

Calcutta Notebook

MNM

*Blow, blow thou winterwind as man's ingratitude,—
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky, thou dost not
bite no nigh, as benefits forgot
—William Shakespeare*

WHATEVER FREEDOM AND comfortable lives Indians now enjoy in the ultimate analysis can be traced to the noble works and sacrifices of armed Indian revolutionaries, not to the contributions of Gandhi's Non-Violence or Nehruvian politics. Except occasional remembering of Khudiram, Bagha Jatin, Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen and Subhash Bose young generations have chosen to remain indifferent to hundreds of other martyrs including those who spoilt their youth in Andaman's Cellular and other Jails. It can be shown, that the British had to leave India mainly because of the armed freedom fighters of which the last nail in the coffin of the British Raj was put by INA and RIN Mutiny of 1946. But other martyrs, hundreds of them, still now have been kept in oblivion. This is an unpardonable ingratitude!

The Indian nation have been misled to believe that Gandhi's Non-violence and Nehru family's contributions to which all Indians should be grateful and so vote for them and keep the Nehru's relatives on the Delhi throne permanently, making India the largest showcase of dynastic democracy. Erroneous or motivated historians have contributed to it. Those in power write the history and in the Orwellian fashion the truth is :

'Those who control the present control the past.

And those who control the past control the future.'

How many, of West Bengal, not to speak of India, have heard the name of Basanta Kumar Biswas who was hanged on 11 May, 1915 at Ambala Jail for throwing bombs to the pageantry led by the New Viceroy Lord Hardinge along with Lady Hardinge at Chandni Chawak, Delhi. On the previous day 10th May, 1915 other persons involved in the Delhi-Lahore conspiracy case were hanged at Delhi Jail : Amirchand, Abodh Bihari and Bal Mukanda.

Basanta Kumar Biswas hailing from Nadia where he got his schooling was a brave lovely young man of 20 who was recruited by Rashbihari Bose and trained in arms and bombs. On the D-Day 23 December, 1912 through the meticulous planning and in the presence of Rashbihari Bose Basanta threw the bomb that injured Lord and Lady Hardinge, but killed other three persons.

Basanta evaded arrest for two years and Rashbihari escaped to Japan where he spent the rest of his life and founded the INA which eventually was handed over to Subhash Chandra Bose in 1943. There is a statue of Basanta Biswas in Tokyo, but even a few months ago there

was not even a photo of Basanta Kumar at the Museum of the Indian Parliament. On the request of Sankariswar Dutta of Gobrapota Subhendu Memorial Seva Pratisthan the Loka Sabha Speaker Meera Kumar has now installed one.

Political theorists, both of the Gandhian and of the Leftist shades will try to expose the futility of such terrorist acts. No doubt such stray acts of violence are not much fruitful in the usual sense, but they are highly effective in awakening the masses like detonators exploding gunpowders. Khudiram's action and martyrdom had long lasting profound effect on the Indian people. Shakespeare's prophetic words is very relevant :

"Actions speak louder than eloquence."

The book (*Sahid Basanta Kumar Biswas & Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case* by Sampad Narayan Dhar and Published by Kalinagar Co-Operative Colony & Credit Society Ltd. on the initiative of Sankariswar Dutta, Tel-09339757442 in Bengali) contains appendices that give the province-wise names of freedom fighters exiled in the Cellular Jail of Andaman. The book has a fine foreward by Kashi Kanta Maitra, the eminent lawyer and politician of WB.

BAIKUNTHA SUKUL

Baikuntha Sukul (1907-1934), another obscure noble Indian martyr who is peerless not only in India, but possibly in the whole world in heroism, patriotism and nobleness of heart. Baikuntha hailed from Hazipur of Muzaffarpur District of Bihar which produced many other freedom fighters, perhaps because its soil was fertilized by the blood and actions of Khudiram. Baikuntha took up the responsibility of killing Phanindra Nath Ghosh who being an "inner man" of the party (Hindusthan Socialist Revolutionary Party of Bihar unit) disclosed many secret information to the Police and eventually became an "approver" as a result of which Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeb and Rajguru were hanged for murdering John Saunders at whose orders Lala Lajpat Rai was mercilessly beaten resulting in his death. Jatin Das died at Lahore Jail through protest fasting. Bhagat Singh practically surrendered to the police and he was hanged. Just the day before being hanged Bhagat Singh wrote an wonderful booklet "Why I am an Atheist?" which is available easily including its Bengali translation. Reading this one will be constantly haunted by another remarkable book "Notes from the Gallows" by Julius Fuchik, the Czech Communist Leader who was murdered by the German Gestapo in 1943.

But the book now in hand "Sei Mahabarashar Ranga Jal" (3rd Edition, 1998, De Book Stores) will move all persons of all countries at all times. The author Bibhuti Bhushan Dasgupta (the Panchayat Minister in the first United Front Government of WB in 1967) was a co-prisoner with whom Baikuntha developed a cordial respectful relationship just a few days before being hanged at the dawn of 14th May, 1934.

No body in the Jail slept in that night preceding the hanging. Baikuntha became enamoured with Rabindra-nath's songs and Khudiram's song ("Ekbar Bidaya De Maa Ghure Aashi"...). Baikuntha urged Bibhuti Bhushan to sing, sing again and again. Joyfully and happily he went to

the scaffold and refused covering his eyes with black cloth at the time of hanging. His last words were:

"Dada, I am now going. One request I want to make to you. You please try to stop the child marriage in Bihar where it is still rampant."

Baikuntha was married. His wife Radhika Debi even at the age of 86 recalled what Baikuntha, her husband told her :

"I could not give you children, company and nothing. Innumerable of your children of the country remain. They will look after you. Under no circumstances never you barter my blood or take any benefits out of that."

His wife lived upto her husband's last desires. □□□