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**CONSPIRACY TRIAL IN
INDIA.**

**PLAN FOR A GENERAL
RISING.**

INDICATIONS OF GERMAN AID.

A remarkable story of a determined, but utterly futile, effort to subvert British rule in India has been unfolded in the first trial at Lahore by Special Commissioners under the recently passed Defence of India Act. Eighty-one persons were indicted for conspiracy with the object of waging war against his Majesty and overthrowing by force the government established by law in India.

Amar Singh, an approver, stated that after studying mechanical engineering at Lahore he joined his father, who had emigrated to Canada, in March, 1909. He worked in a saw mill at St. John, New Brunswick, with other Indians, and from Thakur Das, a workman who joined the mill later, they heard that Har Dayal—a former Oxford student, well known as an active revolutionist—was at San Francisco. They invited him to St. John, paying his travelling expenses, and on his arrival in May, 1913, he lectured to his fellow Indians on "unity, liberty, equality, and human rights," and collected money from them to start the notorious *Gadhr* (Revolutionist) paper. Accompanied by the witness and others Har Dayal visited many towns where Indians lived in prosecution of the propaganda.

The *Gadhr* began to appear weekly in November, 1913, the staff working at first without remuneration, and Gurmukhi and Gujerti editions subsequently appeared. In March, 1914, following on proceedings for his deportation started by the Immigration Department, Har Dayal left for Switzerland, but other Indians continued to produce the *Gadhr*.

SEDITIONS DOCUMENTS IN THE SEA.

When the attempt of Gurdit Singh to force an entry of 400 Indian labourers, brought by the *Komagatu Maru*, into Vancouver contrary to law failed, and they had to return to the East, the Indians at St. John, to use the approver's words, "thought it a good chance to return with them to demand our rights, and if necessary to use force." They visited other places, and at a meeting of 5,000 or 6,000 Indians at Sacramento "it was thought, and it was said, that as the war had broken out in Europe and the troops from India were serving in the war, it was a good chance to demand their rights." The witness was one of a party of 70 Indians who sailed from San Francisco on August 29 last for Hong-kong, en route for India.

Parties of Indians landed at various ports with a view to seditious propaganda among Indians, and they were active among the Indian sepoys stationed at Hong-kong. With other Indians, making a total between 250 and 300, they left that port in the *Tosha Maru* on October 14 last. At Singapore, said the witness, they landed by resorting to a dodge, and tried to poison the minds of the Indian sepoys there. They stopped at Singapore for three days, and their steamer took on more Indians. (It will be recalled that the mutiny of the 5th Indian Light Infantry there broke out on February 15.) Throughout the voyage there were inflammatory speeches and recitations.

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The ringleaders threw into the sea seditious documents they had amongst their baggage, as they expected to be searched on arrival in the Hooghly. It should be remembered in this connexion that as the majority of the passengers were working-class people returning from the vain endeavour of Gurdit Singh and others to force an entry for them to Vancouver, the repatriation from the Far East onwards was carried out largely at the cost of the Government of India. The deplorable riot which broke out amongst the party when some of them suddenly fired on the police on arriving at Budge Budge and finding a train waiting to convey them to their Punjab homes will be recalled.

A RISING IN THREE PROVINCES.

Amar Singh gave details of the activity of the ringleaders after reaching the Punjab, and of efforts to seduce the Indian troops in Lahore, Umballa, Meerut, and other cantonments. A general rising in the Punjab, the United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province was fixed for February 21, one of its features being an attack on the Lahore Cantonment (Main Mir) arsenal. Emissaries were sent in all directions a week in advance, but on February 19 suspicion fell on one Kirpal Singh, who had arranged to go and excite the troops at Main Mir. A party of the conspirators was surrounded at a house in Lahore, and the conspiracy was frustrated.

In the intervening months since their arrival the conspirators had resorted to dacoities (robberies by armed bands) on a large scale to secure funds for the

far to alienate the support on which they were reckoning. Here and there in the evidence, as far as it is available, there are indications of German encouragement. Thus a second approver, Mula Singh, in corroboration of the evidence of Amar Singh, stated that on the return journey he stayed at Shanghai with an Indian from Amritsar, who gave him six automatic pistols and 600 cartridges, saying that a German friend had given these for use in India.

The evidence has borne out the statement of Mr. Bevan Petman, who has charge of the case for the Crown, that the revolutionary conspiracy was for the overthrow of British rule by the following means:—

(1) The seduction of Indian soldiers from their allegiance to the King-Emperor, and to cause them to mutiny and to join in rebellion and to furnish arms and munitions;

(2) The collection of arms, men, and munitions, and also money for the purchase of arms and munitions;

(3) The obtaining of money for the same purpose by means of forcing and robbing Government treasuries, and by dacoities, necessarily involving the murder of police and other officials who interfered with the carrying out of the conspiracy;

(4) As soon as the rebellion started, the murder of all civil Europeans, the wrecking of trains and railway bridges, a sudden attack on and the killing of all his Majesty's European troops;

(5) The production and circulation of seditious literature, the delivery of seditious speeches, and exhortations to the rebels.

The desperate character of some of the ringleaders is illustrated by the fact that Nadham Singh, a returned emigrant, who was one of the absconding accused, on being tracked and arrested in the Ludhiana district, stabbed one of the policemen who effected his arrest. He was armed with a large double-edged dagger.

The voluminous reports of the proceedings before the Special Tribunal given in the Indian papers are prepared by the official reporter and approved by the President, unauthorized reports being prohibited.