

The Forgotten Shaheeds of Dagshai

K. S. Sarkaria

§ 1. The question. My family's connection with Dagshai goes back to 1935 when our cottage here was built by my grandfather, Atma Singh Sarkaria. He used to call it the "Singuffa", or the lion's cave, and all who see this cottage invariably pose the same question: why that door, seemingly to nowhere, on its first floor?



The object in this note is however a different – and an altogether more serious and important – **question: why does the Dagshai of today not remember the twelve freedom fighters who made the supreme sacrifice here in 1915 ?**

There is evidence – see the extracts from publications on the Ghadr discussed in §3 below – that gives us *the names of all the twelve martyrs*, and seems conclusive about this event here in Dagshai in 1915. One would think then that these names should be as well-known as Bhagat Singh's in Dagshai, but I was unable to find a single citizen – and quite a few families have been here for three or more generations – who had even heard of this event! It seemed to be yet another case of public memory being short, and heroes forgotten very quickly. To help lift the veil of oblivion that had so undeservedly wrapped these shaheeds, I started digging into this question a few weeks ago, and this is a roughly chronological record of what I have learnt so far.

§ 2. An email from Chachaji. Until last year, I myself was ignorant about this event, though I vaguely remember having heard something like it before – maybe from my grandfather during one of the stopovers in Dagshai on our way to the plains from Simla where my father was posted in the 1950's ? – when I was quite small.

What woke me up to it was an email, dated January 18, 2006, from my Chachaji, who now lives in California. The relevant extracts follow:--

**... about the Ghadr movement, I have found
some factual data. One is an episode that took place in Dagshai.**

**On May 13, 1915, the Sikh soldiers of the 23rd Risala were being shipped from
Nagaon Cantonment in UP to the war front. (I assume to
Mesopotamia.) At the railway station a piece of luggage of Dafedar
Wadhawa Singh fell down and a grenade kept in it exploded. When other
baggage was searched more grenades were found. He and others were
arrested and their links to the Ghadr Party were discovered. Some of
the soldiers of the regiment, who were already at the war front, were
recalled; all were arrested and a court martial was held in
Dagshai. Twelve were sentenced to death and executed by a firing
squad. Of the twelve, eleven were Sikhs and one a Muslim. Some
others were sent to the Andaman Islands.**

**Now you should do research to find out the location of their
execution and cremation. There are many retired army men in
Chandigarh. Maybe they could tell you where or how to search the
records which the British always diligently kept. Maybe some student
at the university could write a thesis on the subject. ...**

I was not able to find much time for these questions then – or a student at the university so disposed – but now I have been able to study this problem some more.

§ 3. The evidence. The extracts [1]-[4] given below tell us that something historically very significant happened here in Dagshai in 1915.

[1] Amritsar District Gazetteer. This reference I had found very soon after I received Chachaji's email. In this computer age my first impulse had been, of course, to 'google' for some source, and it turns out that all the Sikh soldiers were from villages of Amritsar district, which has its 1976 gazetteer on-line at the following website.

http://punjabrevenue.nic.in/gaz_asr8.htm

Appendix VII of this gazetteer lists **the names of the eleven Sikh shaheeds** :--

VII. Army men of the 23rd Cavalry court-martialled at Dagshai (near Simla) and sentenced to death :

No.	Name	Village
1.	Bhag Singh	Roorhiwala
2.	Mota Singh	Do
3.	Dafedar Tara Singh	Do
4.	Wadhawa Singh	Do
5.	Inder Singh	Jeohala
6.	Inder Singh	Sahajpur
7.	Dafedar Lachhman Singh	Chuslewar
8.	Boota Singh	Kasel
9.	Gujjar Singh	Lahoke
10.	Jetha Singh	Do
11.	Budh Singh	Dhotian

As we'll see from references [3] and [4] below, there are some mistakes in this table, which probably crept in due to careless typing and proof-reading while putting the gazetteer on-line: it is Wadhawa Singh at no. 4 who was Dafedar, not Tara Singh at no. 3, also Sahajpur should be Sabajpur and village Jeohala is in fact Jeobala.

This gazetteer also proudly lists many other revolutionaries of Amritsar who were convicted by the British courts on various counts – insurrection, sedition, murder, dacoity, etc. – subsequent to the unravelling of the Ghadr of 1915. Of particular interest for Dagshai is that its appendix VI also gives us the names of **the six cavalrymen who were transported to the Andamans:--**

VI. Persons belonging to 23rd Cavalry, originally sentenced to death by a military court, but their sentences commuted later into transportation for life :

No.	Name	Village
1.	Bishan Singh	Sathiala
2.	Bishan Singh No.2	Do
3.	Natha Singh	Do
4.	Kehar Singh	Do
5.	Chanan Singh	Dhand Kasel
6.	Nand Singh	Rai ka Burj

As [3] and [4] will show, there is a mistake here too: nos. 1-4 were from Dhotian, not Sathiala (the native village of no. 1 in the district's Lahore Conspiracy Case list, so this seems to be a cutting-and-pasting error that was again (!) left un-corrected by the babu in-charge of the district; such blunders were rare in pre-partition gazetteers).

There is more on no. 6 of the above table, i.e., Nand Singh of Rai ka Burj, in the next reference [2], which was brought to my attention last September by Chachaji.

[2] “The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Volume III” (editor Harbans Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997). Looking up “Dagshai” in its cumulative index had yielded two entries, of which only the following was about the Ghadr:--

197 NAND SINGH fought in the battle of Anandpur as well as in that of Chamkaur. He fell a martyr at Chamkaur on 7 December 1705. BIBLIOGRAPHY 1. Santokh Singh, Bhāi, <i>Sri Gur Pratāp Sūraj Granth</i>. Amritsar, 1927-35 2. Gian Singh, Giānī, <i>Twārikkh Gurū Khālsā</i> [Reprint]. Patiala, 1970 3. Nayyar, G.S., ed., <i>Sau Sākhī</i>. Patiala, 1985 P.S.P. NAND SINGH, of Rāi kā Burj, a village in Amritsar district, was a soldier in the 23rd Cavalry, with headquarters at Miānmīr cantonment, Lahore. He was one of the <i>sowārs</i> who came in contact with the Ghadr leaders and who raised their hands in meetings to indicate that they would take part in the uprising against the British. According to the plan, the <i>sowārs</i> were to bring arms to a meeting of the Ghadr leaders at Jhār Sāhib on 6 November 1914. On 19 February 1915, word was received that a part of the regiment was to be sent to the war front and the depot moved to a new cantonment. On 13 May 1915, as the baggage was being loaded, a box fell and a bomb exploded. The explosion gave the officials the clue to the plan of the <i>sowārs</i> to join the Ghadr revolution. This led to the detention of eighteen men, all belonging to the troops of Dafedār Lachhman Singh, of Amritsar, and Dafedār Vadhvā Singh, of Rūrīvālā. They were court-martialled at Dagshai, in Shimlā hills, and ordered to be shot. Later, the sentences of six, Nand Singh among them, were commuted to transportation for life, with forfeiture of property. The other five were Bishan Singh, Bishan Singh No. 2, Natthā Singh and Kehar Singh, all of Dhotiān (Amritsar) and Charan Singh, of Dhand Kasei (Amritsar). They were sent to the Cellular Jail at Port Blair, Andamans, to serve their sentences. Nand Singh died there as a result of the torture which was commonly the lot of	NAND SINGH 198 the prisoners. He was 26 when he was sent to prison. BIBLIOGRAPHY 1. Saihsarā, Gurcharan Singh, <i>Ghadr Pārī dā Itihās</i>. Jalandhar, 1961 2. Jagjit Singh, <i>Ghadr Pārī Lahir</i>. Amritsar, 1955 S.S.J. from "Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, vol III" editor Harbans Singh (1997) pp. 197-198 (S.S.J. = Sohan Singh Josh)
--	--

I began now, on 27/06/2007, with S.S.J.'s sources – see [3], [4] below – both say execution was by hanging, and that Charan Singh above should in fact be Chanan Singh.

[3] "Ghadr Parti da Itihas" by Gurcharan Singh Sainsara (Jalandhar 1961).

The 23rd Risala figured prominently from the beginning in the plans of the Ghadr leaders, but, *just* for the connection with Dagshai, pp. 216-218 of this book suffice:--

੨੩ਵਾਂ ਰਸਾਲਾ

ਗ਼ਦਰ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਮੀਆਂ ਮੀਰ ਵਿਚ ੨੩ਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਉਣ ਜਾਣ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਸੀ। ਗ਼ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਭੈੜੇ ਪੈਕੇ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਹੋਏ ਵਧੇਰਾ ਮਾਫ਼ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਜ੍ਹਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ੨੩ਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਰਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਮੇਲ ਜੋਲ ਸੀ। ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਲੀਡਰ ਜਾਂ ਵਰਕਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਬਚ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਇਕ ਅਚਾਨਕ ਘਟਨਾ ਵਾਪਰਨ ਨਾਲ ੨੩ਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦਾ ਭਾਂਡਾ ਇਸ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਢੱਸ ਗਿਆ।

→ ੧੯ ਫਰਵਰੀ ੧੯੧੫ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਸ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਜੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਡੀਪੂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਯੂ. ਪੀ. ਵਿਚ ਨੌਗਾਉਂ ਦੀ ਛਾਉਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਦਿਤਾ, ਜੋ ਹਰਪਾਲਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ੧੩ ਮਈ ੧੯੧੫ ਨੂੰ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਮਾਨ ਗਡੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਲਦਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਵਸਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਬਕਸਾ ਡਿਗ ਪਿਆ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਬੰਬ ਚਲ ਗਿਆ। ਸਾਰੇ ਸਾਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ੀ ਲਈ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਬਕਸੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਬੰਬ ਨਿਕਲ ਪਿਆ। ਵਸਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਗ਼ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਉਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਸਾਰਾ ਪਤਾ ਚਲ ਗਿਆ। ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੇ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਅਲਫ਼ੋਂ ਯੇ ਤਕ ਸਭ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਪੁਲਸ ਨੇ ਕਢ ਲਈ*। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਝਾੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਫੜੇ ਗਏ ਸੂਚਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੈਰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਹੋਣ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਪੰਦਰਾਂ ਦਿਨ ਕੋਰਟ ਗਾਰਦ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਂ ਕੱਟ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਨਾਮ ਕਟੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਉਹ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਬਣ ਗਏ।

ਕਹਾਣੀ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਮਾਝੇ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫ਼ਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੱਸ ਬੱਸ ਘਾਟ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਲੂਕ ਤੋਂ ਬੜਾ ਗੁਸਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਛੁਟੀ ਗਿਆ ਸਵਾਰ ਸੂਚਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੋਹਲਾ ਇਹ ਖਬਰ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਕਿ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ ਉਠਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੂਸਲੇਵੜ ਨੂੰ ਆਕੇ ਦਸਿਆ। ਦੇਸੀ ਪਲਟਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਜੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਬੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਪਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਗਲ ਚੰਗੀ ਲਗੀ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸੂਚਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਜਾਕੇ ਪਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਖਿਆ। ਉਹ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਜਾਕੇ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਰਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ। ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਗਰੁਪ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕਠਿਆਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਪਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਦਸਿਆ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਨੇ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਕ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਤੁਰਪ ਵਿਚ ਦਫ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਵਸਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਲਾ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰ ਵੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੀਟਿੰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ। ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਹੇਠਲੇ

*ਉਤਲਿਖਤ ਮੁਕਦਮਾ ਸਫ਼ਾ ੬੩।

ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਉਹ ੨੫ ਤੇ ੨੬ ਨਵੰਬਰ ੧੯੧੪ ਦੀਆਂ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੱਧੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਤਰੀਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਿਸਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਜਦ ੬ ਤਰੀਕ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਰ ਬਾੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਲਈ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਏ ਤਾਂ ਪਲਟਨ ਦੇ ਗਰੰਥੀ ਮੂਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਭਾਨੀ ਮਾਰ ਦਿਤੀ ਕਿ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਾੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਇਕਠੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਿ ਨਾਂ, ਐਵੇਂ ਅੰਨ੍ਹੇਵਾਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰ ਪੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਇਸ ਉਤੇ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਰੁਕ ਗਏ। ਪਰ ਸਵਾਰ ਸੁਚਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਹਲਾ, ਸਵਾਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਸੇਲ, ਸਵਾਰ ਚਨਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸਵਾਰ ਸੁਰਾਇਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਦੋਬਦੀ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਅਗੇ ਬਾੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਚਨਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਂ ਮੁੜ ਆਇਆ ਪਰ ਬਾਕੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਭਣ ਚੜ ਪਏ, ਜੋ ਪੁਲਸ ਨੇ ਗਤਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਏ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੈਰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਰਟ ਗਾਰਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ*।

ਮੀਆਂ ਮੀਰ ਛਾਉਣੀ ਦੇ ਸਦਰ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈ ਮਦਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿੰਡ ਗਾਗਾ ਦੀ ਤਰਖਾਣੇ ਦੀ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੁਨਹੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਂਦ ਪੁਛਣ ਦਸਣ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਦਿੰਦੀ।

ਇਸੇ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਤੁਰਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਦੋਕੇ ਬਰਾੜ ਤਸੀਲ ਅਜਨਾਲਾ ਦਾ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ, ਜੋ ਸੰਘਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ, ਭਰਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮਾਦੋਕੇ ਬਰਾੜਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਵਲ ਖਿਚਿਆ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਰਸਿੰਘੀਏ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਵਾਈ। ਭਾਈ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਚੁਸਲੇਵੜ ਬੜਾ ਸਿਆਣਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਆਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾੜਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਇਤਬਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਕਰੇ। ਪਰ ਭਾਈ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਉਹ ਬਰਾੜਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਲੱਗ ਤੇ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਤੁਰਪ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਲੱਗ ਮੀਟਿੰਗਾਂ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਭਾਈ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਸਚੀ ਨਿਕਲੀ। ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਲਮੂਹਾਂ ਮੁਖਬਰ ਵੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੜਿਆ ਤੇ ਬੰਬ ਵੀ ਏਸੇ ਤੁਰਪ ਦੇ ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਬਕਸੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਡਿਗਕੇ ਫਟਿਆ। ਬਰਾੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੁਰਪ ਦੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਸਭ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਗਵਾਹ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਵਧਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਤੁਰਪਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿਤੇ।

ਇਹ ਬੰਬ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਵਰਤਨ ਲਈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤੁਰਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਜੇ ਸੰਭਾਲਕੇ ਰਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਵਧਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਤੁਰਪਾਂ ਦੇ ੧੮ ਆਦਮੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੰਗ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਮੰਗਵਾਕੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਡਿਗਸ਼ਈ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਰਟ ਮਾਰਸ਼ਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਬਰਾੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਵਾਰ ਗਵਾਹ ਬਣਕੇ ਬਚ ਗਏ। ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੁਸਲੇਵੜ, ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਵਧਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਲਾ ਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮੌਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੂੜੀਵਾਲੀਏ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀਉਬਾਲਾ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਬਾਜਪੁਰ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬੂਟਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਸੇਲ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਹੁਕੇ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਜੇਠਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਹੁਕੇ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਢੋਟੀਆਂ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਬਦੁਲਾ ਨਾਅਲਬੰਦ (ਲਾਹੌਰ) ਆਦਿ, ੧੨ ਜਣਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਲਾਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਢੋਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੂਸਰਾ,

*ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਮੁਕਦਮਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ, ਸਫਾ ੫੨-੫੪।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ; ਢੰਡ ਕਸੇਲ ਦੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਚਨਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਏਕੇ ਬੁਰਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਹਟਾਕੇ ਕਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਕੈਦ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ* ।

ਦੋ ਹੋਰ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਸੁਚਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਹਲਾ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਸੇਲ ਨੂੰ ਵੂਸਰੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਮੁਕਦਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਵਲੋਟਕੇ ਉਮਰ ਕੈਦ ਕਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਘਰ ਘਾਟ ਜ਼ਬਤੀ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਿਤੀ ਗਈ ।

ਮੇਰਠ, ਫੈਜ਼ਾਬਾਦ, ਬਨਾਰਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ

ਮੇਰਠ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਾਭਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਫੇਰ ਇਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਪਿੰਗਲੇ ਦੇ ਸਪੁਰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ । ੧੨੮ਵੀਂ ਪਾਇਓਨੀਅਰ ਨਾਮੀ ਪੁਲਟਨ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਗ਼ਦਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਬੇਬੰਦਕ ਸੀ । ੧੨੯ਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਵਾਰ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਮੋਢੀ ਸੀ । ਮੇਰਠ ਫੌਜੀ ਡਵਿਜ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਹੈਡਕਵਾਟਰ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਦਿਲੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਤੇ ਬੜੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਫੌਜੀ ਪੋਜ਼ੀਸ਼ਨ ਰਖਦਾ ਸੀ । ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਥੇ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਉਘਾ ਲੀਡਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਪਿੰਗਲੇ ਡਿਊਟੀ ਉਤੇ ਲਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ । ਪਰ ਇਹ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਨਾਦਰ ਖਾਂ ਜਮਾਦਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਠੱਗੀ ਖਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ੨੩ ਮਾਰਚ ਨੂੰ ਦਸ ਬੰਬਾਂ ਸਮੇਤ ਫੌਜੀ ਬਾਰਕਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ । ਭਾਈ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਲੈ ਲਈ । ਨਾਦਰ ਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਦੋ ਹੋਰ ਸਵਾਰ ਫਸਾ ਦਿਤੇ । ਇਹਨਾਂ ਚੌਥੇ ਭਾਈ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ੧੨੯ਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਭਾਈ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਤੌਗ ਦੀ ਛਾਉਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਰਟ ਮਾਰਸ਼ਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਸੂਰਮੇ ੨੬ ਅਪਰੈਲ ੧੯੧੫ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰਠ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਕੇ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਦੇਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੇ ਗਏ ।

ਯੂ. ਪੀ. ਦੀ ਛਾਉਣੀ ਫੈਜ਼ਾਬਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਵਾਲਦਾਰ, ਜੋ ਸਦਰ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਚੌਧਰੀ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧ ਰਖਦਾ ਸੀ । ਉਹ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਛਪਤਾਂ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਦਾ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਕੇ ਸੁਣਾਉਂਦਾ । ਭਾਈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਛਾਉਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੇ ਦੌਰਿਆਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਬਣਿਆ ਸੀ । ਏਥੇ ੯ਵੀਂ ਭੂਪਾਲ ਪਲਟਨ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਹਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਪਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਤੇ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਸਨ । ਕਿਸੇ ਵਾਇਦਾ ਮਾਫ ਦੇ ਬਿਆਨ ਉਤੇ ੬ ਅਪਰੈਲ ੧੯੧੫ ਨੂੰ ਹਵਾਲਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਗਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਬਗ਼ਾਵਤ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਦਮਾ ਚਲਾਕੇ ਸੈਸ਼ਨ ਜੱਜ ਫੈਜ਼ਾਬਾਦ ਤੋਂ ੪ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੧੫ ਨੂੰ ਦਸ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਸਖਤ ਕੈਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਇਸਰਾਏ ਨੇ ਪੰਜ ਸਾਲ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ† ।

ਬਨਾਰਸ ਦੀ ਛਾਉਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਾਭਾ ਆਪ ਆਇਆ ਤੇ ਫੇਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਚਿੰਦਰ ਨਾਥ ਸਾਨਿਆਲ ਤੇ ਓਸ ਦੇ ਬਨਾਰਸੀ ਸਾਥੀ ੭ਵੀਂ ਰਾਜਪੂਤ ਰਜਮੈਂਟ ਪਾਸ ਆਉਂਦੇ

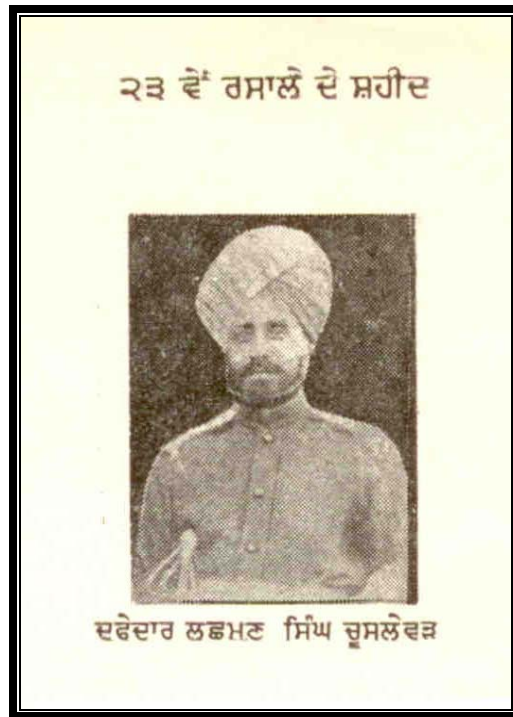
*ਹੋਮ (ਪੋਲੀਟੀਕਲ) ਓ. ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੧੫, ਨੰ: ੬੭੧-੮੪, 'ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਂ ਹਿੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਤਾ', ਸਫਾ ੨੦੩ ।

†ਉਤਲਿਖਤ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਤੇ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਮੁਕਦਮਾ ਸਫਾ ੧੧੩ ।

‡ਹੋਮ (ਪੋਲੀਟੀਕਲ) ਓ. ਅਪਰੈਲ ੧੯੧੬, ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਨੰ: ੪੭ ।

From the above – see p. 217 bottom and p. 218 – we have now *all* the eighteen names: **the twelfth shaheed** was Abdullah Nayalband of district Lahore.

Facing p. 218 of this book are three photographs, two are reproduced below:--



I have omitted the third photograph because its caption, ‘Sawar Dhian Singh’, does not match any of the 18 names given, but possibly this Dhian Singh ties with the book’s unexplained “aad” after twelve names on the bottom of p. 217 ?

The book does not mention the specific sources of these photos, though it seems reasonable that these could have been obtained from the sawars’ regimental records, or else, from some present-day descendants in their extended families.

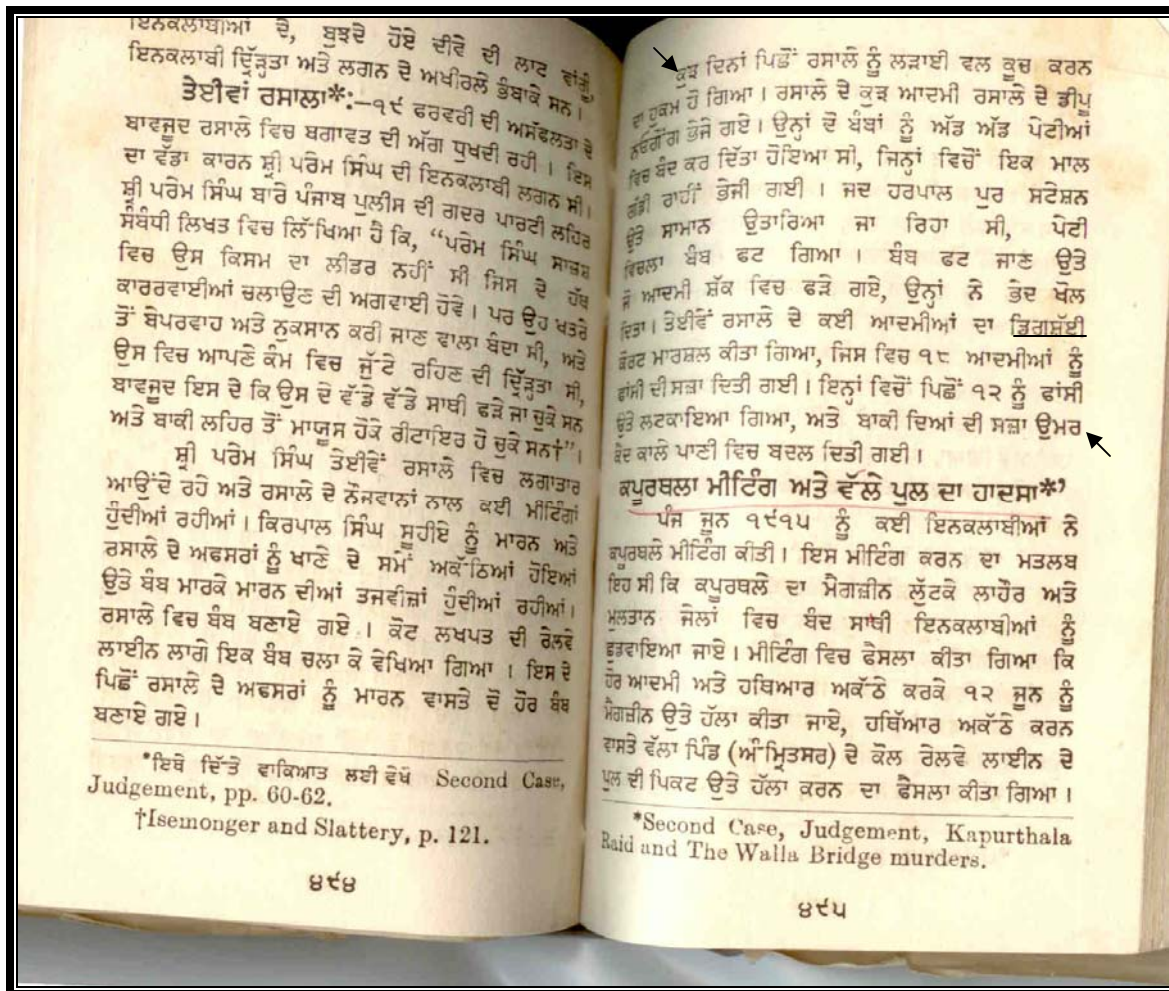
As per the above account, the Dafedar Wasawa Singh whose exploding box led to the unmasking of the plot – and who later spilled the beans and turned approver with some others – was distinct from Dafedar Wadhawa Singh (cf. Chachaji’s e-mail). The latter, like all others convicted at Dagshai, was, according to this account, already on the (way to the) front. If so, the possibility arises – cf. O’Dwyer’s version [5] below, who says the British knew that the 23rd was “tainted”, but lacking evidence had sent suspects towards the front anyway – that the box-exploding incident was contrived between the approvers and the British to manufacture the needed evidence?

Notes

[3.i] This book is formally authored by the “Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee,” and is no exception to the rule that books written by committees – for example, most of the text books inflicted on our school students by the N.C.E.R.T. – are less than first-rate. Luckily however, this book was written almost entirely by just one of the committee member, Gurcharan Singh Sainsara, who has done a reasonably scholarly job, but we are informed on p. 9 that his drafts were approved – it would seem for left-wing ideological ‘correctness’? – at numerous meetings of the entire committee.

[3.ii] There is an amazing allegation made by this Committee against the then government of Nehru on p. 8 of this book, namely, that hundreds of pages of notes made by them for writing this book, from original documents in the National Archives of India, were confiscated by the Home Ministry on the pretext of national security ! In 1960, about a rebellion that occurred way, way back in 1915 ? The insinuation plainly is that some Congress leader of 1915 – maybe the Mahatma himself – could be exposed, by the de-classification of these secret documents, as having collaborated with the British against the Ghadrates at that time. If there is any truth in this allegation, there is an interesting story here.

[4] “Ghadar Parti Lahir” by Jagjit Singh (Taran Taran 1955). Since our concern is only with evidence that connects Dagshai with the 23rd Cavalry mutineers, just the following two pages, 494-495, of this treatise should suffice :--



Just like [3], this earlier book also asserts that the twelve cavalymen were *hanged*, *not executed by firing squad*. The names of the twelve hanged, and of the six whose sentences were commuted to life imprisonment, are given in tabular form on pp. 678-679 of this book (the footnote on p. 678 however suggests the possibility that “executed” became hanged merely because of a mis-translation from English into Punjabi) :--

(ਬ) ਕੋਰਟ ਮਾਰਸ਼ਲ। ਤੇਈਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਡਕਸ਼ੱਈ ਕੋਰਟ ਮਾਰਸ਼ਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਲਾਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ*:-

ਨਾਮ	ਪਿੰਡ	ਜ਼ਿਲਾ
੧. ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ	ਰੁੜੀ ਵਾਲਾ	ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ
੨. „ ਮੋਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੩. „ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੪. ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਵਧਾਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੫. ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ	ਜੀਓਬਾਲਾ	„
੬. „ „	ਸਬਾਜਪੁਰ	„
੭. ਦਫੇਦਾਰ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ	ਦੂਸਲੇਵੜ	„
੮. ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਬੂਟਾ ਸਿੰਘ	ਕਸੇਲ	„
੯. „ ਗੁਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ	ਲਹੜਕੇ	„
੧੦. „ ਜੋਠਾ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੧੧. „ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ	ਢੋਟੀਆਂ	„
੧੨. „ ਅਬਦੁਲਾ		ਲਾਹੌਰ

*O'Dwyer, p. 203. Eighteen sentenced to death and twelve actually executed.

ਤੇਈਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੌਤ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਹੋਈ, ਪਰ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਉਮਰ ਕੈਦ ਕਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲ ਦਿਤੀ ਗਈ:-

ਨਾਮ	ਪਿੰਡ	ਜ਼ਿਲਾ
੧. ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ	ਢੋਟੀਆਂ	ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ
੨. „ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੰ: ੨	„	„
੩. „ ਨੱਥਾ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੪. „ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ	„	„
੫. „ ਚੰਨਣ ਸਿੰਘ	ਢੰਡ ਕਸੇਲ	„
੬. „ ਨੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ	ਰਾਏ ਕੇ ਬੁਰਜ	„

ਇਕ ਸੌ ਅਠਾਈਵੀਂ ਪਾਇਓਨੀਅਰਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਫੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ (First Case, Seduction of Troops, p. 6)। ਬਾਰਵੇਂ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਫੌਜੀ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਲਾਏ ਗਏ (First Case, Seduction of Troops, p. 9.), ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਸਾਨਿਯਾਲ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਮੇਰਠ ਦੇ ਲਗ ਪਗ ੧੦-੧੧ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਾਂਸੀ ਲਾਈ ਗਈ (ਬੰਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ, ਭਾਗ ਦੂਜਾ, ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬)। ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਗਦਰ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਫੜੇ ਗਏ ਗਦਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ੪੧ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਰਟ

The book [3] by Gurcharan Singh does not refer to this earlier book by Jagjit Singh, but the same photo of **Lachhman Singh of Chuslewar**, again without any attribution as to source, can be found also in this book: facing p. 617.

The story on pp. 617-618 of this book about **Abdullah** – both [3] and [4] fail to give us the exact location of his native place, but put it in district Lahore – is touching. According to it, the British tried to make him state-appraiser, pointing out that otherwise he would go to his death hanging next to the *kaffir* Lachhman Singh. To this Abdullah replied: “*Were I to go to the gallows with Lachhman Singh, then surely will I find Paradise!*” For this story the author cites, ***Bandi Jeevan*, by S. N. Sayal**, p. 112.

I have not been able to find this book, a Punjabi translation of the reminiscences – published in 1943 in Bengali – of its author, who served a prison term in the Andamans following conviction in the Banaras Conspiracy Case. Though Sayal was one of the Bengali revolutionaries who had worked in Punjab – notably with Kartar Singh Sarabha – it seems quite unlikely that he had met either Lachhman Singh or Abdullah during these few days, and being a civilian, it seems on the face of it almost certain that he could not have shared a military prison with these two. However, it is quite possible that Sayal could have heard of this story later on, in the Cellular Jail, from one of the six surviving court-martialled mutineers of the 23rd, who had been in Dagshai jail with Abdullah and Lachhman Singh prior to their execution ?

A glaring lacuna remains: **the above references give no Dagshai-specific details about the imprisonment, court-martial, or executions of the 23rd Cavalry’s rebels.** Yes, since it was wartime, this army trial of 1915 was probably in camera and very summary, as well as, obviously, very harsh towards the accused. Yet, without clinching proof of these soldiers’ actual physical presence here in Dagshai at that time, the question of § 1 takes on a very different aspect. Yes, the evidence is *almost conclusive* towards a court-martial here, and in that case the death sentences handed out by this tribunal were also *probably* carried out here in Dagshai only, but – without corroborative details of the kind mentioned – we cannot put flesh on bare bones, we cannot be certain. The possibility remains that the above evidence is yet another door to nowhere ...

Notes

[4.i] As per military law there is no provision of an appeal against conviction in a court-martial, only a reduction in sentence is possible after review. Actually, even the civilian Ghadrites were tried under the newly enacted “Defence of India Act”, which had curtailed the usual rights of the civilian accused severely.

Each case was conducted, at least nominally, per the usual rules of procedure in civilian court; however, once convicted, the only appeal possible was for clemency; no appeal was possible against either conviction or sentence. All this is discussed, for example, in Appendix 2, pp. 643-650, of Jagjit Singh's book, where he also tells us that the public and press were barred from the courtrooms, but an official abstract of each working day's proceedings was handed out late in the evening to the waiting journalists.

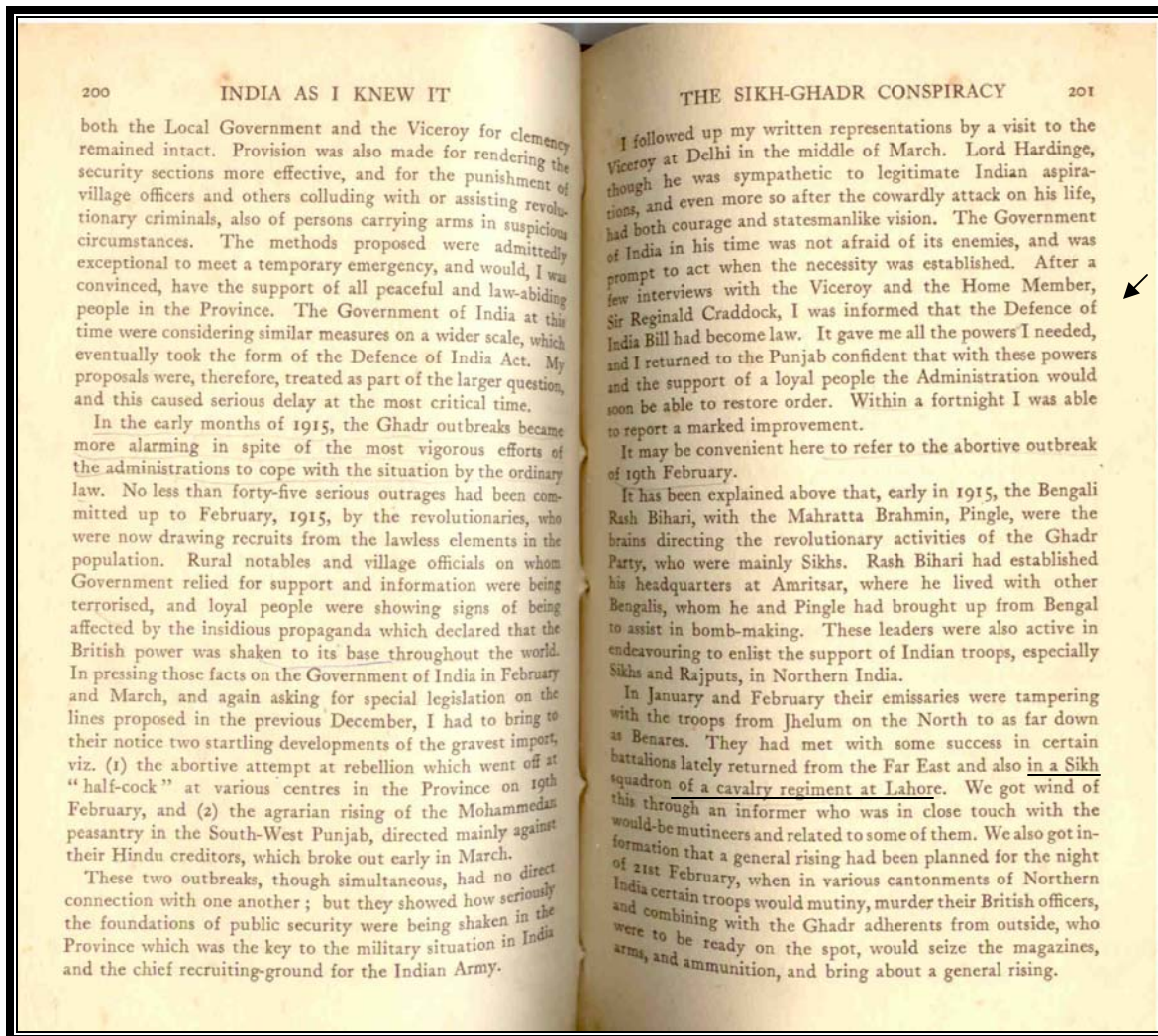
[4.ii] However, Jagjit Singh accepts – p. 644 – on the basis of personal interviews that were given by the revolutionaries returning from the Andamans after serving their prison terms, that there was mostly truth in a judge's assertion that the then Punjab Police had *not* concocted evidence to convict the accused. With rare exceptions, most interviewees admitted that they had indeed committed the acts for which they had been held legally responsible. Jagjit Singh is by no means alone in this respect: *the facts found in all histories of the Ghadr are derived largely from the judgements of the Lahore Conspiracy Cases only.*

[4.iii] It is also noteworthy that in neither [3] nor [4] is there mention of the Punjab Police of 1915 resorting to anything like “fake encounters” to suppress that rebellion. Also, the Defence of India Act, though violative of the norms of human rights, was obviously degrees better than the more draconian T.A.D.A. and P.O.T.A., which have been repeatedly used in recent times.

[4.iv] Probably you have solved by now the puzzle about Singuffa's door to nowhere? The date of its construction and the picture – the corner room is what it seems to be, a toilet – were giveaways: things have improved a lot now, and it is no longer customary to have outside ladders for safai karamcharis.

§4. Primary sources ? The extracts [3] and [4] more than suffice for the ‘factual data’ mentioned by Chachaji, but these books – likewise the Amritsar gazetteer [1] of 1976 – were written decades after the events of 1915. So it is necessary to check their citations. It is encouraging that Dagshai is mentioned as the site of the court-martial, and the table of the soldiers convicted is given, even in the earliest of the above references, viz., the 1955 book [4] by Jagjit Singh. Also, I was encouraged by the footnote placed by him on his table of the condemned, which suggested that it might be a simple matter to push back the provenance of this data to at least 1925.

[5] “India as I Knew It : 1885-1925” by Michael O’Dwyer, Constable, London (1925). Pages 200-203 of this book are shown below:--



The idea was not fantastic, for it had penetrated as far down as Bengal and was known to the disaffected elements in Dacca. In Lahore the first move on the above lines was to come from the disaffected Sikh squadron. It was my misfortune to have a dozen men from this squadron as my personal escort at the time. I resisted the suggestion of my private secretary, who, with the head of the Criminal Investigation Department and myself, alone knew the full ramifications of the conspiracy, that I should change the escort. To do so would probably arouse suspicion that *their* plans had leaked out, and we did not want to act till *our* plans were matured. So the escort stayed on, though I used them as little as possible. On the morning of the 19th February, we received information from our spies that Rash Bihari and Pingle had moved their headquarters to Lahore, that suspecting the leakage of their plans they had decided to antedate the rising to the night of the 19th, and had sent messages or emissaries to the various selected centres, including several cantonments, to act accordingly. We had then to act at once.

The rebel headquarters in four separate houses at Lahore were raided by our police that afternoon headed by that very brave and able officer Khan Liyat Haiyat Khan, and Mr. L. L. Tomkins, the efficient head of the C.I.D. Thirteen of the most dangerous revolutionaries were captured with all the paraphernalia of the conspiracy, arms, bombs, bomb-making materials, revolutionary literature, and four rebel flags (one of which I claimed and hold as a souvenir). Unfortunately, Rash Bihari and Pingle were not among the gang that were captured.

Both escaped down country. Pingle was arrested a few weeks later in the lines of the 12th Cavalry at Meerut with a collection of bombs brought up from Bengal and sufficient, in expert opinion, to blow up a regiment. He and Parma Nand were among those tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged in the first Lahore conspiracy case by the Special Tribunal under the Defence of India Act a few months later. Pingle was hanged. Parma Nand's sentence was commuted by the Viceroy to one of transportation for life, and he has, I believe, since been released! Of the two I should have been more

inclined to show leniency to Pingle, who did not hesitate to risk his life, acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and met his death like a man; while the other, like Rash Bihari, had kept out of danger himself while inciting his dupes to action which in some cases led to their death.

The coup at Lahore on 19th February foiled the plans for a general rising that night. We at once wired in cipher to the various cantonments, Sialkot, Ferozepur, Rawal Pindi, etc., and the military authorities took the necessary—in some cases perhaps excessive—precautions. At Lahore and Ferozepur Cantonments, gangs of the Ghadr Party had gathered to “chip in” when the expected mutiny began. But they found all the troops fallen in and under arms, and they beat a hurried retreat. The tainted Sikh squadron was sent to the Front soon after with the rest of the regiment; for in time of war it was not thought advisable by the military authorities to have a court-martial which would make public the mutinous preparations.

The depot was moved to a distant station, and when it was detraining, some of the bombs, which had been secreted for months after 19th February, exploded. A court-martial could not now be avoided. The result was that eighteen men of the regiment were sentenced to death, and twelve were actually executed. I was too busy at the time to enquire how many of these had been among my protective escort prior to the 19th February.

This fact and others showed that the failure of a bold design, though it strengthened our hands and steadied the waverers, did not dishearten the leaders. They found the atmosphere of the Punjab too hot to be comfortable for themselves and took refuge in the United Provinces, whence they directed a campaign of assassination and outrage for several months more. Above all they continued their efforts to seduce Indian troops. But the capture in March of Pingle at Meerut, in the lines of the 12th Cavalry, and of other agents, who were tampering with the 22nd Cavalry in the Punjab but were seized and given up by the Sikh officers and men, showed that this was a dangerous game to play at.

Unfortunately, though one does find on p. 203 the words, “eighteen men of the regiment were sentenced to death, and twelve were actually executed,” *the name of their regiment is not mentioned, and Dagshai figures nowhere in this book.* Furthermore, its haughty author – the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab throughout the tumultuous time from the return of Kartar Singh Sarabha to Jallianwala Bagh – *deigns it beneath his dignity to actually name any of the condemned soldiers.*

That the regiment's name is missing is not serious. O'Dwyer's own account, dovetailed with [6] below, shows beyond doubt that it was the 23rd Cavalry. Apparently, O'Dwyer – an Irishman from Tipperary who remained loyal to his masters even as his own countrymen were fighting for their independence from the British – is only

conveying that he found the disloyalty of this “disaffected Sikh squadron”, which had contributed to his personal escort, so reprehensible, that he won’t mention it by name.

In fact, it may be that these rebels came in for especially harsh treatment from this despot because of *their* “misfortune” of having been once in his personal escort? “I was too busy at the time to enquire how many of these had been among my protective escort prior to the 19th February” (p. 203) sounds like an alibi: so it may indeed be worthwhile to find out the names of the “dozen men” who were in O’Dwyer’s escort?

More serious is that this book is of no help at all in confirming the rebels’ names, or – for us – the crucial fact that the court-martial was indeed in Dagshai only.

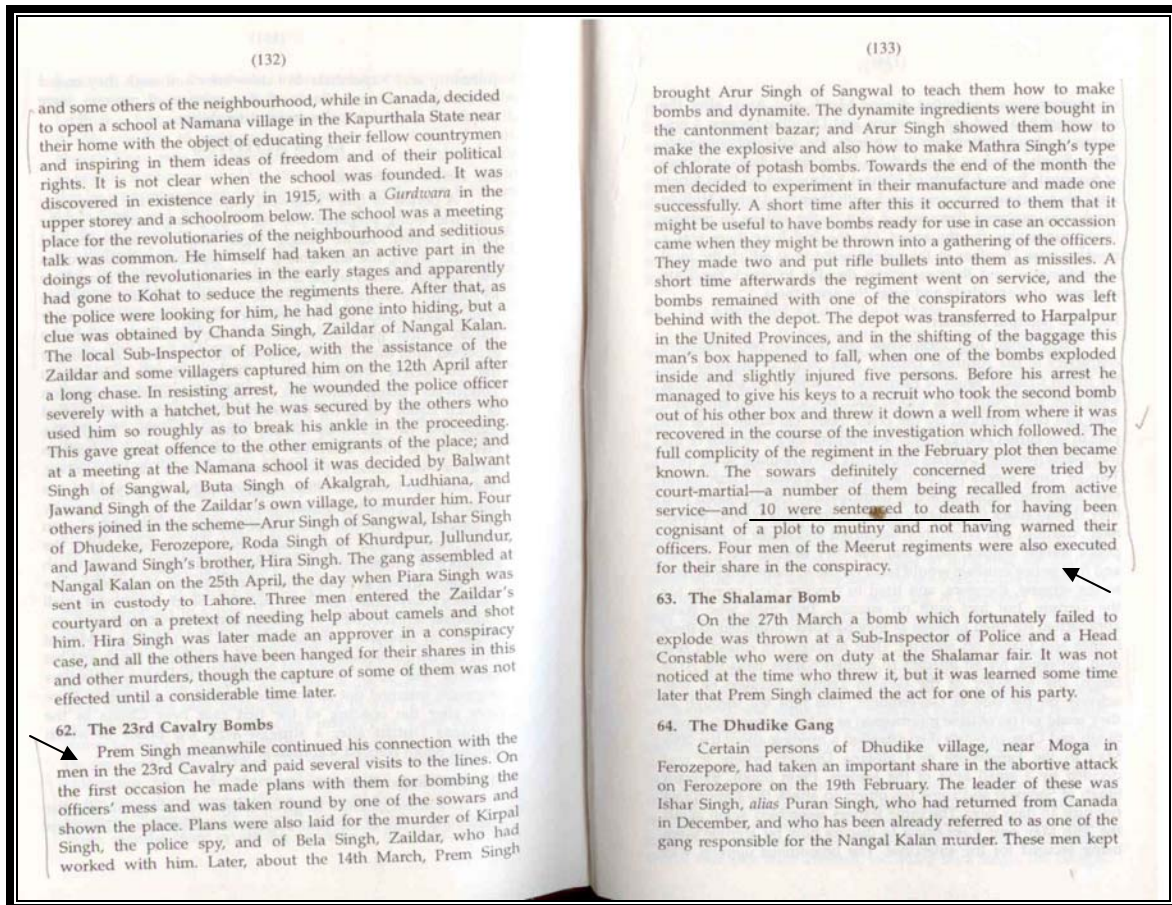
Notes

[5.i] Nevertheless, O’Dwyer’s book is a valuable picture of the times as seen from the other side. At this distance, it is only amusing when we read of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh as “notorious” (p. 129), Har Dayal as “most sinister” (p. 185), Rash Behari Bose as “inciting his dupes” (p. 203), etc. However, his take (p.33) on the massacre of the 131 Akalis at Nankana Sahib in 1921, and even more so, his version – “Dyer’s Action at Amritsar, 13th April” (pp. 283-285) – of the earlier 1919 massacre at Jallianwala, are anything but amusing. Brigadier Dyer had the full, and probably prior, approval of Lieutenant-Governor Michael O’Dwyer. Later, in 1940, O’Dwyer was “executed” for this by (Shaheed) Udham Singh.

[5.ii] These flaws of perception and judgement are the corollaries of the fact that he was, like many other Irishmen in India, excessively and unquestioningly – ‘my country, right or wrong’ ? – loyal towards the country then oppressing his own, Ireland. Outside of this, O’Dwyer’s book is at times quite enjoyable, for there are in it many – these are mostly pre-1912 – interesting anecdotes and episodes, which the author describes with charm and typical Irish wit, and often, even love.

The other references given in [4] were some pages from the judgement of the ‘Second Case’ – more precisely, as Jagjit Singh explains on p. 647, the “*Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case*” of 1915-16 – and the following report [6] on the Ghadr conspiracy that was published soon afterwards by two officers of the then Punjab Police. Since this account, which we shall review now, gives a very good idea of what one can and cannot expect to see in the court judgement, it would be fair to say that *with the next review, we would have essentially checked all the sources cited by Jagjit Singh.*

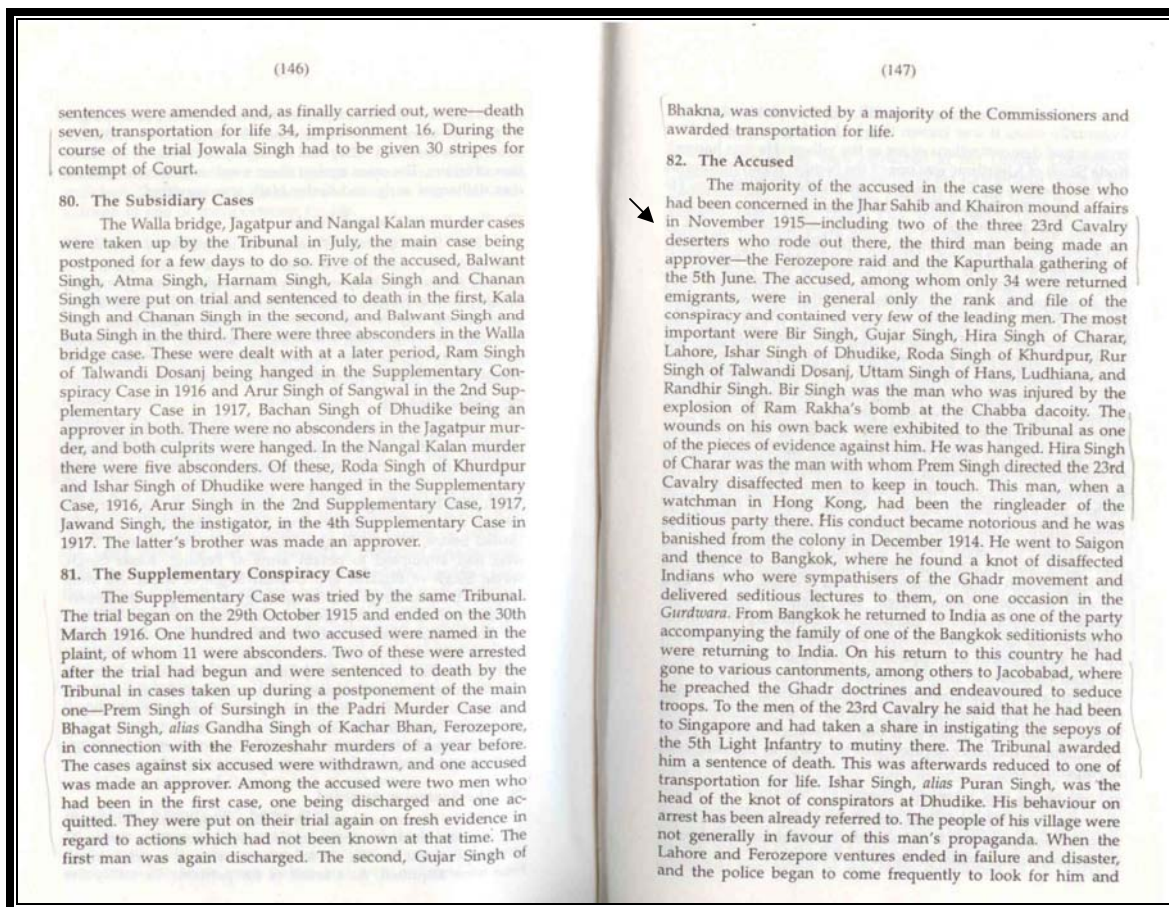
[6] “An Account of the *Ghadr* Conspiracy (1913-1915)” by F. C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab, Lahore (1919); the extracts given below are however from a recent reprint of the original brought out by Archana Publications, Meerut, in 2001, with a foreword by V. P. Vatuk :-



This account should be compared and contrasted with that in the second and third paragraphs on the 23rd Risala in Jagjit Singh [4], pp. 494-495 (the quotation about Prem Singh's nature in the first paragraph is from p. 139 – not p. 121 – of this reprint [6]).

Unlike O'Dwyer [5], the regiment is now named, but again, *there is no mention of the place where the court-martial was held*, and neither is the list of *its* accused given (as against this, long lists of the accused of various civilian cases are given as Appendices). However some men – see below – of the 23rd Cavalry Regiment are mentioned by name on various pages of this book. The above extract also raises an unexpected difficulty: it says, “10 were sentenced to death”, a numerical discrepancy with the figures in [1]-[5].

A summary of the Supplementary Conspiracy Case of 1915 and its findings constitutes sections 81 and 82 of Part III of Isemonger and Slattery's book, these are given in the extract – pp. 146-148 of the reprint – reproduced next. Besides, there is also a 12-page long Appendix D, which I have not reproduced, that gives the names of all the 102 accused of this case, the sections under which they were charged, and the sentences awarded; it also gives the names of the 29 state approvers of this case. In fact *the list of civilians convicted that one finds in [1], [3] or [4], are simplified versions of the lists given in the appendices of Isemonger and Slattery*, and, I presume, these in turn are close replicas of the official lists of the various civilian court cases.



others of his coterie, they were still less favourably disposed. Eventually when it was known that he had been arrested, there were actual demonstrations of joy in the village. He was hanged. Roda Singh of Khurdpur was one of the Nangal Kalan murderers and took part in the first attempt to attack the Walla Bridge. He was hanged. Rur Singh of Talwandi Dosanj was a one-eyed man of more than middle age, not a returned emigrant, who was of the party which actually carried out the Walla Bridge murders. He was hanged. Uttam Singh, *alias* Ragho Singh of Hans, was one of the Nangal Kalan murderers, and was connected with Lohatbadi and the activities initiated from there. He was hanged. Randhir Singh's history has already been given. "Whether he became a revolutionary because of some fancied grievance," wrote the Commissioners, "or whether he joined the Ghadr movement under the impression that it would become popular and with a craving for notoriety, going about the country with a number of adherents, we shall probably never know. Of his guilt there can be no possible doubt whatever, and we cannot lose sight of the fact that it was his influence that brought several of the co-accused (including several youths...) into the dock. He is obviously a very vain man, belonging to a very strict sect; but he had not the brains to become a Ghadr leader of the type of Kartar Singh, for instance. We are ready to say what we can in his favour; but it only amounts to this, that the idea of the Ferozepore raid did not originate in his brain." He was sentenced to transportation for life. Among the other accused, the two 23rd Cavalry deserters, Sucha Singh and Maharaj Singh, were awarded transportation for life; three of the discharged seditious sepoys of the 26th Punjabis were also awarded transportation for life; and a fourth was acquitted. Arjan Singh, who murdered the head constable in the Anarkali bazar on the 20th February, had been at the Ferozepore affair on the previous night. When he was arrested, a slip of paper was found in his pocket with the name and home address of one of these convicted sepoys. Particulars of the other accused will be found in the statement at Appendix D.

83. The Padri Murder Trial

The Padri Murder Case was the next heard by the same Special Commissioners. It has already been summarised above. Particulars will be found in Appendix H.

This book, brought out by a civilian department, is not concerned with the army trials, in particular, with the court-martial that we are interested in. This court-martial is mentioned only fleetingly (Part III, no. 62, previous extract) and apparently not with the

same care as the rest of the book, only as an example of the serious consequences of a crime – ‘seduction of troops’ – that was allegedly committed by some of the civilian accused of the Supplementary Conspiracy Case, see pp. 147-148 above.

These were Prem Singh of Sursingh (no. 67 of Appendix D, death penalty), Hira Singh of Charar (no. 28 of Appendix D, transportation for life) and two ex-sawars of the 23rd Cavalry who had deserted early on, namely, Maharaj Singh of Kasail and Sucha Singh of Chola Kalan (nos. 52 and 82 of Appendix D, transported for life, the third ex-sawar Surain Singh of Shahbazpur, is approver no. xv in Appendix D).

Page 148 of the last extract also mentions the religious leader, **(Bhai) Randhir Singh of Narangwal** (no. 69 of Appendix D, transported for life) – who struck the tribunal as “*obviously a very vain man*” – who seems to have been convicted apparently for misleading all sorts of youth in general through his sermons! The Kartar Singh that Bhai Randhir Singh is compared unfavourably with by the tribunal – as far as brains for revolutionary kind of activities go – is of course **(Shaheed) Kartar Singh Sarabha**, who had been arrested on 2nd March, 1915 (see page 131 of this book) and already sentenced to death by hanging in the main Lahore Conspiracy Case (he is no. 39 in Appendix C of this book, that gives names of all the 82 accused and 10 approvers of this case).

Sarabha was during 1913-1914 a student of chemistry at the **University of California, Berkeley** – see page 38, also page 53 where a British spy reports, “*The students at Berkeley, California, are also believed to be almost universally tainted with Ghadr ideas.*” – and was one of the thousands of Sikhs who returned from U.S.A., Canada, etc., to India in 1914-1915 to attempt this abortive revolution. However, as this exciting account by two British police officers brings home, its failure was by no means a foregone conclusion. This revolution had been timed reasonably well. But for a string of fortunate – from the British point of view – accidents, resulting mostly from the Ghadr leaders not paying enough attention to details, the game might well have gone differently. A decisive role was played by the British spy with contacts in the 23rd Cavalry – the Kirpal Singh mentioned on p. 132 – who turned out to be very capable: he informed the British in advance of the date(s) that Rash Behari fixed for this Ghadr !

However I digress, and sweeping but unverifiable theories about great historical events are rather commonplace. After drawing a blank in [5] and [6] we must address the more basic and well-defined **question: *was the court-martial held at Dagshai?***

I conclude by listing the sawars of the 23rd mentioned by name in [6], for this could help in solving the above riddle. These are, their leader Lance-Dafedar Lachman Singh (pp. 82-83, 124); Balwant Singh of Barar, a returned emigrant from Shanghai, who enlisted to serve as a liaison with the Ghadrtes (pp. 83, 122, 124), but facilitated more the covert work of his cousin, the spy Kirpal Singh of Barar, also back from Shanghai (pp.122-124, 132); the regimental granthi Mul Singh, who advised prudence at the wrong time (pp. 82, 106) and later very prudently became a state approver; **Sucha Singh of Chola Kalan**, *the sawar who first brought the news about the Ghadr to the regiment, who deserted later with two others, was finally arrested and convicted in the Supplementary Conspiracy Case, however, instead of being transported to the Andamans, he was amongst those sent – because of an overcrowded Cellular Jail – to the Hazaribagh Central Jail in Bihar, from where he escaped in 1918, and was at large when this book was published* (pp. 81-83, 147-148, 168); and the other deserter, Maharaj Singh of Kasail, also awarded life imprisonment in the same case (pp. 147-148).

Note

[6.i] Till the seventies or so the state printing presses provided a useful service to scholars by re-issuing government publications that had gone out of print. The binding was bad, but the price was great, and, one was assured of the one thing which matters, *the authenticity of the text*, because the reprinting was from the original typesetting. Then at some point a decision was made – maybe by some enterprising civil servant who caught the whiff of approaching liberalisation – to terminate this useful service. Since most copyrights have lapsed, reprints can be made by just about any one, and with government presses out of the way, these cheaply made reprints can sell even if unreasonably priced (however sometimes the marked price is so high even in dollars that practically no one in India will buy them). Most of the remaining and reasonably priced reprints, for example [6], appear to be brought out by individuals or organisations dedicated to keeping the memory of a particular historical figure or movement alive. It is regrettable that Dr. V. P. Vatuk, who has, according to the blurb of [6], “For decades worked with people dedicated to preserve and honor Gadar heroes’ memory”, did not tell its publishers that they were *not* honouring this memory adequately by bringing out such a reprint. Perhaps a reprographic process was cost-prohibitive, but the original page breaks could easily have been indicated in the margin. As such, one can only hope there are not other, more serious, departures: for example, for all I know, the numerical discrepancy – ‘10 sentenced to death’ – may only be the contribution of Archana Publications to this mystery ?

This curious lack of evidence about the court-martial became, if anything, still more acute, when I stumbled on the following scholarly article, which is available on-line at www.csas.ed.ac.uk/papers.php, and whose title clearly promises us so much.

[7] ***“The Anatomy of Dissent in the Military of Colonial India During the First and Second World Wars,”*** by Gajendra Singh, Edinburgh Papers in South Asian Studies, no. 20 (2006), 45 pp.

This paper is completely silent about the said court-martial! And this, *not* because it is, by any means, confined to dissent on the war-front. It has many paragraphs about dissent in Punjab during the Ghadr, and both [5] and [6] are amongst its references. One would think, considering the topic being researched, that the author would have jumped at the lead provided by the mention of the court-martial of the 23rd Cavalry squadron in both [5] and [6]. Indeed, considering the number of soldiers executed or awarded life imprisonment, this case might be one of the most serious instances of “collective dissent” – to the anatomy of which about half of this paper is devoted, the remaining half dissects “individual dissent” – during the First World War.

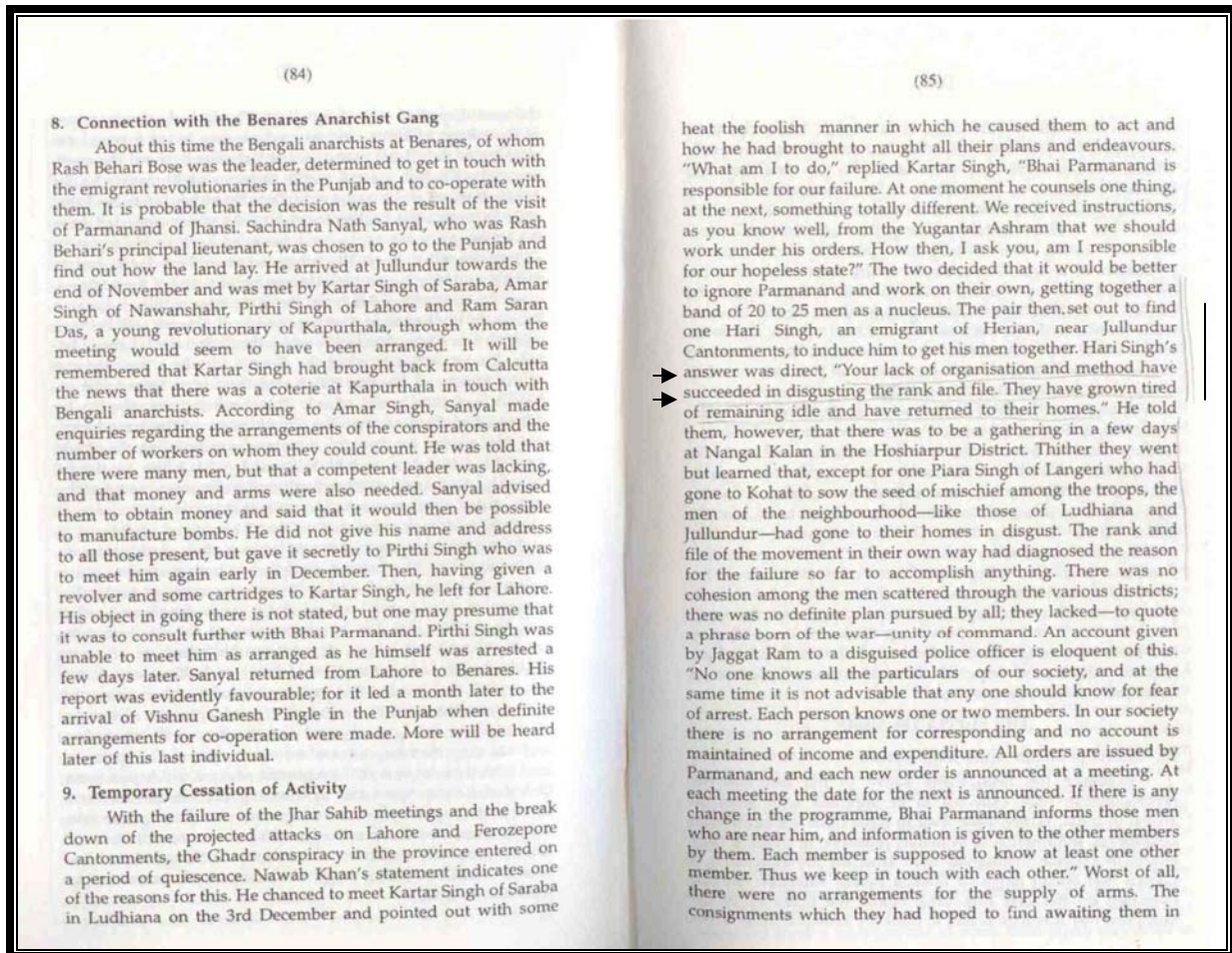
What makes this silence positively deafening is that this paper has also the following quotation from Isemonger and Slattery [6] on p. 26 :

“Your lack of organization and method have succeeded in disgusting the rank-and-file. They have grown tired of remaining idle and have returned home.”

And, the footnote (no.114) that embellishes it informs us that the above words were spoken by Lance-Dafadar Lachman Singh to Nawab Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha. Assuming that this is true, it is truly baffling why this work, on individual and collective dissent in the military of colonial India, should fail to mention a court-martial – mentioned in the book cited ! – in which the same Lachman Singh, along with many other fellow cavalrymen, was later condemned to death ?

The reprint [6] of Isemonger of Slattery that I am using has also the same quotation (on page 85, not page 105 as the aforementioned footnote 114 tells us) but it says the words were spoken, according to Nawab Singh’s statement, which Isemonger

and Slattery are discussing in “9. Temporary Cessation of Activity” of Part III of [6], *not* by the Lance-Dafadar or any other soldier, but by one *civilian* named Hari Singh of Herian, a fellow-emigrant back home in India for the Ghadr, and – see pp. 84-85 of [6] reproduced below – all the disgusted people returning home are also civilians :-



It seems that Gajendra Singh is using a version of Isemonger-Slattery which is different not only from my [6], but also from the version(s) used by Gurcharan Singh [3] or Jagjit Singh [4]: the page numbers cited in [3] or [4], respectively [7], correspond to bigger, respectively smaller, page numbers of [6]. But is there a version so *materially different* from mine that (i) it puts the above quotation in the mouth of Lance-Dafedar Lachman Singh and has disgusted soldiers, instead of civilians, returning to their homes (= barracks?), and (ii) it fails to mention a subsequent court-martial in which the very same Lachman Singh along with some other cavalrymen was condemned to death ?

Could be – stranger things have happened ! – but it seems more likely to me that Gajendra Singh has made, let us say, a **Freudian slip** ? For a possible answer to what could have led to it, I have reproduced next pp. 25-26 from his paper [7]:--

Sikhs were reading, was taken away. It is written that it is far better for the community that loses its sacred places to die. ... The only remedy, is [for] ... the troops to mutiny.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, even when the message was delivered unabridged, it could be interpreted in different ways that were shaped by *sipahis'* prior understanding of the issue, as was the case with the apocryphal language used to convey pan-Islamist messages;

Habibullah then told Bartya Sahib this parcel of lies ... [that] Ahmed Yar Khan read out an address in which he stated that for a Mahomedan to fight against a Turk would be the mark of an infidel, and that all those killed in fighting against the Turks would not go to Paradise. This was all false, for the lecture was really to the effect that the Mahomedans who drink wine and committed fornication and did other things forbidden by Islam, would die the death of unbelievers.¹⁰⁹

As a result, not only was there a different understanding of Ghadrite and Khilafatist propaganda by soldiers, but only the partial co-option of these revolutionary messages in the mutinies that soldiers were willing to commit.

This was certainly the case with the dissent that took place among Sikh *sipahis* between November 1914 and March 1915, because whilst educated Ghadrites may have sought to turn any instances of insubordination into a wider pan-Indian revolt that would lead to the spiritual and moral upliftment of all oppressed peoples¹¹⁰, those Sikh soldiers that were mobilized by the movement came to hold different goals. This is evident from the testimony of Sunder Singh, 'an old cavalry man', during the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case¹¹¹, for he claimed to have joined an insurgent attack on the Ferozepur armoury because of his anger at the demolition of part of the Rikabganj Gurdwara in New Delhi in 1913, the police firings at Budge Budge in November 1914, and his loftier desire to revive the ailing Sikh *Panth*;

A Sikh was hailed as a patriot by the Motherland and as a hero by the world abroad. But Oh-shame! Now Sikh has become a nickname for tiller at home; a synonym for labourer or Kooli [sic.] in the coasts of both the Pacific and Atlantic. ... Therefore, Awake, Oh

¹⁰⁸ Anon. Sikh, California, USA, to Sepoy, 82 Punjabis, Nowhera, NWFP; Isenmonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.36-37

¹⁰⁹ Abdul Alim, Signal Troop, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, to Risaldar Farrand Ali Khan, 6 Cavalry Depot, Sialkot, Punjab, (not dated), *CIM*, 1915-1916, Part 5, p.716

¹¹⁰ *As Krishna said to Arjun in the Gita: "Come to me and I will absolve you from your sins"; so the Ghadr party says in these hard times:*

"Oh sons of India... come to me, serve me, listen to my teaching... light up my country with my flame. I am the goddess who protects weak persons, brings together those who have long been separated, effaces injustice, removes famine and plague... and makes a waste country a happy place. My followers will grant the boon of faith, knowledge and happiness to Bharat. Come to me."

Lala Har Dayal, 'Nia Zamana' ('New Era'); Isenmonger and Slattery, 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.45-46

¹¹¹ *ibid*, p.124

Khalsa, Arise, Oh Khalsa, and never again shall we be fallen. Liberate BHARAT MATA from the clutches of MALECH FARENGIS.

SAT SRI AKAL.¹¹²

Moreover, it was this divergence in ideology between *sipahs* and the Ghadr Party that resulted in *sowars* of the 23 Cavalry being quite willing to cut telegraph wires, create 'chlorate of potash' bombs, and to plan for the assassination of their officers in November 1914¹¹³, but to be unwilling to mutiny before there was evidence of insurrection in the Sikh villages of Punjab. In fact, because such a religious uprising never took place, when Ghadr agents, in the form of Nawab Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha, made contact with the regiment again in January 1915, they were told in no uncertain terms, that,

Your lack of organization and method have succeeded in disgusting the rank-and-file.

They have grown tired of remaining idle and have returned to their homes.¹¹⁴

Instead it was only in the aftermath of the First World War, and in the blue *pagris* and *cholas* of the Akali Dal, that Sikh soldiers were willing to leave their 'homes' again. For in the Akali agitation for the control of Sikh gurdwaras, not only did military pensioners and discharged soldiers form over a third of the Akali *jathas* in Ludhiana district, one in seven of those from Jullunder and one in ten of all Akalis in Amritsar¹¹⁵, but former soldiers completed the fusion between Chadrite radicalism and Sikhism in the armed creed of the Babbar Akalis;

...the land of five rivers is replete with Sikh Gurdwaras so that it is practically a vast Sikh Gurdwara. So long as the Punjab does not come under the political control of the Sikhs, neither the Sikh community can be relieved of the anxiety about its religion nor can peace be maintained in this country.¹¹⁶

Therefore, the integration of a Chadrite message with Sikhism, resulted in Sikh soldiers being willing to undertake mutiny only when it was Sikhism that was endangered.

Whilst there were no revolutionaries visiting regimental lines during the inculcation of pan-Islamist sentiment, the result of Khilafatist propaganda was nonetheless similar to that of the Ghadr movement. In contrast to the work done by the

¹¹² 'Khalsa Pamphlet', posted at Highgate, London, 17 September 1910 to 21 October 1910; N. Singh and K. Singh, *Struggle for Free Hindustan*, p.317-318

¹¹³ 'Isomonger and Slavery', 'Ghadr Conspiracy Report', p.100-103, and 184

¹¹⁴ Lance-Dafadar Lachman Singh to Nawab Khan and Kartar Singh Sarabha; *ibid*, p.105

¹¹⁵ 240 discharged soldiers and military pensioners out of a total of 672 known Akalis in Ludhiana, 148 out of 916 in Jullunder, 152 out of 1,363 in Amritsar; R.K. Mazumdar, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, p.229

¹¹⁶ 'Babbar Sher', Amritsar, 30 September 1923; 'Extract from the weekly report of the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Dept., Govt. of India, 17 October 1923'; *Sikh Activities in India, 1923*, Public and Judicial Papers, OIOC, British Library, IOR/L/PJ/12/170, p.4

It seems from the above that the author gives great importance to the disconnect between the returning emigrants' leftist ideas, and the more traditional ones of the Sikh troops they were attempting to subvert. Undoubtedly, these ideological differences contributed to the Ghadr's failure, and all books acknowledge this, though opinion as to

importance varies. However, it is a bit too much when a historian cites (in this case, a ‘quotation’ of a Lance-Dafedar) and omits to cite (this same Lance-Dafedar’s court-martial) from the very same book, only according to whether it suits, or does not suit, his theory. And, certainly, the line *has* been crossed, when his obsession with his pet theory makes him unconsciously (?) replace an inconvenient civilian, who actually spoke those quoted words, with a soldier who never spoke them.

Notes

[7.i] By giving page reproductions from some references I hope I have minimized my own contribution to the possible multiplication of error. The reader has the original conveniently before him, while he might have been loathe to check it if I had merely appended a citation. However, this works only for statements of the type ‘X is *in* Y’, no technology seems available for reinforcing statements of the type ‘X is *not in* Y’, where Y is long with no index. And, even page reproductions would be quite impracticable for someone painting a broader picture than the, admittedly very narrow, problem that we are focussed on. For example, were William Dalrymple’s brilliant book, “The Last Mughal” (Penguin/Viking 2006), to contain page reproductions of even one-third of his references, its considerable length would multiply by at least ten. But then, an important question arises: *how are these scholarly books or papers, with hundreds of citations, refereed for accuracy?* We have seen inaccuracies in practically each and every one of the references we reviewed above, but surely, even the most conscientious of referees cannot be expected to analyse hundreds of citations. However, because accuracy is so important, some serious effort should be made, for example, a detailed analysis of a small but statistically significant sample of the citations, should help a lot.

[7.ii] It is true that error has a way of creeping into even the most careful of works, and even the greatest of mathematicians have made non-trivial mistakes. Yet, *precision is important in all disciplines*. It is needed as a mathematician chips away at error through counterexample and proof to arrive at a beautiful truth, it is needed as a sculptor chips away material from a block to arrive at a beautiful form. However, *there is more to a discipline than precision*. Just as poetry is more than precise metre, mathematics is more than logical precision. To quote from an address of Marston Morse (see his “Collected Papers” Vol. 2, World Scientific, 1987, p.1010): “The speakers were not hostile to mathematics; mathematics was even emphasized, but frequently for erroneous or insufficient reasons. One of the contributors writes ... ‘pure mathematics with its unparalleled precision’ ... Yet, who wants to be precise except on occasion ? To give play to the imagination, to create and form ideas, to have a mastery of language and logic, to have that freedom that comes from recognition of dogma, and the open acceptance or rejection of an axiom at will, to recognize how much one does not know, or can not know; these things are all in mathematics.”

[7.iii] In India the common perception of mathematics is, in fact, ludicrous. Most school students think of it as a subject in which *no logic* (!) is needed, only some methods – like finding h.c.f. – have to be memorized, the crucial thing being to practise these ad nauseum, preferably in a reputed tuition academy, till the high level of speed and numerical accuracy required to ace the all-important exams – set by people who themselves have the same ludicrous perception of mathematics – have been attained. Verily is the tail wagging the dog! To my eyes, what is passing for it here in India, is about as close to mathematics as my saying chan-chen-chin-chow-chuw is close to speaking Chinese. An intelligent non-mathematical person, who enjoys doing crossword puzzles or Sudokus, is closer to being a mathematician than the majority of the M.Sc.’s, and even some of the Ph.D.’s, in “mathematics” that Indian universities are producing. These latter have no inkling of what logical precision – let alone the finer things that Morse told us are also to be found in mathematics – means, and can not think out on their own even one problem from the International Mathematical Olympiad (a test for gifted school students) even if given all the time in the world for it. Nevertheless, most tuition academies are run by such individuals only.

[7.iv] Similarly, accuracy about facts is only one part, but a *key* part, of being a historian. In the West, even historical minutiae have been lovingly preserved, for example, in the public library of Lille, I once saw what seemed to be no more than a local gossip column – which lord’s daughter was engaged to which baron’s son, etc. – for the time preceeding the Battle of Hastings in 1066 A.D. In India, facts about even relatively very recent events are quite blurred, so the energy of its historians should be spent more on bringing these blurred facts into focus, rather than theorizing from thin air. As Dalrymple, op. cit., pp. 13-14, points out – with just a wee bit of poetic license – “For a time when ten thousand dissertations ... have ingeniously theorized about orientalism and colonialism ... all invariably given titles with obscure meaning – *Gendering the Colonial Paradigm*, *Constructing the Imagined Other*, *Othering the Imagined Construction*, not one PhD has ever been written from the Mutiny Papers.” These unused Mutiny Papers were conveniently there all the time, in the National Archives of India, “in a magnificent Lutyens-period building bang in the centre of India’s capital city. Using the Mutiny Papers and properly harvesting their riches as a source for 1857 felt at times as strange and exciting – and indeed as unlikely – as going to Paris and discovering, unused on the shelves of the Bibliotheque Nationale, the entire records of the French Revolution.” One can’t help feeling that the full answer to our little mystery is also probably lying around, neglected, in these or some other well-known archives ?

[7.v] This lost opportunity (failure to use these and other easily available archives) on the part of Delhi’s historians – maybe the younger ones on its campuses were ‘too busy’ preparing for the exam into babudom? – means that Dalrymple is probably the first writer who has truly brought home the *extent* of the massacres committed by the British in Delhi after the city was retaken in 1857. These rival in numbers, and perhaps surpass in cold-bloodedness, those committed before in Delhi by Nadir Shah – see p.391 of Dalrymple for his comparison – and Tamer Lane.

[7.vi] I have dealt only with honest errors in all of the above. These are almost inevitable, and not even the best, and the most sincere, of researchers is immune from them. There is a world of difference – and every researcher worth the name can easily spot this difference – between this, and *inherently shoddy, insincere, deceptive, or even fraudulent work*. The state of Indian academia being what it is – the remarks made in note [7.iii] above about the current quality of our M.Sc.’s and Ph.D.’s generalize to all disciplines – work of this kind is, unfortunately, more the rule than an exception in all our universities.

§5. Quo vadis? Clearly its omission in [7] is unimportant, the court-martial almost certainly happened; and, it is equally clear that, *the one and only satisfactory way of putting the issue to rest is to obtain the court-martial's record*. So I emailed this request to some likely places. Only an archivist from the British Library has replied so far (11/07/07): he did a brief search on my behalf through the India Office Records, and feels a more thorough search will yield the desired information. The National Archives of India in Delhi did not reply, but I've found some very helpful people, including a cousin of mine who used to be a full Colonel in the army before he quit to run a model farm. These friends are even now looking through the National, as well as the Army, Archives in Delhi, so I am hopeful that we'll soon have this 'smoking gun'.

In the meantime, I have – with my wife as an (occasionally reluctant) research assistant – continued my investigations in Dagshai. I've still not found a native who is aware of this event of 1915. The principals of its two public schools assured me that their libraries had nothing other than text books, etc., and both felt that their students had neither time nor taste for any outside reading (I was hoping that one of these libraries might have some old tome from around 1915 with maybe some local Dagshai gossip or information). One of these gentlemen has taught history for long in his school but confessed disarmingly that his knowledge of local history did not go beyond the well-worn 'Daag-e-shahi to Dagshai' story about the town's name. This old story is told in an article – see [8] below -- from a newspaper that is posted in front of Dagshai prison.

Note [8.i]. The Punjab Gazetteer, Simla District, 1888-89, p.29 has this about Dagshai's origin: "This small district, consisting of the five villages named Dabbi, Bughtiala, Dagshai, Chunaweg and Jawug, was transferred to the British Government without compensation in 1847, by the Maharaja of Patiala, for the purpose of a cantonment. The whole of the lands attached to the abovenamed villages have been included within the limits of the cantonment." Thus, *one of the original villages was also named Dagshai*. Accordingly, in the version of this story now on the web, it was not the British, but an unspecified eighteenth century 'Mughal', who initiated this habit of tattooing the prisoners foreheads indelibly with the royal stigma, the Daag-e-Shahi. The entire Simla hills was under the Gurkhas for about five years till – see, e.g., B.D.Sanwal, "Nepal and the East India Company", Asia Publishing (1965) – the Battle of Malaon (1815), in which David Ochterlony, with some help from the Patiala forces, finally managed to beat Amar Singh Thapa. The Gurkhas were forced to cede their conquests to the British, who returned most of the hill kingdoms to their erstwhile rajas, except in those cases where the raja had actively aided the Gurkhas. Some or all of these rajas territories were given in gratitude to their battlefield ally, the Maharaja of Patiala. After some decades the British had second thoughts, they decided to build the cantonments of Simla, Dagshai, etc., and, for this purpose, they got the requisite land back from the Maharaja of Patiala, who continued however to hold very substantial tracts of the Simla hills till at least 1947.

[8] A newspaper article posted in Dagshai prison, by Fateh Singh Chauhan.

Though its history is shaky, the layout and construction of this Central Jail are fairly well described in this article (if only some unfortunate partition walls could be removed, and the place cleared of clutter, this jail can still be restored, with a minimum of cost, from the godown it has become, to a rough approximation of its original):--

दागेशाही से बन गया डगशई

फतेहसिंह चौहान

डगशई (हि. प्र.) : बहुत ही कम लोग यह जानते हैं कि 'डगशई'-दाग-ए-शाही का बिगड़ा हुआ नाम है। सन् 1846 में जब पांच गांवों की यह भूमि छावनी बसाने के लिए ब्रिटिश सरकार को महाराजा पटियाला ने दान की थी तो छावनी के साथ अंग्रेजों ने एक शाही कैदखाने (केन्द्रीय जेल) का निर्माण भी करवाया था जिसका वास्तविक स्वरूप आज भी बरकरार है।

यह कैदखाना बाहर से एक किले की तरह दिखाई देता है। इस कैदखाने को ऊंची मोटी चारदीवारी लगा कर एक किले का रूप दिया गया है। यह जेल 'टी' आकार में निर्मित है। इसके निर्माण में पक्के नीले पत्थरों का प्रयोग हुआ है। इस कैदखाने (जेल) के निर्माण में सीमेंट की जगह उस वक्त 'सूखी' जो ईंट की पिसाई कर बारीक बाऊंडर की तरह होती थी, में चूना मिलाकर इस जेल का निर्माण किया गया है।

सूखी व चूने के मिश्रण से बनी यह जेल डेढ़ सौ वर्ष बाद आज भी ऐसी लगती है जैसे कुछ वर्ष पहले ही बनी हो। इस जेल में 50 कोठरियां हैं तथा प्रत्येक में एक मोटा लकड़ी का द्वार है और एक लोहे की सलाखों वाला मोटा भारी दरवाजा आज भी मौजूद है। इस जेल का फर्श 'दयार' की लकड़ी का बना है। जेल के मुख्य दरवाजे पर दो बहुत मोटे-मोटे लकड़ों के द्वार हैं। जेल से बाहर किलानुमा दीवार पर एक मोटे लोहे की रॉड का बना दरवाजा गेट के रूप में है। जब इस द्वार को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो किले को 'पाँच' कर कोई भी बाहर नहीं जा सकता।

इस कैदखाने को इस कारीगरी से बनाया गया है कि आज हर इन्सान इसे देख कर हैरान हो जाता है। इस जेल में खाने-पीने व अन्य सुविधाएं उस समय अंदर ही मौजूद थीं। इस जेल को अंग्रेजों द्वारा अपने कैदियों के लिए बनाया गया था जिसमें अमीर शाही अंग्रेजों तथा अन्य अपराधी अंग्रेजों को बंदी बनाकर रखा जाता था।

संगीन अपराधी को कड़ी यातनाएं इस जेल के भीतर दी जाती थीं तथा सजा पूरी होने पर उनके माथे पर अंग्रेजों द्वारा एक अमिट चिन्ह दाग दिया जाता था जिसे देख कर हर एक को पता लग जाता था कि ये दागे-शाही की जेल काट कर आया है। ये चिन्ह संगीन अपराधी की निशानी होती थी।

इस कैदखाने में किसी भी भारतीय अपराधी या राजा, स्वतंत्रता सेनानी को नहीं रखा जाता था बल्कि भारतीय आदमी का इस जेल के समीप से गुजरना भी वर्जित था। अंग्रेज भारतीय अपराधियों व स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को अंडेमान-निकोबार द्वीप समूह को दंड क्षेत्र के रूप में बरतते थे। वहां भारतीय आजादी की मांग करने वाले स्वतंत्रता सेनानी को सैल्युलर जेल में बंदी बनाकर यातनाएं देते थे।

अब यह जेल आजकल डगशई एम.ई.एस. का स्टोर व सहायक दुर्ग अभियंता का कार्यालय है। यही कारण है कि एम.ई.एस. की देखरेख में आज भी यह ऐतिहासिक धरोहर सुरक्षित है। हजारों बड़े-बड़े सैनिक अधिकारी व अन्य पर्यटक इस जेल को देखने के लिए आते हैं।

FATEH SINGH CHAUHAN
B/S M.B.S. DAGSHAI (HP)

Fs Chauhan

If the 1915 court-martial of the 23rd Cavalry was indeed in Dagshai, then Lance-Dafedar Lachman Singh and his seventeen followers must have been kept (most probably) in the cells of this prison only. However, in the above extract, Chauhan avers that this prison was meant, and had been used, exclusively for British prisoners only. Most other citizens of Dagshai also subscribe to this view, and quite a few locals shall tell you that, till quite late into the 1900's, non-whites other than regimental menials and domestics were not even allowed by the British to come above the Cart Road.

Anyway, here is a picture showing five of this prison's fifty cells :--



At website <http://coad.neuf.fr/donohoe.htm>, which has much of interest for Dagshai, you can read how some Gurkha soldiers of the Nasiri regiment, then stationed at Sabathu, Kasauli, and Jutogh, who revolted during 1857, were brought to this prison only, and executed in Dagshai. This would of course imply that Chauhan's statement is

incorrect, however it is probably true for the time period 1917-47, and the most famous of this prison's prisoners, whom we discuss next, were certainly white.

Connaught Rangers. Even as Lieutenant-Governor O'Dwyer was extolling the British barbarity in Jallianwala Bagh, many of his countrymen were fighting for the independence of Ireland. The news from back home, about British barbarity against some of these guerilla fighters, ignited in 1920 a mutiny in this Irish regiment, that spread quickly from Jalandhar to other cantonments. Two mutineers were killed, and the remaining arrested, and put in Dagshai prison; later, fourteen were sentenced to death, though eventually only one, the firebrand James Daly, was executed, here in Dagshai prison, by firing squad (one prisoner John Miranda had died during imprisonment).

A truly staggering – especially as compared to the pathetic paucity of available information regarding the 23rd Cavalry's mutineers – amount of information is available about these Irish rebels. Clearly, **Ireland has preserved the memory of its heroes, and India has not.** One finds from the internet even trivia about their court-martial – for example, that a famous British actor's father was one of the judges – and about their stay here in Dagshai prison, and the exact wording of the execution order for Daly, details about his execution, also we learn that first his body was interred in an unsanctified grave near the prison, much later in 1970 exhumed and properly reburied as hero in Ireland. Since this is all so easily available, there is no point in my repeating it. Here are two of the numerous websites that have something to say about this Irish mutiny in India:--

<http://www.factbug.org/cgi-bin/a.cgi?a=975969>

<http://www.tipperary-central.com/forumcgi-bin/prntopic.cgi?cid=262&fid=488&tid=760>

Browsing through this material I have found so far only one possible clue to our riddle: an Irish prisoner reminisces that a large number of Indian prisoners had died in Dagshai prison in 1916 – were these of the 23rd Cavalry ? – and that after this, Dagshai prison had remained empty till the Irish came. Another item of interest was that the Irish court-martial was in the *Gymnasium*. Though I have not pinpointed this building as yet, it is probably a part of the Army Public School now. Could it be, then, that the 1915

court-martial of Lachman Singh and others was also in this building? We learnt during our last visit that *a film crew from Ireland had shot in Dagshai Prison scenes for a documentary movie – complete with actors playing the roles of Daly and the other mutineers – last year.* I need to check out this movie, also find the teacher of A.P.S. (our helpful guide had forgotten the name) who was their liaison, and who, according to our guide, is writing *a book on this prison?* Lets hope that he, at least, is aware of the court-martial of the 23rd Cav, otherwise his book will skip it! That Daly was executed by firing squad, and that this prison has no gallows in it, does *not* imply that the soldiers of the 23rd were executed by firing squad. The Gurkha mutineers of 1857 could have been hanged elsewhere – cf. p. 200 of Dalrymple’s “The Last Mughal,” a British hero of 1857 recommends that Indians be put to death only by hanging to save gunpowder – likewise, our 12 shaheeds of 1915, but this ‘elsewhere’ may well be in Dagshai only.

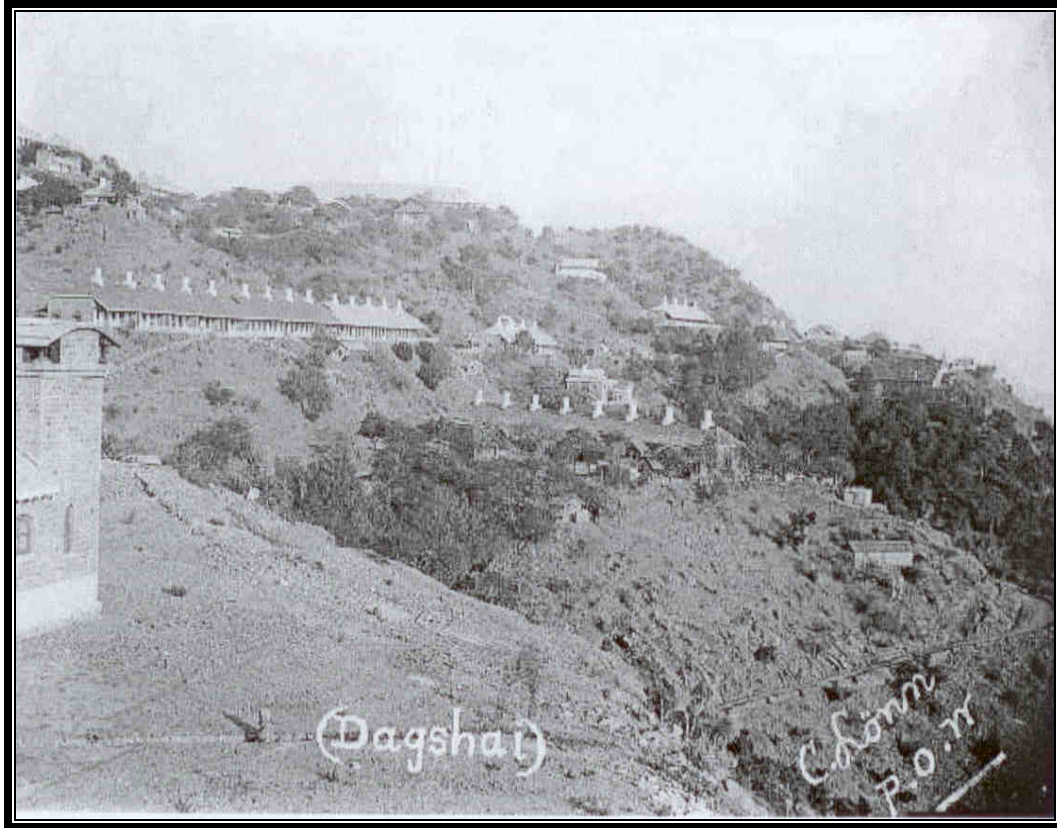
Dagshai Gallows? The helpful commanding officer of the Gurkha regiment now in Dagshai assured me that the town had one, see picture below. It is a modest affair, and with no scaffold or pit to see now – nothing but the stuff of an N.C.O. – it is hard to recognise it as a gallows. However the cabins near it – see next picture – do seem a bit like death-row. Anyway, it is located before the unused church, as one descends from the C.O.’s office towards Charing Cross, and to Gurkhas it has always been **Phansighar:-**





The website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Connaught_Rangers will give you the glorious battle record of “The Devil’s Own”, i.e., the Connaught Rangers. (Likewise, the 23rd Cavalry was a crack fighting unit with a proud battle record by 1915, that was why it was in the Lieutenant-Governor’s escort.) Amongst the famous battles these Irish ‘devils’ fought were some in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Hardly any local knows, but Dagshai has a fascinating connection with this war. Many Boers were interned as prisoners of war at various places in India during this time. Of these, about 290 were in Dagshai cantonment. **A Boer prisoner of war, C. Lönn, took the next photograph of Dagshai – so it is well over a hundred years old!** (This photograph and information I had downloaded some years ago, the pages bear the title *Anglo-Boer War Photo’s* (sic), however the website seems obsolete now and email bounces back from the given eaddress daniru@anglo-boer.co.za. Nevertheless, it should still be possible to double check, because there are on the internet many websites run by Boer afficiandos of this war.) Even our expert M.E.S. guides were hard put to place the scene precisely in present-day Dagshai, for things have changed. For example, those helpful rows of chimneys that one sees in the picture were knocked out some time ago, at least from most A.P.S. rooftops, because of excessive rain coming through them and bothering this school’s students. Anyway, one thing is pretty clear from the picture, the conditions of confinement for these P.O.W.’s were pretty laid-back in comparison. It is

very unlikely that the mutineers of the 23rd Cavalry – who had been charged with capital crimes – were imprisoned anywhere else but in Dagshai Prison, because no other building in this town seems equally suitable from the point of view of security.



It seems that the most likely place, where ‘the smoking gun’ shall be found, is the Army Archives, but light could be shed also by the contemporary municipal records of Dagshai. I remember reading in some historical novel – was it Mandeep Rai’s charming, “In the Shadows of the Pines”, UBS (1996) ? – a description of a ballroom scene in Dagshai, with a reading room near the Officer’s Mess. However, the commanding officer assured me that no library existed now, and that he had no idea where all the old books and papers could have gone. A phone-call from him to the superintendent of the very old **Dagshai Military Hospital** – *its records of 1915 ought to have something of interest about the court-martialled cavalrymen* – elicited the reply that their medical records did not go further back than 1947. So, did the British just pack their ‘diligently kept’ town records and take them back to Britain?

If so, they did Dagshai a favour. We are, to put it mildly, notorious at preserving records. Barely a week after someone has been cremated, one can see a raddiwala carting away the late lamented's papers and books, other of course, than his check-book, pass-book, and so on. As an example of this propensity of ours, you might also like to have a look at *the rock next to the Dagshai C.O.'s office, where some imbecile, in a fit of misplaced patriotic fervour, obliterated (only the barest signs remain now) the beautifully engraved insignias of all the British regiments that were posted in Dagshai before 1947.* This criminal defacement was done many years ago – the C.O. himself painfully pointed it out to me again – I myself had seen this first about 10 years ago.

One of the school principals was sure the old records of Dagshai cantonment are now in Kasauli – or maybe Dehra Dun, he later qualified – and the way to go was to make a formal request for what I wanted to the Station Officer, Kasauli. I'll probably try that on my next trip, because, besides this problem, I am also interested in some others for which these town archives are probably better than the national ones in Delhi.

The reader must have realized by now that **the problem that I am considering is in fact trivial**, more exactly that, it *should* be trivial in a well-functioning democracy. Any citizen of the U.S. can obtain authentic information about fifty-year old court-martial by writing a simple email to the Department of Defense. Yet here, poor Jagjit Singh, a scholar toiling on a treatise on an important freedom movement, was unable (apparently) to obtain such information in 1955, ditto Gurcharan Singh Sainsara and his "Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee" (with Members of Parliament in it) in 1961, down the line to us so far in the year of the lord, 2007. Anyway, as I waited eagerly for one of my 'Paul Drakes' to come up with this 'smoking gun' from Delhi, I decided that I should check *directly* – we have already checked this indirectly through the 1919 police report [6] by Isemonger and Slattery – on what the 1916 judgement of the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case had to say about this court-martial of 1915.

With some help from Dinesh Khurana, I located (the on-line and card catalogues assign it quite different numbers) the following book in the university library.

[9] “War Against King Emperor (Ghadr of 1914-15) A Verdict by Special Tribunal,” editors Malwinder Jit Singh, Harinder Singh, Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Trust Ludhiana (2001).

I had hoped, from the title and the publisher’s name, to find in this book the full 1916 judgement of the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case. However this is not so. But long extracts *are* given, which are in italics and interleaved with longer extracts from the 1915 judgement of the Lahore Conspiracy Case. These extracts apparently suffice for us, for they seem to contain all the allusions that this tribunal had to make regarding the 23rd Cavalry’s mutineers. As surmised before, their court-martial was mentioned only incidentally in this 1916 judgement, because some soldiers of the 23rd Cavalry, namely, the first five below, were state approvers in this civilian case:--

Mul Singh, P. W. 17.

Ganda Singh, P. W. 18.

Puran Singh, P. W. 19.

Wasawa Singh, P. W. 20.

Balwant Singh, P.W. 22.

D - The 26th Punjabis: -

Teja Singh.

Anokh Singh.

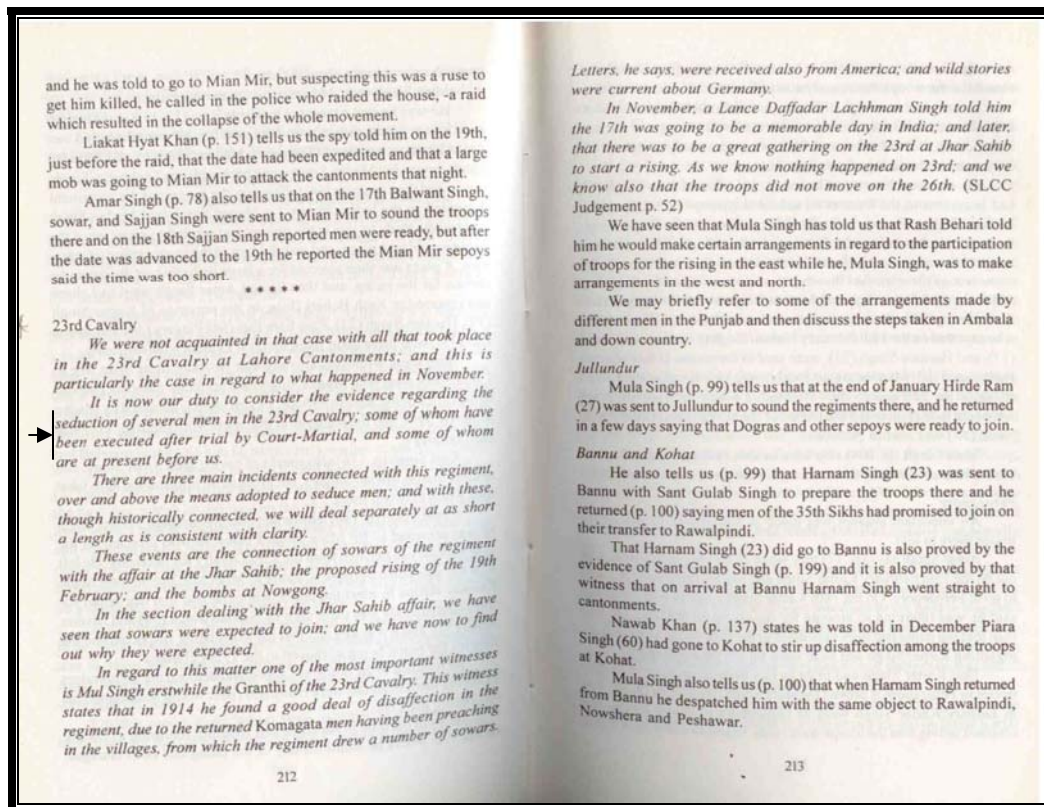
The history portion of this judgement and the treatment of individual cases will show what these approvers testify to.

The 23rd Cavalry was transferred from Mian Mir, Lahore to Nowgong. On the way, at Harpalpore Station, bombs exploded in a wooden box belonging to Wasawa Singh, which contained Puran Singh Lance-Daffadar’s luggage. Both of them were arrested, and sent to Jutogh. Balwant Singh was also sent for and enquiry commenced. About the 15th May Puran Singh began to disclose some information. Balwant Singh was examined on the 28th May and Wasawa Singh examined on the 31st May. Ganda Singh, a sowar, was examined on the 20th June, an examination which laid bare the object of Jhar Sahib gatherings. The information thus collected showed that three men had visited the lines, afterwards identified to be Lal Singh of Bhure, L.C.C., Natha Singh and Sunder Singh (W.G.), approvers. Natha Singh gave a clue to the pocket-book in which were noted the names of men at the Kairon mound, which was recovered soon after. Sunder Singh (W.G.) was arrested on the 16th July; was examined first by Dhanpat Rai, P.W. 130, on the 18th and again by Harkishen Singh on the 28th July. He made a very long statement. We have examined the earlier of the two statements in the interests of the accused. When Lala Dhanpat Rai recorded the confession of Sunder Singh (W.G.), he did not know of the arrest or the statement of Natha Singh, approver.

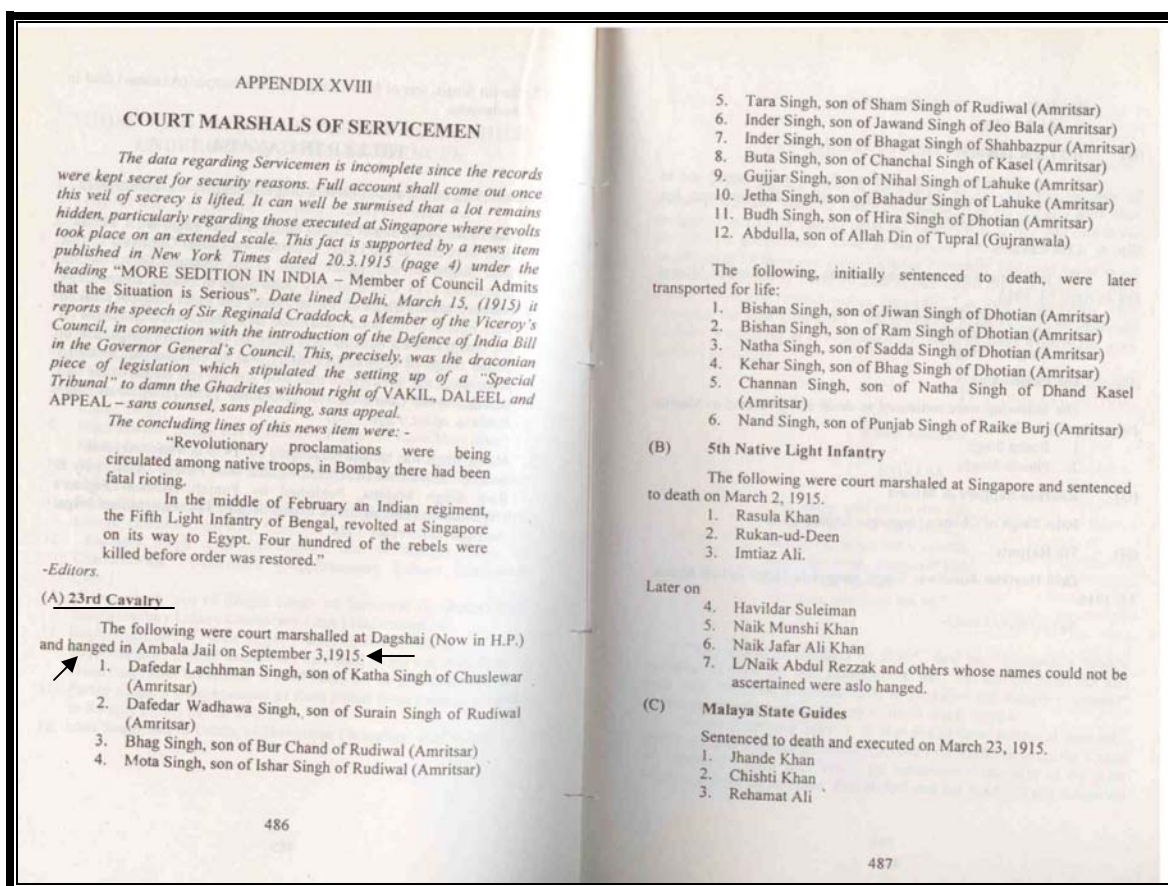
Natha Singh approver’s statement was recorded by Ijaz Husain, P.W. 190. He was brought to Lahore on 13th July on the order of the Superintendent of Police, Lahore. He was identified

We do obtain from the above – which is from “*Part II Law Points 14. Approver’s Testimony*” of the 1916 judgement – one new bit of information: *after the box-exploding incident, the two approvers involved in it were sent to Jutogh Cantonment*, next to Simla, so we are not too far from Dagshai now! Subsequently Balwant Singh (who was already cooperating) was also sent to Jutogh, presumably with policemen, to aid the army interrogators in the ‘enquiry’ there; the imprecise ‘about the 15th May’ shows that this was outside the judicial ambit. As against this, precise dates are given on which four approvers were ‘examined’ subsequently for this civilian case, but it is unclear if the three approvers who were in Jutogh were also brought to Lahore for this purpose.

The court-martial is mentioned, amongst the extracts from the 1916 judgement that are in [9], apparently only once, on page 212, which is from “*Part III The History Of The Conspiracy And War, C- The Revolutionists in India – Outline of Proceedings in India, III. Activities of the Revolutionists , (4) Seduction of Troops*”. From this page we glean another small but important bit of information: *by the date this judgement was delivered, that is, before March 30, 1916, the shaheeds had already been executed :--*



Like Isemonger and Slattery (1919) and O'Dwyer (1925) after it, this judgement of 1916 was silent about where the court-martial took place. On the other hand, like Jagjit Singh (1955) and Gurcharan Singh Sainsara (1961) before them – these two are not cited in this book – the editors of [9] again tell us, in **Appendix XVIII, Court Marshals (sic) of Servicemen**, (A) 23rd Cavalry, pp. 486-487, that the court-martial was in Dagshai, and give us the same list of the 18 convicted soldiers:--



However there is a more official air to the data – the father's name is given in each case – this time, and we are told that Abdulla was from a village in district Gujranwala, not Lahore; but what caught my eye right away was the assertion that the twelve were **'hanged in Ambala Jail on September 3, 1915'**! Now here, at last, was a clear-cut assertion that I could verify, more conveniently so, because a family friend is a high-ranking police officer in Haryana, and indeed, he is already on the job as I write this. Note also that *the introductory material of Appendix XVIII is clearly by the two editors, but they are silent about the authorship of the data which follows it.* I looked

through the book, and the best guess I could make is: *Bhai Nahar Singh*? This because there are, on page xv of the Foreword, contributed by Kharak Singh, these words: “*The Editors have based their account largely on the material collected by Bhai Nahar Singh, the well-known historiographer, from the archives of the Central Government in New Delhi. It is unfortunate that he expired before the material could see the light of the day.*” And, even earlier, on page x, a publisher’s note informs us that Bhai Nahar Singh was unable to continue his work because of old age, so had “*handed over all the material collected by him to the present editors Prof. Malwinder Jit Singh and Prof. Harinder Singh,*” who had now brought his work to fruition. So there was still hope! *It was possible that in this posthumous material of Bhai Nahar Sahib there were exact archival references for the data of ‘Appendix XVIII’?* If so, it could be of great help in getting also the complete records of the court-martial. Clearly, I needed now to get in contact with the editors, who alone could answer the questions that I have just posed.

Notes

[9.i] It is incumbent on any writer to give, for the facts claimed by him, exact and specific references. Yet, this elementary tenet of scholarship has been ignored once again. Also, it is imperative for a scholar to acknowledge previous work. This too is unfortunately not the case. We found the names of the eighteen, and the statement that the court-martial was in Dagshai, even in the 1955 book [4] of Jagjit Singh. Yet, with the single exception of [2], all subsequent mentions did not acknowledge the existence of this well-known treatise. However, it must also be said that Jagjit Singh himself did not leave us – he passed away in 1997 – at least not in this treatise, enough clues as to what his own sources were: we have reviewed all his citations, and found in none any mention of Dagshai or a list of the eighteen. It seems the historians of the Ghadr are making the same mistake their heroes made, not paying attention to details.

[9.ii] I hasten to add that these are my heroes too—that is why I am engaged in writing this—for the *passion* they brought to their cause, and indeed, passion is to be found in everything worthwhile that has ever been done, from great music to great mathematics (unfortunately, being an ‘in’ word, it is also found these days in the mouths of many who show not the slightest symptom of passion). I prefer history written by insiders – it is so much more fun! – but I tend, for better or for worse, to measure their declared passion for their cause by the amount of effort I can discern in their finished work.

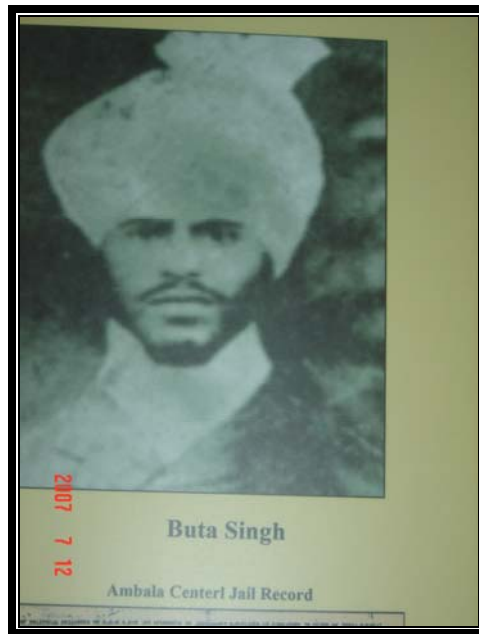
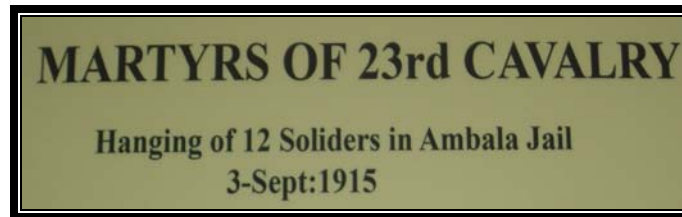
[9.iii] That “a lot remains hidden” (about the unrest in the army) one can almost sense already in Isemonger and Slattery [6] in the *ease* with which the Ghadrates ‘seduced’ troops. Apparently only a *fait accompli*, viz., the disclosure of the court martial of the 23rd Cavalry during the Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case, had prompted a mention of this particular event in Isemonger and Slattery [6] and O’Dwyer [5] ? Otherwise, the British seemed intent on keeping a lid on things. That is understandable from *their* point of view – witness the similar efforts being made by India’s two main political parties to keep a similar lid on Delhi, 1984, and Gujarat, 2002 – *but why were all the post-1947 governments interested in keeping these old skeletons of the British Raj in the closet?* There seems no logic to “... the records were kept secret for security reasons. Full account shall come out once this veil of secrecy is lifted,” but then, there is not much logic to most things in India’s babudom. It seems that, from Jagjit Singh onwards, these historians have been dependent on ‘leaks’ from sources that cannot be disclosed

because they work under these hidebound secrecy rules? I don't think RTI can be of much help either unless one is demanding clear-cut information – like, 'did these hangings take place in Ambala Jail on September 3, 1915?' – but by then the historical problem is well-nigh solved. Assuming that this checks out, felicitations are due to Bhai Nahar Singh, or whosoever, who obtained this information first.

[9.iv] I have also a quibble with the repeated use of 'na vakeel, na daleel, na appeal' by the editors. This catchy slogan, of the next generation of revolutionaries, no doubt reflects correctly the vindictive spirit often displayed by the judges, but the book itself tells us that the defence did have some 'vakeels' and did make some 'daleels': some lawyers are named on p. 7, both the judgements weigh a number of objections raised by them (but almost always the ruling is adverse), and from p. 531 we learn that there were over a hundred witnesses for the defence. Only the third part of the slogan was literally true: no appeal was possible against conviction or sentence (one could only appeal for clemency).

§ 6. A lucky break. Back home on 06/07/07 with [9] from the library, I'd started leafing through it, for all on the 23rd Cav, and soon was at Appendix XVIII, and realized I needed to get at its source. Then I had a lucky break! I saw that one of the editors of [9], a grandson of Bhai Randhir Singh, was known to me. With help again from Dinesh – he found me Professor Harinder Singh's email – I had soon sent a request for this source, mentioning that the only guess I could make was Bhai Nahar Singh? Professor Harinder Singh's net was not working, so he replied only on 11/06/07, referring me to his co-editor for information about the 23rd Cav and Bhai Nahar Singh's papers, and gave me his telephone. Next morning I called, asking if I could come see him for Bhai Nahar Singh's papers and information on the court-martial. *Professor Malwinder Jit Singh told me that much had happened since [9] was published: he had now everything on the court-martial!* I suppressed the twinge of disappointment – nobody likes being 'scooped,' not even a johnny-come-lately who started two weeks ago – and congratulated him, asking him if I could come over and see? He said that that was not possible for at least three weeks, because he was recovering from surgery and not meeting anyone. I wished him a speedy recovery, requesting him to let me know when I could come, and some desultory conversation followed. Sensing perhaps some skepticism creeping back into my disappointment, he then reassured me that he wanted to share whatever he had with everyone, he was not one of those who kept things hidden, and that, indeed, some time ago he had put up an exhibit on these shaheeds with **a certificate from Ambala Central Jail that the twelve had been hanged there on September 3, 1915**, all I needed to do was go to Sector 17 and see it! I congratulated him once again, and told him that I'll do just that.

[10] “Soldier Martyrs : 1914-1947, Martyrs of 23rd Cavalry, Hanging of 12 Soliders (sic) in Ambala Jail, 3-Sept : 1915,” exhibit at National Gallery of Portraits, Sector 17, Chandigarh. It has three portraits, the ones we have already shown of Sawar Inder Singh and Lance-Dafadar Lachhman Singh, and that of Sawar Buta Singh.



[10a] “Ambala Centerl (sic) Jail Record.” This is placed, in the gallery exhibit, immediately below the above portrait, and is reproduced on the next page.

Two words in its top line are unclear to me, but when I replaced these two words by ‘belonging’, it read, “LIST OF POLITICAL PRISONERS OF GADAR PARTY BELONGING TO ARMY, COURT MARTIALED BY COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF INDIA DAGSHAI, AND SENTENCED TO DEATH.” The twelve shaheeds are alphabetically listed, and we find from this chilling hangman’s document that, **all twelve were sentenced to death on 26th August 1915 at Dagshai for the crime of Mutiny, brought to Ambala Central Jail on the 30th August, and hanged there on the 3rd September, 1915.** Professor Malwinder

Jit Singh has been as good as his word, this is great! But, *shouldn't due priority be given, I thought in admiration, to the scholar who had got to this old jail record first?* The certification bears the date 04/05/1999, so maybe it was Bhai Nahar Singh, or maybe he had already passed on the baton to the editors of [9]; also, below [10a] was written in rather loud letters “(Courtesy: Mahavir Singh Mann & Mrs. Rajwanti Mann, Haryana Archives)”; are these Manns claiming this priority then, or mere custodianship? My admiration was based on the fact that I could not figure out how this scholar had made the inspired guess that the soldiers had been hanged in Ambala, and not in Dagshai itself, or anywhere else (we saw that Dagshai had possibly a gallows, and probably there were nearer ones in the same army jurisdiction, then why a civilian jail).

LIST OF POLITICAL PRISONERS OF G.D.M. PARTY WHO WERE SENT TO ARMY COURT MARTIALLED BY COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF INDIA D.G.M.I. AND SENTENCED TO DEATH.										
S.NO.	CONVICT NO.	NAME	FATHER NAME	VILLAGE	P.S.	DISTT.	SECTION AND CODE	DATE OF SENTENCE	DATE OF ADMISSION	REMARKS
1.	2707	Abdulla	Alah Dia	Tupral	Nardika	Ujranwala	Bolawa/Mutiny	26.8.15	30.8.15	hanged on 3x3x1 3.9.15.
2.	2708	Bhagat Singh	Bur Singh	Burwal	Burbhali	Arifpur	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
3.	2709	Wadh Singh	Nara Singh	Deotian	Burbhali	-do-	-do-	25.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
4.	2710	Bute Singh	Chanchal Singh	Kasail	Lafhnawal	-do-	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
5.	2711	Wajar Singh	Nihal Singh	Lala Chalk	Thurawala	Lyallpur	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
6.	2712	Inder Singh	Jawand Singh	Jiwale	Tarastoran	Arifpur	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
7.	2713	Inder Singh	Wagat Singh	Shabanpur	Burbhali	-do-	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
8.	2714	Jetha Singh	Bahadur Singh	Lala	-do-	-do-	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
9.	2715	Lachman Singh	Katha Singh	Cheslewar	Patti	Ludhiana	-do-	25.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
10.	2716	Wada Singh	Ishar Singh	Burwal	Burbhali	Arifpur	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
11.	2717	Tara Singh	Shan Singh	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-
12.	2718	Wadh Singh	Burwal Singh	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	26.8.15	30.8.15	-do-

A.C.P. 4.5.15
Depot Master
Central Jail, Ludhiana

Note : Photographs of No's 4, 7 & 9 are displayed here.

This puzzlement disappeared to a large extent with the last line of the next item.

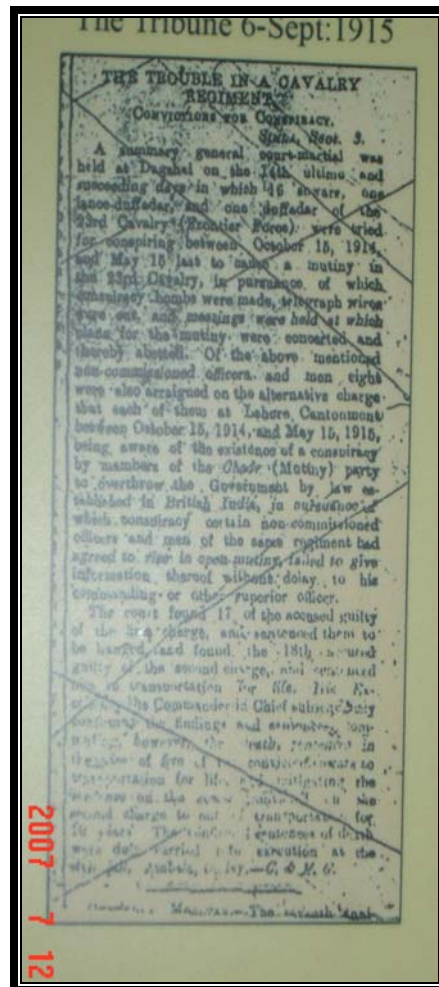
[10b] “The Tribune 6-Sept: 1915.” In the exhibit this newspaper cutting was below the right-most portrait (Lachhman Singh) under an intermediate item (which reminds one of Isemonger-Slaterry). My reading of this news item is given next – two words of the last line I could not make out at all – followed by its photo.

THE TROUBLE IN A CAVALRY REGIMENT

CONVICTIONS FOR CONSPIRACY,

SIMLA, Sept 5 (?). A summary general court-martial was held at Dagshai on the 14th ultimo and succeeding days in which 16 sowars, one lance-duffedar, and one daffadar, of the 23rd Cavalry (Frontier Force) were tried for conspiring between October 15, 1914, and May 15 last to make a mutiny in the 23rd Cavalry, in pursuance of which conspiracy bombs were made, telegraph wires were cut, and meetings were held at which plans for the mutiny were concerted and thereby abetted. Of the above mentioned non-commissioned officers and men eight were also arraigned on the alternative charge that each of them at Lahore Cantonment between October 15, 1914, and May 15, 1915, being aware of the existence of a conspiracy by members of the Ghadr (Mutiny) party to overthrow the Government by law established in British India, in pursuance of which conspiracy certain non-commissioned officers and men of the same regiment had agreed to rise in open mutiny, failed to give information thereof without delay to his commanding or other superior officer.

The court found 17 of the accused guilty of the first charge, and sentenced them to be hanged, and found the 18th accused guilty of the second charge, and sentenced him to transportation for life. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief confirmed the findings and sentences, commuting however the death sentences in the case of five of the convicted sowars to transportation for life, and mitigating the sentence in the case of the sowar convicted on the second charge to that of transportation for 10 years. The confirmed sentences of death were duly carried into execution at the (??) jail, Ambala, (??) – C, & M.G.



This newspaper cutting I find simply amazing, for here is the area's most prominent newspaper, publicly reporting the twelve executions in Ambala just two days later, with some details about the preceding court-martial at Dagshai!! This takes all the mystery out of our unknown scholar wanting to see the Ambala Jail execution register, that's what *anyone* would like to do after reading this news item.

It also informs us that **the court-martial at Dagshai began on the 14th August, 1915**. So the eighteen were in this town, probably in Dagshai Prison, before this date, but *when exactly the eighteen were brought to Dagshai we still don't know*. It is likely this was well after 15th May, because that was when one approver from the box-exploding incident started talking in Jutogh, and the eighteen who were on (their way to) the war front, had to be arrested and brought to these hills. Perhaps first to Jutogh, for that would be more convenient for the Simla based interrogators, or directly to Dagshai Prison for security reasons (if so, the "kaffir" story of Sanyal pertains to this prison only).

As per this news item, **one sawar was sentenced to life by the court-martial, and on review by the C-in-C, his sentence was reduced to 10 years**, the other 17 sentences being as we have been reading thus far. Thus we have here *a material difference from what we found in the previously reviewed items*. Even Appendix XVIII of [9]! But I have a feeling in this case it is a slip, Bhai Nahar Singh had to have this news item – for this is the most natural explanation of his wanting to see the hangman's register of Ambala Jail – and that he and/or the editors of [9] overlooked this fact given in their news cutting, probably because of its bad quality.

It seems clear to me that, *if Jagjit Singh [4] or Gurcharan Singh Sainsara [3] had read this news item of 1915, they too would have made a beeline for the Ambala Jail to get the hangman's record*. (This would have been well within the resources of the "Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee." These days this organization has a website and much more, but the email I sent – to obtain sources of the data in [3] about 23rd Cav – bounced back. A similar query to the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, regarding the data in the 1976 Amritsar Gazetteer [1], has reached him, but remains unanswered.) *At the very least, they would have then put in their books, some or all of the extra information that one gets by*

merely reading this news item, viz., the date on which the court-martial at Dagshai began, the fact that the executions were in Ambala, the date by which they had been carried out, and that one of the sawars had received a lesser sentence.

Thus it seems true that, **the treatises [3] and [4] on the Ghadr of 1914-15 were written without their authors having bothered to read through the contemporary files of the most prominent newspaper of this region!** This is a bit too much. It is akin, in the modern context, to someone wanting to write, say, “The Fake Encounters of 1990-91,” without reading the relevant news items for that year. Yes, Gurcharan Singh Sainsara [3], does include the ‘Tribune’ of Lahore in his list of references at the end, but clearly he – or even his “Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Committee” as a whole – did not read all the relevant news items from it.

Considering how carelessly even the ‘Tribunes’ of 1915 were used, should we presume that the archives in Delhi have been used any more carefully? Yes, contacts are essential in India – otherwise even academics ignore requests for information – and there may even be a veil of secrecy, but one can’t help feeling that, if someone had really set his heart to it, he would have found by now something as innocuous as the records of a 1915 court-martial. Anyway, I am putting this to the test, so let’s see if my ‘Paul Drakes’, who are still very much at it in Delhi, will help ferret out this record.

Talking about archives, there is a citation of [3] that we have still to check, and it is to the National Archives of India: using p. 286, the footnote [*] on p. 214 – see the extract I reproduced – seems to say: “*Proceedings of the Home Department (Political and/or Police) October 1915, nos. 671-84, ‘India as I Knew It, p. 203’.*” The positioning of the asterisk at paragraph-end leaves us in doubt as to exactly which of the statement(s) made in it were based on these references; the latter half of the footnote, i.e., p. 203 of O’Dwyer [5], only gave us a mention of the court-martial and the number of soldiers sentenced to death or life; let us wait and see what exactly the first half will give.

Notes

[10.i] *Why were these army convicts hanged in a civilian jail* (Ambala Jail was a civilian jail even in 1915)? This is not clear to me at all. Perhaps only the judgement of the court-martial will explain this

legal/administrative point, but *why was a more legible copy of the hangman's order not used in the exhibit?* The two doubtful words of its top line can be important, for it seems these condemned soldiers were no longer being treated quite as army responsibility. Prof. Malwinder Jit Singh told me on the phone that Dagshai was then in Ambala district – I presume he has verified this – but why should civilian districts matter to the army, its jurisdictions are demarcated differently? Certainly, it was *not* the army's practice to sentence all soldiers to death *only* by hanging, and that too in the nearest civilian jail with gallows. Five years on, James Daly was treated quite differently, he was executed by the army in Dagshai itself by firing squad. Was it by any chance the case that the British Indian Army – so many years after 1857 – was still saving on powder by putting all its non-white mutineers to death only by hanging? Even when this saving was more than offset by the expense of sending them all the way to Ambala from Dagshai?

[10.ii] Again, *why was a more legible copy of the all-important newspaper cutting from the 'Tribune' not used in the exhibit?* It seems from the above photograph that it had been lying wrinkled in somebody's (maybe Bhai Nahar Singh's?) private papers for years, before it was smoothed out, photocopied, and put up as this exhibit. Lots of words were blurred, and there seems even to be some mild over-writing in the end. No wonder, the important fact that one sawar had received a lesser sentence was not observed: I myself had to spend quite some time staring at the enhancement that I had made on the computer screen from the digital picture I took before this became clear to me. Yet, as my reading given above shows, I could still not make out two possibly important words in the end, and am not certain of its dateline. On top of it, it is frustrating that the gallery personnel do not even keep a magnifying glass, that an interested visitor like me can borrow to (try to) read such minute exhibits.

[10.iii] As against this, the names of the functionaries of the Haryana state archives, which loaned one of these barely legible exhibits, are announced in letters of a size you can't miss. Nice people I am sure, but I would have liked also to know *the primary source(s) of the three photographs?* Were these from personnel records in the Army archives, or loaned by some descendants? Or again, the exact reference of the, presumably no longer secret, '*official enquiry report on conspiracy in the 23rd Cavalry*' (from which some Isemonger-Slaterry type of generalities are quoted)? And why, pray, does this national gallery not amend those *spelling howlers* on its panels that even a schoolchild would be ashamed of? Or, send someone over to the local 'Tribune' building to fetch a better copy of that news item?

We are faced here with a problem, for **a news cutting from "The Tribune 6-Sept: 1915" is quite impossible!** The point being that – as an easy 'date to day-of-the-week' calendar calculation will show you – it was a Monday on September 6, 1915; but Sabbath was a fairly serious matter in the British India of 1915 – even the presses of the 'Tribune' did not roll on Sundays – so **there was no 'Tribune' on Mondays.** Apparently, like me above, the possessors of the old and barely legible newspaper cutting had misread its dateline as "SIMLA, Sept 5" and jumped to the wrong conclusion that, much like nowadays, it must have appeared in the 'Tribune' of the next day. ***Actually, this news item appeared in the Sunday 'Tribune' of September 5, 1915, and its dateline is "SIMLA, Sept 3", that is, the very day on which our twelve shaheeds were hanged in Ambala Central Jail.*** Thanks to a word put in yesterday (16/07/07) to the 'Records Section' by an editor of the 'Tribune' who is known to me, I was able to obtain quickly a perfectly legible digital picture of this news item that is shown next.

was charged and tried for obstructing recruiting discharge of their duties has been of. His Honour the 1st class of Tanjore found him guilty of the accused's alibi being declared the course of his judgment, his assented the point raised by accused's the recruiting party were not nts, nor was recruiting a duty to which could be a penal r the code. He had come to on that it was a legitimate part of a sepoy as much to serve in the army and that the discharge of such duties tion under the Penal Code. accused was a leading mirasdar ge, a sentence of Rs. 40 as in the court's opinion, meet justice. The fine amount was

3. EASTERN MARKETS. Japan's Huge Efforts.

BOMBAY, Sept. 4.
India's Tokyo correspon-
The department of Agricul-
merce imported a special man
to instruct the Japanese
as to the goods most desired
y. He is now busy going
centre pointing out the goods
d by Germany and for which
w waiting. His plan is to
nd to hold meetings at which
ares to traders and manu-
ady trade with Australia has
ase and there seems every
pan will be able to meet the
e of the most interesting
the war has had upon the
is the interest excited in
national market southwards.
les are now advising that
ld bend all its efforts to
oriental markets, especially
and the South Seas. To
ighbouring countries would
eight expenses and make
rival products from the
more easy. The effort,
to secure commercial control
a Islands, is certainly re-
week one roads in the
deputations to these Islands
as sent experts from various
ions to study and report on

and Lucknow two.

No important change in Punjab is fore-
casted.

THE TROUBLE IN A CAVALRY REGIMENT.

CONVICTIONS FOR CONSPIRACY.

SIMLA, Sept. 3.
A summary general court-martial was held at Dagshai on the 14th ultimo succeeding days in which 16 sowars, one lance-duffadar, and one duffadar of the 23rd Cavalry (Frontier Force) were tried for conspiring between October 15, 1914, and May 15 last to cause a mutiny in the 23rd Cavalry, in pursuance of which conspiracy bombs were made, telegraph wires were cut, and meetings were held at which thereby abetted. Of the above mentioned non-commissioned officers and men eight were also arraigned on the alternative charge that each of them at Lahore Cantonment between October 15, 1914, and May 15, 1915, being aware of the existence of a conspiracy by members of the Ghadr (Mutiny) party to overthrow the Government by law established in British India, in pursuance of which conspiracy certain non-commissioned officers and men of the same regiment had agreed to rise in open mutiny, failed to give information thereof without delay to his commanding or other superior officer.

The court found 17 of the accused guilty of the first charge, and sentenced them to be hanged, and found the 18th accused guilty of the second charge, and sentenced him to transportation for life. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief subsequently confirmed the findings and sentences, commuting, however, the death sentences in the case of five of the convicted sowars to transportation for life, and mitigating the sentence on the sowar convicted on the second charge to one of transportation for 10 years. The confirmed sentences of death were duly carried into execution at the civil jail, Ambala, to-day.—C. & M. G.

GURUKULA, MOOLTAN.—The seventh anniversary of the Mooltan Gurukula, which was twice postponed owing to plague and excessive heat, will now be celebrated from the 24th to 27th September, 1915. Learned Samajic Pandits and Sanyasis are expected to grace the occasion. The public is cordially invited.

General Count von Bethmann-Hollweg. General Pflanzer's assistant came to a violent engagement in Galicia, and the heights along the bar progress on the eastward of Lemberg. The Strypa, 50 miles eastward of Lemberg, Sept. 3.—A Petrograd communication says there is no important change in the Riga-Dvina front. German day night attacks on September 1 and 2 in the region of Friedrichstadt, were repulsed. The Russians are successfully progressing between the Sventy and Vilna approaching Wilkomir. Russian cavalry the 1st September carried two villages near Szirwinty at the point of the bay. The Germans fled in disorder. The Russians are likewise progressing along that bank of the Vilna.

London, Sept. 2.—Paris: An official note says that the Russian success in Galicia shows that the Russian remain masters of the situation. The Russian of their retirement show that they continue capable of assuming the offensive whenever the circumstances are favourable.

IN THE DARDANELLES.

Important Position Captured
London, Sept. 2.—General Sir Hamilton reports that further fighting on August 27th and 28th in the north section of the line resulted in the capture of an important practical (? natural) commanding the Biyuk Anafarta eastwards and northwards with an approach of ground by the Australian and New Zealanders. The fighting was entirely hand to hand, and of a character. Very heavy losses were inflicted on the Turks. Three of their machine guns, three trench mortars, 300 rifles, 500 and a large quantity of small arm ammunition were captured.

THE WESTERN FRONT.

More Artillery Front.

London, Sept. 2.—Paris: A communication reports that there has been only grenade fighting and artillery action on the western front.

London, Sept. 3.—A Paris communication says:—We effectively bombarded the batteries and camps in Belgium. Fighting with aerial torpedoes and grenades took place against sap heads in the trench batteries silenced Germans in the Somme and the Oise. A fierce mutual bombardment took place in the Aisne, the

In particular, the previously doubtful concluding words of the news item, are now perfectly clear: "... at the civil jail, Ambala, to-day."

A war was going on, unpleasant news about the army were severely rationed by the Civil and Military Gazette (that's what C. & M. G. denotes), but someone powerful in Simla who could order this official news agency about – I think O'Dwyer himself – had decided nevertheless that the exemplary punishment meted out to the former cavalrymen in his personal escort, who had dared to be disloyal to his King-Emperor, should be made public as soon as it had been administered to them in Ambala Central Jail? One can imagine an aide of his, anxiously awaiting that telephone call from Ambala, and as soon as death's knell rang, sending his prepared script over the wire. Fanciful? Maybe. But I for one would not mind perusing the daily diary and official log of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab for that terrible Friday, the 3rd of September, 1915.

“At the civil jail, Ambala, to-day.” So much lies hidden behind these few words. Twelve hangings in a single day, and now 92 years on, this is all that we have, from a news item that the historians of this rebellion forgot to read. The city in which they were hanged has forgotten them entirely, ditto the hamlet in the hills where they were sentenced to death by a wrathful tribunal. Were they hanged one by one, or all at once twelve in a row, or maybe, three at a time à la Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev much later? Were the bewailing parents – the hangman's register gives the father's name as Chanchal Singh, we don't know the mother's – of dashing Sawar Buta Singh there in Ambala that day, and if so, were they allowed to take his body and cremate it properly after Ardas in a Gurdwara? Was grieving Alah Din from village Tapral in Gujranwala, the father of Nalband Abdulla (what did he look like), who had now indeed found his cherished “bahisht” hanging next to that “kaffir”, his charismatic leader Lance-Duffedar Lachhman Singh, in Ambala too on that black Friday? And what about this Lachhman Singh of Chuslewar – his Army record should tell us the undoubted gallantry that he must have displayed in the previous battles of the Frontier Force – what had drawn him, and his cavalry squadron, to the attention of O'Dwyer – himself a lover of horses – and how had the two interacted for the time he was in the latter's escort, what was so special in him that his sawars were prepared to ride with him into the jaws of death, and did? Of course, much has been irretrievably lost, but I have a feeling that a lot can still be painstakingly reconstructed if historians set their mind to it.

[10.iv] A 'fictional historical movie' – i.e., something as mindless as 'Mangal Pandey' or 'Shaheed Udham Singh' – would of course be dead easy to make on Chuslewar and his men, but that is not at all what I am talking about. I am thinking more on the lines of how the Irish have gathered and preserved data on James Daly and the other Irish mutineers who were housed in Dagshai Prison five years later. Something like that will require significantly more effort than a Bollywood movie, but is, to my mind, a much more worthwhile thing to do, if these heroes of 1915 are to be properly honoured.

[10.v] I also browsed through the 'Tribunes' of the three preceding, and the one succeeding, weeks. In the issue of August 21, 1915, I found two mentions of the 23rd Cavalry court-martial, one specified that the court-martial had started on August 14 and will take some days to complete. Since we learn nothing extra from these news items I have not reproduced their photos here.

[10.vi] Let me conclude this journal for now – I'll resume after my 'Paul Drakes' have found me enough new material to review – by reminding you how the calendar calculation can be made. Yesterday was July 16, 2007. The alleged date of the 'Tribune' news cutting was September 6, 1915. One needs $(24+31+30+31)$ more days from this to get to the next year 1916; the next 91 years have $(91 \times 365) + 23$ days because there are 23 intervening leap years; this brings us to the beginning of 2007, of which yesterday was the $(31+28+31+30+31+30+16)$ th day. But I knew that yesterday was Monday. So to prove that September 16, 1915 was also a Monday, I need to show that the sum of these three numbers, i.e., $(24+31+30+31) + (91 \times 365) + 23 + (31+28+31+30+31+30+16)$ is divisible by 7. This is straightforward, and can be speeded up a lot if we note that multiples of 7 can be 'thrown out' at any time, these are called *calculations mod 7*. For example $91 = 0 \text{ mod } 7$ because 91 is a multiple of 7. Likewise the first term $(24+31+30+31) = (3+3+2+3) = 11 = 4 \text{ mod } 7$. The third, i.e., $23 = 2 \text{ mod } 7$, and the last $(31+28+31+30+31+30+16) = (3+0+3+2+3+2+2) = 15 = 1 \text{ mod } 7$. So the sum of all the four terms is $4+0+2+1 = 7 = 0 \text{ mod } 7$. *q.e.d.* So such sums are pretty simple as long as one remembers the definition of a 'leap year': these are years which are divisible by 4, except that, for years divisible by 100, we insist on divisibility by 400. So 2000 was a leap year – one of the 23 in the above calculation – but 1900, 1800 and 1700 were not leap years, then 1600 was. All this pertains of course only to the usual (post-1582 Gregorian) calendar; some pretty serious historical goof-ups can, and have, been made while switching between different calendars. For your amusement (there was much else in these old 'Tribunes' that was quite interesting too) here is a news item from the 'Tribune' of August 15, 1915, showing how seriously the Christian Sabbath was observed in British India then:--

