAR NETWORK IN SEA

One of the early plans of the Ghadar Party concerning the S.E.A was to develop adequate links between the Ghadar headquarters in San Francisco and its branches throughout the region. The leaders of the Ghadar Party, such as Bholu Nath Chaterjee and Kshirod Gopal Mukherjee, were convinced that, without Ghadar branches, especially in the various parts of the S.E.A, the ghadarwallah would never succeed in entering India and joining the rebellion. Therefore, the establishment of branches becomes a priority in Ghadar thinking.²³

In an attempt to establish this network, two schemes were taken into consideration. The first scheme was to send Ghadar emissaries to various parts of SEA, not only to pass on the 'true story' about British rule in India, but also to organize the Indian residents of SEA to join the rebellion which surely would burst forth any movement in India. The second was to circulate revolutionary literature, such as the Ghadar and Jihad-i-Islam to the Indian communities. These schemes remarked a very important stage for the Ghadar movement, for it became a real test of the Ghadarwallah in seeing it; they could carry through other actions, such as supplying arms and ammunition to Indian revolutionaries. Indeed, without the Ghadar branches in the SEA region, the Ghadarwallah would find it difficult to continue their missions.

In carrying out the first scheme, Ghadar emissaries from San Francisco were sent to various part of SEA in an attempt to gain support, and establish Ghadar branches. These branches would play the role of 'channels of communication' for all Indian revolutionaries. It was important that Ghadar choose to establish their branches in neutral territory particularly Manila, DEI and Siam. These places, it was hoped, could prove to be safe harems for its activities.²⁴

The Report of the Lahore Conspiracy Case indicates that, "before the departure of the main body of men from [the] USA and Canada, a certain numbers of Ghadarites were sent to various parts of SEA with a similar objective to establish the branches of the Ghadar Party, subscribe money and so forth".²⁵ In a report by Ram Chand Peshwari to the Berlin Committee in November 1916, the following figures were given as stating the number of men dispatched from the USA to SEA to establish missions:

"Sent directly to India [via SEA] – 3000 (from USA); 2000 (from Canada)
To Singapore [Malay States] – 70
To Burma – 30
To Siam - 50²⁶

In Manila, the Ghadar branch was established along with the arrival of Gurudatt Kumar, in 1914. Until that time, there were no revolutionary in Manila but Gurudatt Kumar called on all Indians to unite.²⁷ The Punjabi Sikh Gudwara in Manila became a centre of revolutionary activities. Regular meetings were held every Sunday

where Ghadar literature was distributed. A committee was formed and subscriptions were convened. The leaders of the committee were Chanam Singh and Hafiz Abdullah; Abdullah's wife was among the active propagandists at this branch.²⁸

Almost at the same time, the Ghadar headquarters at San Francisco sent Bhagwan Singh to Manila.²⁹ Under the assumed name of Ram Lal, he arrived at Manila and began inciting disaffection among the Indian community. When Hafiz Abdulla left for Japan in September 1914, Bhagwan Singh replaced him but not for very long his place, in turn was taken by Dos Mohamad.³⁰

The establishment of Ghadar branches in Siam was divided into three geographical sections. The first was in northern Siam where Chingmai became the centre.³¹ Other places of importance were Chengrai and Phre. Among the prominent figures in Chingmai was Chattar Singh, the grantis of Chingmai Gurudwara. The second section was southern Siam, where the branches were established at Larkin, Bajol, Bandon, Lampang, Paknom, Phuket, Senggora and Rahang. At Phuket, the Ghadar movement was led by Chanda Singh.³²

Phuket became one of the most important branches because, geographically, it was nearest to Burma and had been used as a 'springboard' for the ghadarwallah entering Burmese territory. There were several active ghadarwallah who had army experience and who were settled in phuket, such as Lela Singh and Hari Singh both with experience in the Indian army and Kessar Singh and Massa Singh who had served with the Taiping Regiment of the MSG.³³ It appears that they were ready to move on India at a moment's notice. The third section was Bangkok, which acted as a focal point for the Ghadar activities in Siam.

By December 1914, three Ghadarwallah, Sohan Lal, Atma Ram and Santokh Singh came to Siam. They were among the prominent leaders of Ghadar Party in San Francisco.³⁴ Santokh Singh stated that their mission was to generate an armed rebellion in Burma and that he wanted to establish:

*"...mission to various place[s] in the far East [including SEA] which [would] serve both as recruiting centre and links between the head organization in San Francisco and the revolutionaries in India."*³⁵

At the same time, H.L Gupta was entrusted by the Berlin Committee to foment trouble in China and Siam in order to prepare a revolutionary force to invade Burma and India, and to establish Ghadar branches and to make arrangement to receive found and arms. As a part of this project, several revolutionaries had been sent along with H.L Gupta from the U.S.A, including Hassan Zade (aka Jodh Singh).³⁶ However, Hassan Zade was arrested by the Siamese Government in October 1915 and was deported to Singapore before proceeding to India for trial.

In addition, the various locations of the DEI became important for Ghadar agitation, especially Java in the west coast of Sumatra where the Indian community was well established:

*"men were sent from San Francisco to Java to see where there were suitable places for landing arms and ammunition...Sumatra as [the] connecting link with India [and] Batavia was the centre of intrigue the DEI. South Indian Mohammedans comprising the party of Saith Mahomed Cassim, Ebrahim Hj Mohamed and Abdul Cadir Hj Hussin were among the active propagandists in Medan."*³⁷

The circulation of revolutionary literature was the second method used by the revolutionaries to achieve the objective of establishing Ghadar branches throughout SEA. Practically speaking, the revolutionaries believed that the Ghadar movement could obtain more supporters if revolutionary literature, such as the Ghadar, would be more widely distributed to Indian Residents. As 'the voice of the Ghadar Party', the Ghadar played an important role in recruiting a new cadres for revolutionary activities.³⁸

At first, all the revolutionary literature came into S.E.A via the mail from San Francisco, which in turn, came via Hong Kong and Tokyo. On arrival, it was distributed through the Ghadar branches in Manila, Batavia, Bangkok and Sumatra. This scheme of things utilized S.E.A as a medium for the transmission of revolutionary literature to India. For example it was reported by E.W Trotter, the deputy Commissioner of police in Bangkok t, that the bundles of newspaper coming into Siam through the post from San Francisco via Hong Kong route. The bundles were addressed to 'Price Charlie' of Arya singh and Indar Singh who were employed with the Siamese Southern Railway at Bandon. The newspaper was circulated secretly to Indians in Siam by these persons. Besides, with the great number of ghadarwallah went to Siam in pursuit of there scheme, they doubtlessly brought revolutionary literature with them which would be circulated when they were reached Siam. An eyewitness has noted that " Indar Singh who worked with Southern railway at Bandon came to Bangkok and visited the Indian communities there and brought along with him the copied of the Ghadar."³⁹

The Ghadar and suchlike material had, for some time, been freely circulated in the region, particularly in Batavia and Siam. However, after 1915, the importation of seditious literature into the DEI was prohibited⁴⁰ and under pressure from the British authority, similar action was taken by the Siamese Government in 1916:

"By July 1916, [the] Siamese Government would inform the US Government concerning the prohibition of circulation in that country [Siam] of certain Indian sedition pamphlets posted in America and would request under Article XVI paragraph 3 of the Rome Convention of 1906 not to dispatch them into their mail".⁴¹

Besides that, the seditious literature was duplicated in Siam and Batavia by using native printing presses and from there, circulated to other part of S.E.A for example, Abdus Salam, who arrived in Batavia as an Indian agent, printed the Ghadar in Batavia before it was distributed to Singapore and the Malay State.⁴² He then collaborated with Saith Mohamad Cassim from Surabaya, who returned to India in the middle of 1915 with the purpose to purchasing accessories for an engraving press. It is pretty certain that Saith Mohamad Cassim and his three brothers were among the Indians DEI who actively circulated revolutionary literature.⁴³ The Ghadar was also printed at Raheng, Pakko and Ban Pin in Southern Siam, which was intended for circulation in Burma.⁴⁴

Compared to the DEI and Siam, the other branches of the Ghadar party were not good centre for the distribution of Ghadar literature. For example, in Manila, Ghadar literature was supplied through Japan and Hong Kong; this was stopped after the Japanese postal authorities had been requested by the British to refrain from delivering such material to the Philippines.

The Ghadar movement appears to have succeeded in its mission from Ghadar branches throughout S.E.A. The establishment of Ghadar branches in every corner of the region was very important to the movement. Before they could move forward in other areas of their scheme, particularly the supply of arms and ammunition to the revolutionaries in India, the establishment of these branches was essential. Besides that, the branches also became 'temporary shelters' for the ghadarwallah from the USA and Canada on their return journey back to India for they could enter India through these branches. Above all, the branches took on the role of a medium for Indo-German activities. All the activities in connection with Indian revolutionaries, such as the supply of arms, money transactions and military training would all use these branches as conduits enroute to India. Besides that, the emergence of a network between the San Francisco headquarters and the various branches in S.E.A and India, particularly in Bengal and the Punjab marks a unique chapter in the Indian revolutionary's attempts to realize their overall objective of freeing India from British rule.

THE IMPORTANCE OF S.E.A IN THE GHADAR POLITICAL NETWORKS

During the First World War, the Ghadar revolutionaries had attempted to use S.E.A as a base of activities in their endeavour to liberate India from British rule. The establishment of the Ghadar branches and the extensive propaganda of the revolutionaries to the Indian communities in various parts of the region were the main factors that contributed to this objective being fully achieved.

The return of the ghadarwallah, especially from the USA and Canada, to India can be divided into two routes. The first was a direct journey to India. The revolutionaries aboard the ships, such as *Tosha Maru* and *Mashima Maru*⁴⁵ organized themselves and made preliminary plans of their actions. They recited revolutionary

songs and in the port towns of Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Penang and Rangoon they went out, preaching rebellion and persuading their fellow Indians to join the crusade.⁴⁶

On this journey, they were also in close touch with the Indian troops stationed at Singapore, Penang and Rangoon. At each port of call, the ghadarwallah landed and tried in vain to seduce the troops, for example, in Singapore, the ghandarwallah were in touch with their friend in the Singapore Guard. A similar attempt was made at Penang and Rangoon. When their vessel, the Tosha Maru and Mashima Maru, were detained for a few days at Penang port owing to the budge incident, the parties of ghandarwallah, lead by Arjan Singh, Kesar Singh and Mangal Singh, landed with the objective of approaching the troops there. They were also decided to meet the Governor and threatened to loot of town if their ship was not allowed to proceed.⁴⁷

However, because of their journey was very straightforward, often their arrival was anticipated by the Indian Government; on arrival Indian ports, hundred of them were arrested including some prominent leaders like Sohan Singh Bhakna, Jwala Singh, Wasakha Singh, Udhan Singh Kasel and Jagat Ram. By March 1915, of the 3,125 immigrants who passed through the land of the police at Calcutta and Ludhiana, 189 were interned, 704 were restricted to their village while 2,211 were subjected to no restriction.⁴⁸

This 'strict caution' of the Government at Indian ports, convinced the ghadarwallah to use the second route to enter Indian Territory. They began to use the Ghadar Branches in S.E.A as 'temporary shelters' before proceeding to India. A favored route of the returning ghadarwallah, from the USA and Canada, would be to first disembark in China, preferably at Shanghai, and then proceed to Bangkok or Singapore via Amoy and Swatow. It has been noted that "the migratory movement of Sikhs and other Indians from America via China was in bulk not only to Siam but so also Singapore, with the objective of crossing the frontier secretly into Indian territory".⁴⁹

Afterwards, a large number of ghadarwallah had assembled at Bangkok, which was more practical than proceeding home in small batches; they were advised to wait in Siam and organize themselves for a well-timed armed incursion into India. It is said that even tunnels were dug near Pakoh in north-west Siam for the secret collection of arms.⁵⁰ As the immediate neighbor of India, considerable preparations had been made for organizing raids into India, and from this view, Bangkok remained the advance base of the Ghadar plan attack India.

Bangkok began receiving large numbers of ghadarwallah. For example, in August 1915, 12 revolutionaries arrived from America; some of them were labeled, 'most dangerous' to the Indian Government. They were starting to organize a force of between 600 to 700 Indians and hoped to recruit many more in Siam for the purpose of creating a rebellion in India. Almost at the same time, the Consul-General of Britain in Siam, Herbert Derring, reported that:

*“every number [sic] of the Ghadar party is potentially dangerous and is sworn when the opportunity arises to embark on the same career of lawlessness and violence which has already marked the doings of the Punjab”.*⁵¹

The Bangkok branch provided all the necessary information to the ghadarwallah who arrived in Siam. Indar Singh provided food, Nihal Singh provided accommodation and Gopal Das and Surti were responsible for the transportation of provisions to a jungle plantation near Muang Sang on the Siam-Burma frontier, were the ghadarwallah were to have established themselves before continuing their journey.⁵² There were to common routers used by the ghadarwallah to get to Burma territory. The first was via train to the north-west Siamese frontier, via sobbouri and then proceed into Burma, from where they were to proceed into India. On 10th April 1915, there were 17 ghadarwallah who had arrived in Bangkok from Swatow using this route.⁵³ The second route was through the Siamese peninsula; from Bangkok the ghadarwallah either chose to proceed to Paknampho by train before proceeding on foot, via Rahang, to Myawadi in Burma or, alternatively, working their way towards Penang via the Siamese peninsula, Terengganu and Kelantan in east coast of the Malay States. On 29th March 1915, several ghadarwallah including Kapoor Singh, Atta Singh and Gokul Singh, left Bangkok for Nakhon Sithamarat by train. On 24th April 1915, 18 Sikhs left Bangkok for Bandon on the SS Yugala and traveled overland from there into Burma.⁵⁴

From the Lahore Conspiracy Case, Mr. Slattery of the criminal Investigations Department has explained that there were 285 revolutionaries in Bangkok during March 1915.⁵⁵ In the Siamese peninsula, there about 200 to 300 Indian revolutionaries settled in different villages between Rahang and Bandon.⁵⁶ At the same time the police officer at Myawadi has reported that at Mesot there were about 30 Sikh revolutionaries ready to move on India. All of these reports indicate that the Indian revolutionaries at the Siam-Burma frontier were considerable enough to make a degree of trouble if they succeed in entering India.

Apart from ‘temporary shelter’ the Siamese branches also played an important role as a training ground for the revolutionaries. Under the instructions of German agents, the ghadarwallah, who were in their way back to India, would take lesson on how to use weapons, marksmanship and making bombs. At the Siam-Burma frontier near Paknampho, “there were six German reserve officers who were dwelling and teaching the Indians to shoot.⁵⁷ In September 1915, a German reserve officer, Von Mouch arrived at Bangkok with the specific objective of training Indian to shoot.⁵⁸ Besides that, Boehm and Steneck, who were involved in the Henry S scheme, were also planning to come to Siam for similar reasons.⁵⁹ The ghadarwallah were also manufacturing explosives and bombs in Siam. One of them, Thakur Singh, found detailed formulae for the manufacture of various types of explosives and ammunition.⁶⁰

E.W Trotter and N.C Whiting, acting and deputy acting commissioner of

Siamese police, who were involved in the investigation of Indian revolutionary activities along the Siam-Burma frontier, approached the Siamese Government with the request for the arrest of several Indian revolutionaries. Prince Devawongse, the Siamese Minister for the foreign Affairs, who passed much pressure from the British Authorities concerning the issues, replied that he would gladly take steps immediately and that he wished to keep all revolutionaries out of his country. Following this consent, in March 1915, Siamese authorities arrested 24 revolutionaries at the Burmese border. On 14th September 1915, another six were arrested following on from six in August of the same year.⁶¹ All of the revolutionaries were detained in Siamese goals before being deported to Singapore, which soon became the centre of an inquiry into the Indian revolutionaries; they would be deported to India.

On top of that, in October 1915, the Siamese Government proposed the introduction of a passport system for Indian who intended to in the Siamese interior. This was done with a view to exercise surveillance over the Indian revolutionary movement.⁶² It was followed with a draft of new regulation in regard to the dispersal of Indian found traveling or residing in north-western provinces in September 1916. The Indians were required to accommodate two conditions. The first was that, all Indians residing in or traveling in the north-west provinces must possess a document in the prescribed form which should be valid for the period which was stated in it. The second was that, if an Indian was resident in any place, he must possess in permit of residence, issues by the Kao Sonan, or Government Council, or by the Governor of the particular Chengwat or division in which he was residing:

"[The Siamese Government stated that all the action which was taken] ...in regard to the Indians is merely my [Prince Bovadarej] interpretation of the spirit which actuates His Majesty's Government for the preservation of the continued good relations between our respective countries".⁶³

The arrest of the Indians on the Siamese territory caused a degree of discontent for the revolutionary movement. From 1916 and after, their journey through Siamese territory was limited. The revolutionaries had to take a more meticulous look at their work and after their plans accordingly because:

"...all the old workers... will remain quiet for a while, while new workers will be sent out".⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

The Ghadar movement enjoyed a considerable role in the history of modern India. After the mutiny of 1857, the revolutionary movement was marked as one of the 'golden achievements' in India's fight for freedom. During the period of the First World War, the Governments of the Bengal, Punjab and the United Provinces (U.P),

had to face a strong opposition from the Indian revolutionaries. This opposition came from several groups of revolutionaries, particularly the Ghadar Party and the Bengal revolutionary movement or a combination of both. G.S Deol pointed out that the Ghadar movement which was active in the Punjab, had made contact with the Bengal revolutionaries in order to make their activities far more effective. Ras Behari Bose acted "as a link between the Bengali anarchists and the Punjab conspirators".⁶⁵

Additionally, the co-operation between both parties helped to swell the ranks of the dissatisfied, especially in SEA. For example, according to the arms and ammunition was concerned, about 3500 Bengal revolutionaries were ready to take up arms inside the country. In crude figures, Dacca division would have provided between 500 to 1000 revolutionaries, in addition, Calcutta was to supply about 100, Burdwan about 500, Rajshahi about 500 and the Punjab almost 3000 revolutionaries. Accordingly, the scheme of distribution of arms and ammunition was to be as follows:

"The Central India 3000 in one division, 1500 in another, Calcutta and surrounding 1000 and 5000 in [each] district. The remainder of Bengal 4000 and Punjab 4000, 4,000,000 round of ammunition were allocated between the last two".⁶⁶

This co-operation showed that the revolutionary movement in India during the First World War was a combination of several groups of nationalists, especially the Punjabi Sikhs, the Pathans, the Bengalis and Indian Muslims from South India. This movement proved to be "*the most serious trouble during the British rule [and] was by far [the] most serious attempt to subvert British rule in India*".⁶⁷ Above all, this development has shown that, no all parties in India followed in the footsteps neither of Mahatma Gandhi; nor of Congress in its support of British rule.

END NOTE

1 This paper originally was presented at 17th International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA), Dhaka, 18-22 December 2002.

2 See, Bipan Chandra, Midula Mukherjee (et.al), **India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947**, London, Penguin Books, 1988, Sumit Sarkar, **Modern India, 1885-1947**, New Delhi, Macmillan, 1983.

3 See Anil Seal, **The Emergence of Indian Nationalism**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, Jim Masselos, **Indian Nationalism: An History**, New Delhi, Stearling Pub., 1993, Judith M. Brown, **Nehru**, London, Longman, 1999, B.N Pandey, **Nehru**, New Delhi, Rupa & Co., 1976, Stanley Wolpert, **Tilak and Gokhale**, Berkeley, California University Press, 1962.

- 4 See Don Dignan, **The Indian Revolutionary Problem in British Diplomacy 1914-1919**, New Delhi, Allied Pub., 1983, Daniel Argov, **Moderates and Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1883-1920**, Bombay, Allied Pub., 1967.
- 5 According Harish K. Puri the Ghadar Party was established 1st November 1913. See, Harish K. Puri, "Revolutionary Organisation: A Study of the Ghadar Movement", **Social Scientist**, Vol. 9, No 2/3, September-October 1980, p. 55. While N.N Bhattacharya in "Indian Revolutionaries Abroad 1891-1919" in **Journal of Indian History**, Vol. L, Part II, April 1972, says it was 21st April 1913. However it was certain that by the November 1913, the party was well established.
- 6 D.G.E Hall, **A History of Southeast Asia**, London, Macmillan, 1968, p. 3.
- 7 K.S Sandhu, "The Coming of the Indians to Malaysia", in K.S Sandhu and A. Mani (ed.), **Indian Communities in Southeast Asia**, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993, p. 154.
- 8 It seems that this was the reason wherefore the Ghadar movement failed to gain effective support in the Malay States, even though Indians constituted a large percentage of the population but mostly were Tamils.
- 9 F.O 628/32, "Dudley Ridout, General Commanding Officer (GCO), Singapore to War Office, encl. statement by Vincent Kraft", 8th August 1915.
- 10 K.S Sandhu, "The Coming of Indians to Malaysia", p. 154.
- 11 Manajit S. Sidhu, "Sikh Migration to Malaya (Peninsula Malaysia)", **Journal of Sikh Studies**, Vol. X, No. 1, February 1983, p. 112.
- 12 S. Swarup, "Indians Historical Relations with Southeast Asia", **The Modern Review**, Vol. CXVII, No. 5, November 1965, p. 388.
- 13 "Indians in Southeast Asia", **Link**, 4th September 1987.
- 14 Ajit Singh Rye, "Indians in the Philippines", in I.J Bahadur Singh (ed.), **Indians in Southeast Asia**, , New Delhi, Sterling Publishing House 1982, p. 148.
- 15 F.O 115/1908, "Memorandum by J.B Rentier, British Consulate-General Manila to Viceroy", 11th November 1915.
- 16 A. Mani, "Indians in Thailand", in K.S Sandhu and A. Mani (ed.), **Indian**

Communities in Southeast Asia, p. 914.

17 Khuswant Singh, "Our Brothers Across the Seas: The Sikhs in Thailand", **The Sikh Review**, Vol. IX, No. 6, June 1961, p. 24.

18 Mehevan Singh, "Sikh Institutions Overseas: Singapore", **The Sikh Review**, Vol. 38, No. 1, January 1990, p. 48.

19 A. Mani, "Indians in North Sumatra", in K.S Sandhu and A. Mani (ed.), **Indian Communities in Southeast Asia**, p. 85.

20 **Ibid.**

21 A.C Bose, **Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905-1922**, Patna, Bhatia Bhavan, 1971, p. 71.

22 F.O 115/1908, "Despatch from J.B Rentier, British Consulate-General, Manila to Viceroy", 11th November 1915.

23 Harish K. Puri, "Revolutionary Organisation : A Study of the Ghadar Movement", p. 63 pointed out that the groups of ghadarwallah came from a variety of different centres. These centres were called 'branches'. The Ghadar exhorted its readers to set up branches. There were, however, no instructions given about the purpose, function or shape of their organization. Sohan Singh Bhakna claimed 72 branches were set up in the U.S alone. He also defined that a Ghadar branch actually meant a group of people influenced by the teachings of the Ghadar. The Ghadar spread the ideas. The people formed small fraternal groups and these of their own accord, started taking organizational shapes. The idea of creating a rational organization between the central authority for the purpose of a united command and control were not considered significant".

24 F.O 228/2702, "Despatch from David Petrie to J. Jordan, British Consulate-General, Peking", 16th August 1916.

25 F.O 228/2700, "Report of Lahore Conspiracy Case", December 1916. According to this report, among the ghadarwallah who were sent to various part of S.E.A, included Gudit Singh, Jaggat Singh, Bhagat Singh, Nubbu Singh, Dhapat Singh and Barnam Singh.

26 F.O 228/2703, 'Secret Document issued by Chief of the General Staff India', 4th December 1916.

27 F.O 228/2701, "Second supplementary of the Report of Lahore Conspiracy

Case”, December 1916.

28 Ibid.

29 F.O 228/2299, “Despatch from J.B Rentier, British Consulate-General, Manila to Mr. Fraser, British Consulate-General, Shanghai”, 10th July 1915.

30 F.O 115/1908, “Despatch from J.B Rentier to Viceroy”, 11th November 1915.

31 F.O 628/31, “Report from British Consulate-General, Bangkok to Viceroy”, 28th August 1916.

32 F.O 628/32, “Report from British Consul, Senggora to British Consulate-General, Bangkok, “3rd March 1915.

33 F.O 628/31, “British Consulate-General, Bangkok to Colonial Office”, 30th October 1915.

34 F.O 228/2704, “Dudley Ridout, GCO, Singapore to Mr. Fraser, Shanghai”, 1st March 1917.

35 C.O 273/431, “Foreign Office to Colonial Office, encl. Memorandum of Hindu Seditious Activities in Siam”, 20th September 1915.

36 F.O 115/2067, “Memorandum of German-Indian Conspiracy”, 14th February 1916.

37 C.O 273/431, “Mr. Beckett, Batavia to Viceroy”, 27th October 1915.

38 The Ghadar played a very important part in the movement. In fact it played a pivotal role in the activities of the Ghadar Party especially in its initial stages. “The Ghadar brought the notices of proposed meetings of the party, instrumental in the creation of the national consciousness among the Indians living abroad...provided a link between the national immigrants in the U.S and the other countries...[and] instilled a revolutionary spirit and zeal in Indians abroad and prepared them for armed national revolution for achieving independence”. See G.S Deol, **The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement**, New Delhi, Allied Pub., 1983, pp. 74-76.

39 C.O 273/429, “F.O to C.O, encl. Memorandum of seditious movement among the British Indians communities in Siam”, 1st January 1915.

40 F.O 422/69, “Memorandum on Germany Literary propaganda as regards India

and the Orient”, 9th September 1916.

41 F.O 628/31, “Edward Grey to Viceroy”, 12th July 1916.

42 C.O 273/431, “F.O to C.O”, 21th August 1915.

43 Mohammad Cassim’s brother were Hussin Cassim, Ismail Cassim and Yusof Cassim, see C.O 273/432, “Mr. Beckett, Batavia to F.O”, 7th September 1915.

44 F.O 422/69, “Memorandum on German Literary Propaganda as regards Indian and the Orient”, 9th September 1916.

45 See F.O 228/2701, “Supp. Of Lahore Conspiracy Case”, December 1915. Also mentioned in this report is several dozen steamship were used by the ghadarwallah in their journey back to India such as the SS Korea, SS Siberia, Nan Seng etc.

46 Harish K. Puri, “Revolutionary Organisation : A Study of the Ghadar Movement”, p. 60. The story of Gulab Kaur showed how the ghadarwallah on their way back to India, stopped at every possible ports to preach revolution. Gulab Kaur, who traveled from Hong Kong to Calcutta, continued to bestir Indian residents in Philippines, exhorting them to join the ranks of the Ghadar Party, see, Gurcharan Singh Sainsara, “A Sikh Heroine of the Ghadar Party-Gulab Kaur”, **Journal of Sikh Studies**, Vol. IV, No. 2, August 1977, pp. 93-98.

47 F.O 228/2700, “Report of the Lahore Conspiracy Case”, December 1915.

48 Sedition Committee Report, p. 155.

49 C.O 273/431, “F.O to C.O, encl. Memorandum of Hindu Sedition Activities in Siam”, 20th September 1915.

50 A.C Bose, Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905-1922, p. 134.

51 F.O 228/2704, “H.G Derring, Bangkok to Mr. Fraser, Shanghai”, 5th January 1917.

52 F.O 628/31, “H.G Derring to F.O, encl. Lists of Ghadarites at Siam”, 30th October 1915.

53 F.O 628/32, “H.G Derring, Bangkok to Secretary of the Government of India”, 13th April 1915.

- 54 Ibid.
- 55 F.O 228/2700, "Report of the Lahore Conspiracy Case", December 1915.
- 56 F.O 628/32, "H.G Derring, Bangkok to Secretary to the Government of India", 7th August 1915.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 C.O 273/431, "Dudley Ridout, GCO, Singapore to H.G Derring, Bangkok", 28th September 1915.
- 59 F.O 115/2067, "Memorandum on Indo-German scheme", 14th January 1916.
- 60 C.O 273/431, "Memorandum of Hindu Sedition Activities in Siam", 20th September 1915.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 F.O 628/33, "Despatch from British Consul, Chengmai to H.G Derring, Bangkok", 19th September 1916.
- 64 F.O 228/2704, "Dudley Ridout, GCO, Singapore to Shanghai", 1st March 1917.
- 65 G.S Deol, **The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement**, p. 116.
- 66 Michael O'Dwyer quoting Gulcharan Singh in, "Role of Sikh in the Struggle for India's Independence", **The Sikh Review**, Vol. XXXIV, No. 389, August 1986, p. 96.
- 67 Hugh Tinker, "Indian and the First World War and After", **The Journal of Contemporary History**, Vol. 3, No. 4, October 1968, p. 89.

