

**A SPECIAL TOUR
OF
PLACES IN LONDON
ASSOCIATED WITH INDIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

by

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Preface

Indian Freedom struggle went through four phases as described in the next few pages. The role of the revolutionaries has been wiped out of memory by various parties of vested interest.

However, because of their sacrifices we have become independent. We now see increased prosperity in India and as a result, many Indians are now visiting England, Europe and even America. Some go around on world tour. And they are not all businessmen. The visitors even include school teachers, and draughtsmen who were once regarded as poorly paid. It is appropriate therefore that they should visit places associated with Veer Savarkar and other Indian freedom fighters who made today's changed circumstances possible.

After the failure of the 1857 war to gain Indian independence from rule of the East India Company, some one said to Emperor Bahadurshah,

Dum Dumaye Dam Nahi

Aba Khaira Mango Janaki

Aih, Jafar Aba Thandi Hui

Samsher Hindostanki

The valour of Indian people has now subsided. You better beg the English for your life.

Bahadurshah replied

Gaziame Boo Rahegi

Jabtalak Eemanki

Tabtak To London tak Chalegi

Teg Hindostanki

As long as there is a spark of self respect in the blood of our youth, we will carry our fight for independence even to doors of London.

That fight was indeed carried in London 50 years later by Savarkar and others. Those patriots sacrificed their careers, their comfort, and their lives so that the future generations would live with dignity. Here is an attempt to take you around places in London where they lived, studied, planned, protested and were jailed and even were sent to the gallows. You will find full details in this booklet.

If you wish me to conduct a guided tour for you, please contact me at the following address

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India's struggle for freedom from the British Rule

The (English) East India Company was started in London in 1600. In 1666, they got a foothold in Bombay (then, a group of 60 islands). They started building fortifications and keeping armies under the pretext of safeguarding their trade. Their major military victory came in 1757 at the battle of Plassey in Bengal. It took them nearly next 100 years to gain the control of the whole of India. In 1857, there was a massive uprising against their rule in India. Though the East India Company succeeded in suppressing the revolt, the British Crown took over the administration of India from the hands of the company. A lull followed for a generation. Afterwards, the Indian Freedom Struggle went through four phases.

The Four Phases of Indian Freedom Struggle

(1) The Moderates

First came the Moderates, men like Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), Surendra Nath Banerjee (1848-1925), Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915). They were great visionaries, men of utmost sincerity and dedication. They sought reforms and better government. They pleaded with the British for a fair play. Savarkar aptly said in 1937, " Moderates were great men. They were rebels of their generation. They did their best for our good under their circumstances. They were just as patriots as firebrands of today."

Ranade had a rather grandiose conception of the destiny of the Indian nation. In a public speech delivered in 1896 at Calcutta, Ranade said, " renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached."

Ranade was one of the founder members of the Indian National Congress (commonly known as the Congress Party or simply as Congress) which held its first session in 1885. But, after just three years, British Rulers forbade Ranade and other Government servants to attend the annual sessions of the Congress.

It must be emphasised that, unlike the followers of Gandhi, the Moderates were never obsessed with non-violence. Time and again, they made resolutions to the effect that the Arms Act of 1858, by which Indians were disarmed, should be repealed.

Some moderates thought that an armed rebellion against the British was impossible or impracticable. Others thought that the British would not stretch their patience to the limit of human endurance and make armed struggle inevitable. But NONE would have denounced the Indian independence won by the armed struggle.

The greatest of the Moderate leaders was Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). Dadabhai literally means the eldest son in a family and he lived up to it in a way. He was affectionately called the Grand Old Man of Indian Politics. His invaluable works was *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* , published in

1901. He proved meticulously that the British were draining away the wealth from India to the tune of £30 to £40 million per year (equal to £1235 to £1646 million per year at 1998 prices and this exploitation went on for 150 years). Dadabhai had suggested that such exploitation was *Un-British*. Hence the title of his book.

In 1892 he was elected as a Member of the British Parliament from the Finsbury Constituency in London (total votes cast 5,600). But he soon realised that he could not achieve much. The Irish had been sending their M.Ps to the British Parliament for a long time. They were White and Christians. Even then, they could not achieve anything through the British Parliament. Dadabhai was not elected as an M P in the 1895 election.

(2) The Militants (i.e more active)

Next came the Militants. They propagated that, without a direct action, the British would never accede to the Indian demands. They proposed the boycott of British goods. They said, "If you cannot avoid buying foreign goods, buy non-British goods." They emphasised self reliance, support to indigenous industries, mass agitation and even going to jail if necessary. Their undisputed leader was Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856 - 1920). He was popularly called Lokamanya Tilak by the masses. They bestowed the title 'Lokamanya' (people's leader) as opposed to Rao Bahadur and other honours bestowed by the British rulers.

* In 1882, Lokamanya Tilak went to jail for exposing the inhuman treatment meted out by the British Authorities to the adopted son and then heir apparent to Maharaja of Kolhapur. While in jail, his weight went down by 24 pounds.

* During the outbreak of BUBONIC PLAGUE in 1896/97, Tilak refused to leave the plague-infested city of Pune, stayed with the people and shared their suffering and misfortune.

* In 1897, he was sentenced to 18 months hard labour, this time for sedition. Again, in jail, his weight went down from 135 pounds to 105 pounds. This time, there were grave doubts about whether he would come out alive from prison.

* In 1908, he was sentenced to transportation for 6 years to Mandalay in Burma. The British newspapers recognised that, unlike other leaders, he was the leader of the masses.

The transportation involved a travel of 3000 miles (compare this to the distance between Paris and Moscow which is 1540 miles). He was confined to an area of 150 ft by 50 ft and kept in complete isolation except for the company of a cook. At that time, the average male life expectancy in Britain was only 48 1/2 years, much less in India while Tilak was 52 years of age.

There was no parole for him when his wife was on the deathbed in June 1912.

The Indian militants achieved a spectacular victory in 1911. Bengal had been partitioned by Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1905. India was outraged by his arrogance. Mass agitations and demonstrations followed. At the Delhi Darbar, in December 1911 King George V was forced to announce that the partition of

Bengal was annulled. This was achieved when Tilak was away in jail in Mandalay in Burma since 1908 and when Gandhi and Nehru were not even heard of.

Tilak was appropriately called *The Father of the Indian Unrest* by the British. During a period of 30 years (1889 -1919) he tried to make Congress as an instrument of constant agitation and wanted it to have an annual programme of action instead of just meeting once a year for four days, passing resolutions and doing nothing for the rest of the time. Dadabhai's complaint was that leaders of the Congress did not believe in continuous, constant, consistent whole-time work. That is what Tilak strived to achieve.

Tilak founded the Home Rule movement in 1916. When charged with sedition, Tilak's lawyers successfully argued that pleading for progressive political rights for the people in itself could never be seditious. Bombay High Court accepted that argument.

(3) The Revolutionaries

The Revolutionaries went one step further. Their leader was Vinayak Damodar popularly called Veer Savarkar (1883-1966). Since 1900, he had been preaching *Absolute Political Independence for India*. This was to be achieved by incessant armed struggle whenever and wherever possible.

He said, " Tilak and his followers are carrying out their activities (movements) within the law and look what happened. The British rulers did not hesitate to send him to jail in 1897. If a movement is within the law today, the British can change that law tomorrow and make the movement illegal. Today or tomorrow, we will have to seek the authority to make the law itself. At some stage, an armed struggle is inevitable. Why not start such a struggle today ? Why waste time ? "

* In 1905, therefore, Savarkar started his secret society *Abhinav Bharat* - on the lines of *Young Italy* the revolutionary society of Mazzini.

* In 1910, he was sentenced to TRANSPORTATION FOR LIFE, TWICE to the Andaman Islands, 1,000 miles [1600 Km] East of Madras (now called Chennai), The sentences of transportation were to be served IN SUCCESSION - a total sentence of 50 years, unparalleled in the history of the British Empire. The badge which he had to wear around his neck stated, date of sentence 24/12/1910, date of release 23/12/1960.

All his property and possessions including his clothes were confiscated and sold at public auctions. Even his spectacles were confiscated.

When Savarkar was in jail, Bombay University withdrew his B.A degree.

* Savarkar was allowed to write a letter once a year to his younger brother Narayanrao. Leaders of India's provinces used to visit Narayanrao, read the letters, copy them, translate and publish them in various Indian language newspapers. This brought about significant changes in the mental attitude of Indians.

* Due to Savarkar's efforts, there arose a succession of revolutionaries. For example, Khudiram Bose (1908), Madanlal Dhingra (1909), Anant Kanhere, Karve and Deshpande (1910), Bal Mukund, Avadhabihari, Amirchand and Vasant Vishwas (1915), Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev (1931), Udham Singh (1941) and many more.

Those who were sentenced to death went to the gallows fearlessly. Their courageous behaviour was admired even by the British officers and it must have made the tremendous impact on the minds of millions of Indians.

Those who were not sentenced to death were sentenced to Transportation for Life to the Andaman Islands. They too accepted their fate with fortitude. The first one to be sentenced this way was the elder brother of Savarkar, named Babarao (Ganesh). So important was the sentencing of Babarao that Viceroy Lord Minto informed the Secretary of State for India, London, by telegram.

It was the defiance of the revolutionaries, which inspired the masses, and they eventually became ready to join in the freedom struggle. The time for mass movement had arrived.

Some idea of the extent of the activities of the revolutionaries can be gathered from 'Who's Who of Indian Martyrs (3 volumes)' published by Government of India. Another valuable source is the annual indices of the *Times* (of London). One should look under 'India - unrest'.

After the revolutionaries, India was ready for mass movements.

(4) Mass movements and armed uprisings

* Finally came Mahatma Gandhi (1873 - 1948). Tilak died in August 1920. Moderates who obstructed attempts by Tilak to make the Congress Party active, now gave way. They broke away from Congress Party and formed the Liberal Party. Savarkar was on the Andaman Islands till 1921, then transferred to mainland India but kept in jails till 1924 and was afterwards kept in internment till 1937. Gandhi, who returned to India from South Africa in 1916, had a free hand to pursue his policies without any opposition.

Gandhi proposed a 4 Anna (quarter of a Rupee) annual membership of the Congress Party, thus spreading the freedom movement to the masses. He initiated the idea of Indians wearing clothes made from Khadi (home spun cotton). It gave a uniform to the Congress workers throughout India. Gandhi also gave Congress a organisational structure.

By 1920, the Congress Party had been in existence for 35 years. Gandhi led the mass movements of 1920, 1931 and 1942. At the same time, there were several attempts of armed uprisings against the British by various groups of revolutionaries. In 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose had formed the Indian National Army from among the Indian prisoners of war captured by the Japanese. Later, Bose died in a plane crash. His attempt did not succeed, but the writing was on the wall for the British.

The British had to grant independence to India in August 1947. At that time, many Congress Party leaders were still members of Savarkar's secret society - the *Abhinav Bharat*.

Savarkar regarded the work of his generation like that of sappers and miners in the army. They detect and defuse mines, remove obstructions, overcome watercourses, streams and rivers either by building bridges or diverting water through pipes, fill potholes and build roads. Their job is extremely dangerous but their work ensures the speedy advance of the soldiers who follow them. Moreover, he was like an engine of a railway by whose driving force all the carriages automatically move forward.

Savarkar and other leaders and their followers

Savarkar met and influenced many men from all quarters.

Moderates

In 1899, Justice Ranade went to Nasik to lay the foundation stone of the Town Hall. At the request of citizens of Nasik, Savarkar composed a poem, welcoming Ranade.

Savarkar joined the Fergusson College, Pune as a student in 1902. G K Gokhale the moderate leader was then the Principal of that college. Two years later Gokhale became a Member of the Central Legislative Assembly in Calcutta and left the college. They met each other again in London in 1908. Gokhale was on deputation sent by the Congress Party while Savarkar was studying to become a Barrister. They deeply respected each other. Time and again Savarkar had said, " Among the Moderates, there were leaders like Gokhale whom we regarded as fatherly figures."

Savarkar also met Ramesh Chandra Dutta, a retired high ranking civil service officer, in London in 1908. He persuaded Dutta to accept that the 1857 war was in fact a War of Independence for India from the British. Datta was President of the Indian National Congress in 1899.

In 1909, Surendranath Banerjee came to London as a delegate for the Imperial Press Conference. Dhingra shot and killed Sir Curzon Wylie on 1 July 1909. On the 5th, a meeting of Indians was convened at the Caxton Hall, London to condemn Dhingra. When Savarkar rose to oppose the motion, he was hit by an Eurasian named Palmer. Banerjee was furious. He said, " Savarkar was perfectly within his rights to express his opinion. It was outrageous to attack him in this way." He left the hall in protest.

* In March 1910, Savarkar returned from Paris to London, knowing very well that he was going to be arrested. His health was very poor. It was therefore decided by his friends that someone should accompany him on his journey. Miss Perry Ben, a grand daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji accepted that responsibility.

Militants (i.e more active)

In the period 1900-1920, there was a famous Trio known as Lal-Bal-Pal. Lal was Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bal was Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Pal was Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal. Savarkar knew them very well.

Lala Lajpat Rai used to come to India House, the Indian students' hostel in London where Savarkar lived. He and Savarkar shared platform on many occasions during the public meetings held in the Caxton Hall, London.

Savarkar studied in Pune during 1902-06. He was well known to Tilak who had given him a reference for the Shivaji scholarship offered by Shyamji Krushnavarma to study in London.

Tilak's lawyers Dadasaheb Karandikar and Dadasaheb Khaparde came to London to appeal against Tilak's sentence of Transportation to Burma for 6 years. Savarkar met them both and they contributed substantially towards the cost of the publication of his famous book 'Indian War of Independence 1857'

B C Pal used to visit India House. He and Savarkar shared common platform on some occasions during the public meetings in the famous Caxton Hall, London. After the completion of his studies, Savarkar lived in house of Pal in London for some time.

Revolutionaries

It goes without saying that a large number of revolutionaries were inspired by Savarkar.

When Savarkar was in internment in Ratnagiri (1924-37), Bhagat Singh and Rajguru met him secretly.

Gandhi and his followers.

Gandhi met Savarkar in London in 1906 and 1909, and again in India in 1926 when Savarkar was in internment in Ratnagiri. Gandhi benefited enormously from the political awareness created by Savarkar. But, while Gandhi became President of the Indian National Congress and was free to move all over India, Savarkar was kept away from the people by the British rulers for 27 years.

Subhash Chandra Bose met Savarkar in Mumbai in 1943. On his advise Bose slipped out of India and later formed the Indian National Army.

Y.B Chavan, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra province and later Defence Minister of India in 1962, had secretly met Savarkar when in internment in Ratnagiri.

These are just a few examples.

Savarkar publicly disbanded his revolutionary society, the *Abhinav Bharat* in Pune in 1952. At that ceremony he said, " It is absurd for the Congressmen, because they are now in power, to say - Gandhi came, we (congressmen)

went to jail and hey presto, we won the freedom from the British. Nothing can be more childish, selfish and insulting to other freedom fighters. "

He then paid a glowing tribute to the contribution of the people of ALL the persuasions, for the Indian freedom struggle. He said, " Credit for the Indian freedom from the British goes not to any one group of people or any particular movement but goes to people of all persuasions over the last three to four generations and their movements. Of course, those who took part in the fight against the British in the 1857 War and in the successive revolutionary activities had forced the pace of the freedom struggle and must be given large share of credit. We must also be grateful to the nationwide movement of the Congress Party. But even the Moderates from Dadabhai Naoroji to G K Gokhale must also be given their due share of credit. "

Various parties of vested interest have ensured that we have no memory of the contribution made by various sections for the Indian freedom struggle. They have ensured that the world knows only about Gandhi and Nehru. Time has come to correct this imbalance.

With this information, let us now begin our Special Tour of places in London associated with the Indian Freedom Fighters. The sequence that I have chosen assumes that we are travelling by London Underground (tube). It will be slightly different if we are travelling by car. Imagine that you are standing in front of each place and I am telling you relevant history.

Special London Tour

(1) 185 North Gower Street, London N.W 1

Mazzini, the Italian freedom fighter lived here, when he was in exile during 1837-48.

Once upon a time the Roman Empire was mighty indeed. The Romans ruled England, Wales, France, Germany (South of Rhine and Danube), Spain, and Portugal, vast areas of North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania.

But, in course of time, they lost the empire and Romans i.e. Italians were enslaved by others in turn. First by the Germans (Lombards) for 200 years (571 to 771), then by the Franks (773 to 873). By 843 Arabs (Moors) captured the port of Bari on the Adriatic Sea and occupied much of Southern Italy and Sicily. Italy was ruled by the Spanish from 1563 to 1713 and by Austrians from 1713 to 1870.

The heroic Italian struggle for freedom from the rule of Austrians took place during 1848 -70. Mazzini (1805-72), Garibaldi (1807-72) and Cavour (1810-61) were the principal personalities involved.

Mazzini was the philosopher-warrior, Garibaldi the General and Cavour the Chief Minister of the tiny state Piedmont, a Statesman. Mazzini was a source of great inspiration to Savarkar. Other Indians too have written Mazzini's biography but only the one by Savarkar was proscribed by the British Authorities.

Giuseppe Mazzini was commonly known as Joseph Mazzini. Austrians sentenced him to death in absentia. He was forced to flee to France in 1831. Austrians put pressure on France to arrest Mazzini, but he went into hiding and was not found.

While in France, Mazzini founded Giovine Italia (Young Italy) movement in Marseilles. In his open letter to Carlo Alberto, Mazzini appealed to the ruler of Piedmont state to lead a great nationalist movement against Austria. This monarch (Victor Emmanuel) had, in 1831, forced Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi to flee from Piedmont. But he waged wars against the Austrians in 1848-49 in support of rebels in Lombardy, and Piedmont was to be the state which ultimately led Italy independence and unity.

From 1837 Mazzini used London as the base for his activities.

Italy's major wars of independence were – 1848-49, 1856-59, 1866-71. Italian revolutionaries freed half of Italy by 1859, liberated Venice in 1866, and Rome and the rest of Italy in 1870.

The ultimate destiny of Italy was shaped as much by interventions and rivalries of the European great powers - France, Austria, Great Britain and Prussia, as by the tenacity and patriotism of the Italians themselves. The rivalries between European powers were exploited by Cavour the Chief Minister of Piedmont state.

Mazzini died in 1872. His biographies were available in India 20 years later. Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai had read those biographies. Savarkar read Mazzini's biography in Marathi written by one Mr Ghanekar in 1900. In 1902, he read the biography in English written by Bolton King. While travelling to London by ship, he used to ask other Indian students to read this English biography.

Why Mazzini ?

Savarkar was attracted to Mazzini because he wanted to emphasise that freedom from the British Rule would not come about easily. Indians will have to face severe hardships, go to jail, and face floggings, torture by police, deportation, transportation and even death. Thousands of families will be ruined before independence is achieved. He used the Italian freedom struggle as an illustration. He said in a poem

Kee ghetale vrata na he amhi andhatene

Labdha Prakash Itihas Nisarga Mane

Je Didvya Dahak Mhanoni Asavayache

Buddhyachi Van Dharile Kari He Satiche

In short, we knew very well from the start that the work we undertook was a fiery ordeal. It was like sitting on a burning funeral pyre of a husband by a devoted woman.

Savarkar also wanted to stress that freedom fighters must be prepared to face several years of disappointments and frustrations. He said in 1950s, "We never thought that we would see India free of British Rule. Our generation was born to die for the freedom struggle. That did not matter. The next generation would have won independence. We were going to do our duty."

At times, even Mazzini thought that he would go mad. But he said to his countrymen, "Every failure is one more step to success. Let us try once more."

This was indeed the reality. Let us take some cases in point --

Jail sentences

* In 1882, Tilak went to jail for exposing the inhuman treatment meted out to the then heir apparent to Maharaja of Kolhapur by the British. It was indeed a brave act. He lost 24 pounds in weight while in jail. Tilak exemplified that he was prepared to endure the harsh jail life for the sake of fighting for his principles and seeking justice.

* In 1897, Tilak was sentenced to 18 months of hard labour for sedition, during which period; again, he lost 30 pounds in weight. There were grave doubts about his survival. Many of his close associates feared that he would die in jail.

Transportation

* After the unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the British Rule in 1857, many Indians who took part in it were sentenced to transportation for life on the Andaman Islands.

* In 1872, Ramsingh Kooka from Punjab was transported to Burma. Fifty of his followers were blown off guns without trial.

* In 1879, Vasudev Balwant Phadake, a revolutionary from Pune, was sentenced to transportation for life to Aden, 2000 miles (3,200 Km) away from Mumbai (Bombay) by sea. Some 60 to 70 of his followers were sentenced to transportation for life, but sent to the Andaman Islands. Thus, Phadake, even

in this sentence was denied the company of his followers. They were kept 4,000 miles (6,400 Km) away from each other. What an inhuman act!! Phadake died in Aden in 1883.

* In May 1907, Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh (uncle of Bhagat Singh) were transported from Lahore to Mandalay in Burma, a distance of 2,125 miles (3,400 Km). So strict was the security that the two leaders did not know that they were kept in prison in the same place, Mandalay.

* In 1908, Lokamanya Tilak, at the age of 52, was sentenced to transportation for 6 years to Mandalay in Burma. The distance from Mumbai to Mandalay by sea and land is 3,000 miles (4,800 Km). He was kept in isolation in an area of 150 ft by 50 ft with the exception of the company of a cook. **There was no parole for him even when his wife was on deathbed in 1912.**

*In 1909, Savarkar's elder brother Babarao was sentenced to Transportation for life to the Andaman Islands, for publishing four poems. All his earthly possessions, including even sauce pans and broom, were confiscated. His wife Yesu was left homeless, penniless and destitute. She sought refuge in local crematorium for some time. She never saw her husband again and died in 1918.

While on the Andaman Islands Babarao was denied even the most basic medical treatment. He contracted so many diseases like migraine that it was a miracle that he survived.

* In 1911, Savarkar was sentenced to transportation for life, TWICE, to Andaman Islands 1,000 miles (1,600 Km) east of Chennai (Madras). The sentences were to be served in SUCCESSION. So frightful was the life for the prisoners that it was nicknamed Kalapani - the black water.

All the Savarkar's personal property and possessions including his spectacles were confiscated. His father-in-law Mr Chipalunkar was Diwan of Jawar state. British authorities forced the Raja of Jawar to sack Chipalunkar and also expel him from Jawar state overnight.

Transportation to Andaman Islands did not mean prison sentence for life. According to Rules, regulations, customs and practice of the British Administration prisoners were allowed to work outside the prison after a year or two, settle on the island and call their families from India. Savarkar and his elder brother Babarao were detained in the prison for more than 10 years in flagrant violation of the rules of the British Administration itself!! They were also forced to do physically hard work all the time.

In 1918 he weighed 119 pounds, in 1919 he weighed only 98 pounds.

In 1921, instead of allowing Savarkar brothers to settle on the island outside the prison, British Authorities sent them back to mainland India. Then, they were separated. Babarao was kept in the most appalling conditions and released from jail in September 1922, only when he was on deathbed. Due to the efforts of their younger brother Dr Narayanrao, Babarao survived.

- * Many contemporaries of Savarkar including Bhai Paramanand, Hotilal Varma and Hemchandra Das, were sentenced to transportation for life to the Andaman Islands.

Deportation

- * In 1897, Natu brothers from Pune were deported from India without charge.
- * In 1909, nine political leaders from Bengal were deported from India without charge.

Torture

- * Baba Khare and Sakharampant Gore, two of Savarkar's colleagues, died of torture while in prison.

- * Babarao, the elder brother of Savarkar was given electrical shocks to extract information from him on how arms and ammunitions were smuggled into India. But, Babarao bravely refused to divulge any information.

- * Savarkar mentions the administration of electrical shocks to political prisoners in jail on the Andaman Islands. He did hear their screams.

- * Various punishments meted out to Savarkar are depicted in his book ' My Transportation for Life'

Flogging

- * Savarkar mentions flogging of some of his contemporaries, on the Andaman Islands. Some Political Prisoners were flogged merely because they were physically too weak to complete the daily tasks give to them.

Death

Apart from the deaths at the gallows at the hands of official executioners, many prisoners committed suicide to escape from harsh prison conditions. One of them was Indu Bhushan on the Andaman Islands (Kalapani). Savarkar confessed that three times he was also on the point of committing suicide, but three times he persuaded himself to fight the British to the last drop of his blood. He also prevented others from committing suicide.

Exile

Many patriots like Shyamji Krishnavarma and Madame Cama had to spend their lives in exile in foreign lands. They never saw their beloved motherland and their kith and kin again.

Internment

Savarkar was interned for 13 years in a remote place in Maharashtra called Ratnagiri which had no railway and no telephones.

In 1950, the commemorative plaque was fixed on 185 North Gower Street by the Greater London Council (GLC). Unfortunately, no one told Savarkar of

this. He would have been thrilled by the news and would certainly have written an article on that occasion. Following chronology explains the reason.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 30 January 1948 | Gandhi was killed in Delhi |
| 5 February 1948 | Savarkar was arrested by Police |
| 10 February 1949 | Government of India tried to implicate Savarkar in the trial to kill Gandhi, but failed. He returned to his home in Mumbai. On 7 March he went to Bangalore to recover his health. |
| 10 April 1949 | Savarkar returned to Mumbai |
| December 1949 | Savarkar attended the annual session of Hindu Mahasabha, in Calcutta. |
| 3 April 1950 | Savarkar was arrested under Preventive Detention Act. |
| 13 July 1950 | Savarkar was released on the condition that he would not take part in politics for one year. |

(2) University College, London N.W 1

Madanlal Dhingra studied for Diploma in Civil Engineering at this college (1906-09). On 1 July 1909 he shot and killed Sir Curzon Wyllie, Political A.D.C (aide-de-camp) to the Secretary of State for India. We will examine the significance of this incident later.

Madanlal Dhingra was from Amritsar. His father was an eye specialist and Civil Surgeon of Amritsar. Some say he was the first Indian doctor to reach that eminent position. Madanlal was married and had a son. He had completed his studies. If he had desired, he could have lived a life of luxury. But, he chose to be a martyr for India's freedom struggle.

Dr Dhingra had seven sons
 Kundanlal (a businessman)
 Dr Mohanlal
 Dr Biharilal (studied at same UCL and became MRCP 1895)
 Chamanlal (Barrister from Middle Temple 1899)
 Chunilal
 MADANLAL
 Bhajanlal (Barrister from Gray's Inn 1911)

When Madanlal shot dead Sir Wyllie, Bhajanlal was in London studying Law at Gray's Inn. Four days after the event Bhajanlal attended the public meeting to condemn Madanlal. On account of that, Madanlal refused to see Bhajanlal

when the latter visited him in the Brixton prison.

Madanlal Dhingra went to the gallows in Pentonville prison on 17 August 1909. Soon after, his brothers dropped the surname Dhingra, with the exception of Dr Biharilal. As their first names ended in Lal they adopted that as the surname. e.g Chamanlal Dhingra became Chaman Lal.

[In a similar manner, many Indian freedom fighters changed their names so that their relations would not be identified and harassed by the British Authorities.]

Until 1988, we did not know the date of birth of Madanlal. At my suggestion Mr Mukund Sonpatki wrote a letter to the Principal of University College, London who obliged by sending us a copy of Madanlal's application for admission to college. His date of birth was 18 September 1883. He was just four months younger than Savarkar.

Note - The University College in Gower Street, London W.C1 was founded in 1826 by promoters of religious tolerance. It was intended to provide higher education for non-Anglicans excluded from Oxford and Cambridge; later it became the University of London. George Birkbeck (1776 -1841) was one of the founders of this college. Catholics were emancipated in 1829.

The 1854 Universities Act made it illegal for Universities to deny higher education to non-Protestants. Women still had no access to Universities. Around 1884 special colleges for women were established in Canmridge and Oxford. Women were still not awarded Degrees till 1924. It was only in 1970s that all colleges in Oxford and Cambridge allowed women

It is interesting to note that Dadabhai Naoroji was Professor of Gujarati in this college from 1856 to 1866. Ravindranath Tagore studied English Literature at the same college during 1878-1880. SOAS was founded in 1916
Dhingra's elder brother Dr Biharilal passed MRCP from University College Hospital in 1895.

A note on Gower St.

As we come out of UCL in our front we see their school of medicine, on the left side are some important houses.

No 110 – Charles Darwin used to live here.

No 52 – Anaesthesia was first administred here during a surgical operation.

No 2 – Miss Fawcett – a Suffragate movement leader lived here. There is a plaque on the house. Savarkar mentions her public speech and activities of Suffragates in his newsletters (1906-09)

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Before we proceed further, we need to know some terms for clarity and to avoid confusion.

' In Council '

English administrators in India always had their councils of advisors. Thus we have the terms like 'Governor General in Council'

THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Whatever the name may imply it had little to do with politics, as we know it. After the Indian War of Independence 1857, the British Parliament took over the administration of India in the name of the British Crown from the hands of the East India Company. Its representative was given the title of Viceroy and the Governor General. He had a dual function. Governor General was in charge of all the Governors. Viceroy represented the British Monarch (Crown) and was responsible for the relations between the Crown and the Rajas and Maharajas (i.e. he used to keep an eye on the Princely states). He had the Political Department to help him with this duty. It used to be a common practice for Army officers to be transferred to the Civil Service, on reaching the rank of a Colonel. Many of them worked for the Political Department.

INDIA OFFICE

After 1857, Secretary of State for India was a minister in the British cabinet. He had his 'council' of advisers. They used to be former members of Indian Civil Service (ICS) or retired Officers of the Indian Army. Secretary of State for India had his office behind Downing Street. The office was called the INDIA OFFICE. This is now the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

INDIA HOUSE

This was an inexpensive hostel for Indian students started by Shyamji Krishnavarma in Highgate area of north London. It was inaugurated as 'India House' on 1 July 1905 and lasted till 1910. Savarkar lived here for three years.

This should not be confused with the present office of the Indian High Commission also called India House, which was built in the late 1920s and inaugurated by King George V and Queen Mary on 8 July 1930.

BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS PARTY

Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. It was decided that there should be representative of the party in London propagating its views. Necessary funds were provided by people in India, but the British Committee was run mainly by retired British Civil Servants who had worked in India.

(3) 60 Muswell Hill Road, London N10 (formerly No. 9 Queenswood Avenue)

This house was purchased by Shyamji Krishnavarma Bhansali, commonly known as S K Varma for his own use. In 1906, he offered a scholarship to enable Savarkar to come to London.

Shyamji (1857-1930) - brief career

Born on 4 October 1857 at Mandavi (Kathiavad- in Gujrat). He lost both

parents by the age of 10. Relatives helped him to come to Mumbai for High School studies. Learnt Sanskrit through a traditional Pathshala.
In 1875, married Bhanumati, daughter of Seth Chhabildas Lallubhai
(famous for Chhabildas High Schools in Mumbai).

Teaching of Sanskrit in Oxford

In 1831, Colonel Boden bequeathed his entire fortune of £25,000 to Oxford University for Sanskrit professorship, with the expressed intention to use knowledge of Sanskrit for spread of Christianity in India.

Hoarce Hayman Wilson became the first Professor. When he died in 1860 there was an election for the Sanskrit professorship. The contest was between Monier Williams and MaxMuller. Williams won.

In 1876, Prof Monier Williams visited India. He was looking for an assistant who was good in Sanskrit as well as in English. Shyamji was such a man. Shyamji organised a series of lectures in Sanskrit on behalf of Aryasamaj. Notable persons of the times like Kunte, Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, Justice Ranade and Gopalrao Deshmukh were impressed by Shyamji's scholarship. But things did not work out fast enough. Prof Williams went back to Oxford.

Shyamji borrowed money from his father-in-law and came to England in March 1879. Prof Williams said that he had not promised any help. Shyamji then registered with Balliol College, Oxford and obtained B.A degree in 1883.

[Lord Curzon (1859-1925) Eton, Balliol College – B.A 1882, M.A 1884

Sir Michael O'Dwyer (1864-1940) Balliol College – B.A 1885]

When Prof Williams realised the potential of Shyamji, he wrote a letter of recommendation to Sir Richard Temple, the Governor of Bombay province who in turn, persuaded Maharaja of Kutch to offer a scholarship of 100 pounds/ year to Shyamji.

In 1882, Prof Williams made a request for a grant for the Indian Institute in the University of Oxford. In 1885, he applied for a grant of £200 for 3 years towards the cost of making and arranging catalogue of books and articles in the Museum. This was granted.

1881 - Shyamji read a paper at the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. He emphasised that the art of writing was known in Vedic times. As a result of presenting this paper, he was elected a Member of the society.

He was honoured to be sent as India's representative for the fifth Oriental Congress in Berlin by Marquis of Harlington, the then Secretary of State for India. Shyamji emphasised that Sanskrit was a living language.

1883 - He was sent as India's representative to the Oriental Congress, in London by the Earl of Kimberley, the then Secretary of State for India. Shyamji joined the Empire Club who had among its members former governors, governor-generals and Army Generals. He became well known to Prof MaxMuller, Dadabhai Naoroji and former Governor General Lord Northbrook.

1884

Shyamji became a Barrister from the Inner Temple and returned to India in January 1885

1885-88 He served as Divan of Ratlam state (salary of 700 Rs per month plus cash of 32,000 Rs at the end of service)

1888-92 He practised as a Barrister at Ajmer

1892-95 He was Divan of Udaipur (salary of 1,000 Rs per month)

1895-96 He served as Divan of Jugagad state with a salary of 1,500 Rs per month, when things started to go wrong. Shyamji had done a favour to an Englishman named Meconoki whom he knew in London. Shyamji used his influence and offered a suitable post to Meconoki. But he conspired against Shyamji and as the result Shyamji was dismissed from the position of Divan of Junagad.

Shyamji was furious and fought for justice. But as soon as it was known that his fight concerned an Englishman, all the other Englishmen closed ranks and refused to listen. He appealed right up to the Secretary of State for India, but to no avail.

After Shyamji's dismissal from Junagad, Maharana of Udaipur wanted him to come back as his Divan. But Sir Curzon Wylie who was Governor General's Agent in Rajputana refused permission. He said that Shyamji had been declared unfit to hold the office of Divan by the British Resident at Junagad. He cannot be appointed as Divan of Udaipur, until that Resident clears the name of Shyamji. As the British Resident himself was involved in the conspiracy to remove Shyamji, there was no chance that he would change his mind. Further details are obscure, but it seems that he did become Divan of Udaipur.

Shyamji had burnt his fingers. He realised what the British Justice meant in practice. He sought help of Tilak. However, on 22 June 1897 the two British officers Collector Rand and Lt Ayerst, were shot dead by Chaphekar brothers, for insults and humiliations suffered by the people of Pune during the recent outbreak of plague. Shyamji thought that if Tilak's house was searched by the police they would find his letters and harass him too. He, therefore, hurriedly resigned as Divan of Udaipur, quietly left India and came to London and purchased the above house (60 Muswell Hill Road). Some major events in his life were as follows :-

1905

February

On the 18th, Shyamji founded Indian Home Rule Society. Indian members of the British Committee of the Congress Party were becoming disaffected with the British members of the committee. They were attracted to Shyamji's society. Among its members we find - Barrister Rana, Barrister Parekh, Dr C M Muththu (he looked after Savarkar in Brighton), Mukundrao Jaykar, Surhavardi and Godrej (he helped Savarkar and Cama in Paris).

Shyamji also started his monthly magazine the *Indian Sociologist*. It was proscribed in Britain four years later. His monthly ran from January 1905 to December 1914.

July – Viceroy Lord Curzon finally announced the partition of Bengal and it came into force on 16 October 1905.

There was widespread anger and resentment against this act. (On 7 October 1905, Savarkar organised a bonfire of foreign clothes in Pune)

* Tilak's paper 'Kesari' carried an editorial about Shyamji's activities in London including his starting of the students' hostel 'India House'

1906

April

On the 14th, a protest meeting against the partition of Bengal was held at Barisal (now in Bangladesh). Police used brute force to disperse the gathering. Surendranath Banerjee was heavily fined.

On 5 May a meeting to condemn the police action was held at Shyamji's home by the Indian Home Rule Society. At this meeting, Vitthalbhai Patel (elder brother of Sardar Patel) and Bhai Paramanand were present. Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale were invited but did not attend.

On 6 May similar meeting was held in Paris by Mr Banker, Mr Godrej, Barrister Rana and others.

Vande Mataram became our national anthem because it was banned in Dacca by Sir Banfield Fuller, Lt Governor of East Bengal

1907

May - Shyamji left London for Paris and carried out his propaganda from there. His address was 10 Avenue Ingress, Pasey, Paris.

1909

May

On the 1st, Shyamji was struck off the register of Barristers by benchers of the Inner Temple.

In 1903, Shyamji had endowed a sum of 1,000 pounds to the Oxford University in memory of philosopher Herbert Spencer who died in that year. This was returned to him in July 1909. The once venerated Sanskrit scholar had suddenly become a *persona non grata* because now he was seeking independence for India.

1930

Shyamji died in exile in Switzerland on 31 May 1930. His wife Bhanumati donated Shyamji's collection of Sanskrit books to the Indian Culture Institute of Sarborne University of Paris. She also donated 10,000 Swiss Franks to Geneva University and 10,000 Swiss Franks to a local hospital in memory of Shyamji.

1933

Shyamji's wife Bhanumati also died Switzerland on 22 August 1933. She

They were both cremated at St George Cemetery, Geneva. They had no children and like many Indian freedom fighters they never saw their beloved motherland again.

* In August 2003, Mr Modi, Chief minister of Gujarat province, took their ashes from Geneva to Mandavi the birth place of Shyamji.

* Plaque on the house was put up due to efforts of Shree Hemant Padhya of Milton Keynes on 15 August 2004.

(4) 65 Cromwell Avenue, London N 6

1905

Shyamji purchased this house to be used as the students' hostel. This was inaugurated as INDIA HOUSE by My Hyndman, a Scottish Socialist on 1 July 1905. Dadabhai Naoroji, Lala Lajpat Rai, Madame Cama, Mr Squelsh of the Justice paper and Mr Sweeny of the Positivist Society were present at the ceremony. [the paper *Justice* ran from 19 January 1884 to 22 January 1925, it was renamed *Social Democrat* and ran from February 1925 to December 1933. The paper *Justice* was banned by Government of India in 1910.]

The house is conveniently located near Queens Wood, Highgate Wood, and Waterloo Park. It had accommodation for 25. The basement was used for a Reading Room/ Library / Conference room.

Charge for lodging and boarding was £1 per week.

In Pune, Savarkar read about Shyamji's activities in Tilak's paper *Kesari*. He also came across an issue of Shyamji's monthly the *Indian Sociologist*, which contained information about scholarships being offered by Shyamji.

1906

March

On the 9th, Savarkar applied for the Shivaji scholarship. Tilak gave him a reference and also assured that Savarkar had no intention of seeking government employment.

June

Savarkar arrived at INDIA HOUSE on 15th. A letter from the Special Department, Pune dated 14 June 1906 to India Office, London followed.

Why did Savarkar come to London ?

* To observe at first hand, the strengths of the British people which enabled them to rule over India and also to note their weaknesses and to think of ways of using them to achieve India's freedom.

* To meet students from all parts of India. Such meetings were much more easier in London than in India. People back home looked to these men with admiration and expected direction and leadership from them. According to report 'Indian Students in U.K.' compiled by Secretary of State for India in

1907 there were some 700 of them in U.K at that time. The make up was as follows –

| | |
|------------|-----|
| London | 380 |
| Edinburgh | 150 |
| Cambridge | 85 |
| Oxford | 32 |
| Manchester | 16 |
| Birmingham | 11 |
| Others | 16 |

* To kindle the spirit of fighting among these youth for the Indian independence.

* To meet professionals, Rajahs, merchants and rich people, who came to London and possibly, also visited Europe. Savarkar sought their assistance in the freedom struggle too. (In 1908 Savarkar did meet G K Gokhale and R C Dutta and discussed with them Indian War of Independence 1857)

* To establish contacts with revolutionaries of other countries like Russia, China, Ireland, Turkey, Egypt and Iran. (Lenin was a friend of Savarkar) He wanted to learn the art of making bombs from them, and put that knowledge and friendship into use for concerted attempts to overthrow the British rule. He also wanted to smuggle pistols and ammunition into India.

We should note that --

* In Iran a nationalist movement became active in December 1905 and in August 1906, the Shah, Muzaffer-ud-Din, admitting the need for reforms, granted a Constitution and established a National Assembly (Majlis). In 1907 Shah Muzaffar died to be succeeded by the despotic Shah Mohammad Ali Shah. He tried to reverse the liberal policies of his predecessor, and violence erupted, with Russia backing the Shah and Britain on the side of the constitutionalists, who wanted the Majlis to survive. The constitutionalists won the day.

* in 1911/12 Chinese overthrew monarchy and China became a Republic under Sun Yat sen

* Bolshevik revolution took place in Russia in October 1917.

* Turks overthrew the Sultan and Turkey became a republic in 1923 with Atta Turk as its first President.

* In Ireland, the Easter uprising in 1916 failed but Irish Free State was granted in 1921.

The speed of Savarkar's activities in London was breathtaking

(i) He started regular Sunday meetings to discuss various topics related to India's future. It soon became popular among Indian students. Revolutionaries from other countries such as Egypt, Ireland, Russia, China and Turkey used to attend, including Lenin. One of the topics of discussion was *"Future constitution of India."*

Savarkar's foresight.

These meetings were intended to increase one's knowledge of all current affairs. They were the precursor of 'baudhiks' or regular discourses, of the

RSS which was founded in 1925. Savarkar was able to maintain this tradition even in jail on the Andaman Islands. He stressed that every day all Indian freedom fighters must learn something of Politics, Administration and Economics. Without this increased knowledge they will not be able to make progress after independence. Mere overthrowing of British Raj is not enough. Savarkar was a man of vision and foresight.

In our childhood we were told stories of Kings and Princes. We were always told that Princes had to acquire 14 Vidyas (knowledge such as Geography, Mathematics) and 64 Kalas (applied science such as Agriculture, Architecture). Without this the prince would not be considered to have progressed to become a King.

Let us take the example of Chaanyaka. With the help of Chandragupta Maurya he overthrew Nanda dynasty. And during the upheaval the Chief Minister Raakshasa has vanished. Chaanakya arranged a plot by which Rakshasa's close friend merchant Chandandaas was charged with sedition (by having sheltered family of Raakshas) and sentenced him to death. Raakshasa rushed to rescue Chandandaas from death. Chaanakya said, "We have no feud with you. It was the king who was useless and would not march against the Greek King Alexander. Now that we have achieved our aim of dethroning the King, who is going to run the country? Please accept the office Chief Minister under Chandragupta." Raakshasa agreed. (That is the theme of the famous drama – Mudra-Raakshas.)

Consider the days of Shivaji. 1666 was a bad year for him. He had to accept a humiliating treaty with Raja Jaisingh and go to Agra to pay homage to Aurangzeb. He managed to escape from clutches of Aurangzeb, but made peace with him which lasted for four years. Shivaji recouped and re-captured all the forts and lands he lost by the treaty of Purandar of 1666. Then in August 1670 he asked one of his generals Nilopant Muzumdar aged 85 to be the administrator of his kingdom. Nilopant had recently re-captured the fort of Purandar from the Mughals and wanted to continue to fight. But Shivaji said, "Administration of my kingdom is just as important as winning battles." Nilopant grudgingly agreed.

(ii) Savarkar organised the days of the remembrance of our illustrious forefathers like Shivajayanti – birthday of Shivaji and celebrations of our festivals like Divali and Dasara. He wanted the revival of our culture, our values, our concepts, and our traditions. And above all, he wanted to imbibe the spirit of self respect in the Indian people.

(iii) Abhinav Bharat -

* Savarkar started his secret revolutionary society the *Abhinav Bharat* (similar to Young Italy of Mazzini) in India in 1905. Its oath has been preserved by the British Secret Police. The words " *Absolute Political Independence* " mentioned in it are significant.

At the time of Indian independence, many leaders of the Congress Party were members of this secret society. They included, Balasaheb Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay Province, Ravishankar Shukla, Chief Minister of Central Provinces,

Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Muslim Chief Minister of Punjab just to name a few. President of the Congress Party Acharya J B Kripalani himself was a member of Abhinav Bharat.

* Copies of bomb manual were printed in India House. One copy did reach Tilak in Pune.

(iii) Literary works

* Savarkar completed his biography of Mazzini in Marathi in September 1906. It was published by his elder brother Babarao in India in June 1907. The book was proscribed by the British a year later.

* He wrote his famous book *Indian War of Independence 1857* in Marathi. It was translated by his friends into English in this house. It was published secretly in Holland in 1909 and immediately banned in India.

[It is interesting to note that the British never called this war as *The sepoy mutiny*. That phrase was unfortunately used by Indian authors. British called it **The Indian Mutiny** - accepting the fact that the whole of India wanted to get rid of the British rule. or they say 'The Great Sepoy War.'

The *Times* reported on 11 August 1909, " The mail from India brings the following notification issued at Simla on July 23 – ' In exercise of the power conferred by section 19 of the Sea Customs Act 1878 (viii of 1878) the Governor-General is pleased to prohibit the bringing by sea or land into British India of any copy of the book or pamphlet in Marathi on the subject of the **Indian Mutiny** by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar or any English translation or version of the same.'

Copies of the book were available from Madam Cama at 25 Rue de Ponthieu, Champs Elysees, Paris. Price 10 Shillings.

Copies were also available from F.H Publication, 749 Third Avenue, New York. Price clothed \$2, paper edition \$1.50.

Savarkar's book served as a source of inspiration to Indian revolutionaries for next 40 years.]

[We have the following information from Secret Files –
Special Department 4830

Bombay 28 April 1909

To Government of India

V D Savarkar is said to be engaged in writing a book on the Indian Mutiny, and it is possible that the book will be of such a nature that it will be advisable immediately to suppress it.

Simla 13 May 1909

Letter 737 of 1909, Govt of India, Home department to Sir Arthur Godley, Under-Secretary of State for India

" I am to add that, on the 11th January 1909 orders were issued under section 26 of The Indian Post Office Act 1898, directing the interception of V.D Savakar's book on the Indian Mutiny."

Thus, the British administration had already issued orders seeking seizure of Savarkar's book in post, 6 months before they actually banned it.

* Sikhs are an important part of the Hindu society. In the Indian Army their percentage was quite high. Savarkar therefore learned Gurumukhi and studied their holy books - Adigranth, Panthprakash and Vichitra Natak. He prepared notes for his book 'History of the Sikhs' which he completed while in Paris.

* Savarkar sent 43 newsletters from India House during the period from 17 August 1906 to 26 November 1909. These were related to politics and current affairs and were published in the Marathi newspaper, Vihari.

* Three leaflets were printed in India House.

1. Gurumukhi leaflet - This appealed to the Sikhs to revolt against the British.
2. 'Oh Martyrs!'. This was addressed to the fighters of the 1857 war. Savarkar assured them ' your blood oh martyrs, shall be avenged. We will continue your fight and drive the British out of India.
3. ' Choose, oh Indian Princes '

This was sent out to Indian Princes, Rajas and Maharajas. after Dhingra's martyrdom in August 1909. Savarkar appealed to them to join in the freedom struggle. His salient points were :-

-> If you co-operate, there could be room for various types of administrations in future India. Look at Germany. All the princes accepted Kaiser William of Prussia as their Emperor in 1871. The princely states remained but Germany became one nation.

-> India is your motherland too. You are slaves of the British just like us.

-> Side with us and one of you will be Maharaja of the whole of India. If you do not co-operate, and at least remain neutral, even your names will cease to be known.

[This leaflet was mentioned in *The Times* (of London) on 22 August 1910]

(When Savarkar was busy with such activities in London, the infamous Cellular Jail on the Andaman Islands was completed in 1906. He was going to spend 11 years of his life in that horrific jail. What a coincidence!)

1907

June - It was decided that Senapati Bapat, Hemchandra Das and Hotilal Varma should go to Paris, contact Russian revolutionaries and learn how to make bombs. Having done so, Hotilal Varma went to Pune and gave Tilak a copy of the bomb manual.

August - It was decided to send Madame Cama as India's representative to the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart. The question was - what should be the Indian National Flag ? Savarkar had discussions with his friends. The American flag had stars (to represent various states) and stripes. But, Indian national symbol was lotus not star. It was therefore

decided that 8 lotus flowers should represent India's 8 major provinces, the Sun and the Moon to show the eternity of India i.e. India will remain as long as the Sun and the Moon exist in the sky (*yavat chandra divakarau*), and the famous slogan *Vande Mataram*. The flag was printed in three colour bands, Green indicating the vitality of youth (the grass is green, the leaves are green), Red for the strength which will be derived from sacrifices by the citizens and is required to gain as well as maintain freedom (blood is red). And Saffron for the success, which depends up on vitality and sacrifices.

Madame Cama unfurled this flag in front of 1,000 delegates from all over the world at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart, Germany. Ramsey MacDonald was one of the delegates. He later became British Prime Minister, **Others included Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg who was hanged during Communist uprising in the days of Weimar Republic.**

Savarkar hoisted this flag again at a public function in Pune on 26 October 1937. He explained the history behind this flag. It is now preserved in the Savarkar Memorial at Mumbai.

1908

May

On the 10th, Sunday, 50th anniversary of the 1857 War of Independence against the British was celebrated in this house.

Barrister Rana came from Paris and was in the chair. Students came from Cambridge, Oxford, Cirencester and Reading. People came in such large numbers that some had to stand outside the house.

Savarkar made the first speech, followed by Mr Khan, Mr Das, Mr Master (a Parsee) and Mr Yerulakar (a Jew).

But merely remembering the freedom fighters was not enough. Savarkar suggested that Indians must do something constructive. He asked them to take vows of sacrifices. Some said that they would not drink for a month, some gave up smoking for a period, some decided not to go to theatres. The money thus saved was to be donated to the National Fund. In this way, these privileged Indians identified themselves with the Indian masses.

After singing Vande Mataram, the meeting ended. Chapatis were distributed as "prasad" because Chapatis were once distributed in 1857 from village to village passing the message of the intended uprising against the East India Company.

[Note – The date 10 May seems to have some historical significance. It was on 10 May 1937 that Savarkar was released from internment in Ratnagiri, after having spent 13 ½ years there.]

1909

Freedom of Thoughts and Expression - a Fundamental right

Throughout his life, Savarkar preached and practised freedom of thoughts and expression. In an interview given to Campbell Green of Sunday Chronicle in March 1909, he said, " India House is an inexpensive hostel. But for

admission as a lodger, one does not need to have any specific political opinion. All that he has to do is to pay one pound (per week) for board and lodge. Political discussions do take place. Persons like yourselves and those who say that the British Raj is a divine dispensation also come here. Discussions take place. Those who can convince others by means of truth and logic win the day." Of course, that is not what the *Sunday Chronicle* printed.

Even Dube and Harishchandra Koregavkar who betrayed Savarkar had confirmed the existence of climate of freedom of expression in their testimonies.

Gandhi came to London on 20 October 1906. He headed a delegation of Indians from South Africa and in that capacity met Mr Morley, Secretary of State for India. He went to India House and met Savarkar. They had their discussions on how India could be freed from the British Rule. Savarkar narrated these details on 14 May 1939 in a public speech at Pune. He said, " After dinner, we revolutionaries used to sit on one side of the table, Gandhi and his followers on the other side. A funny thing happened each day. At the end of our discussions, one of Gandhi's followers would desert him and join our side. A day came when Gandhi sat alone on his side and all his followers having deserted him sat on our side."

Abhinav Bharat – oath

In London Savarkar started his revolutionary organisation named *The Abhinav Bharat*. Its aim was to seek Absolute Political Independence for India. Its oath is preserved by British Police.

When India became independent many leaders of the Congress Party were members of Abhinav Bharat and taken its oath. They included –

Balasaheb Kher – Chief Minister of Bombay Province

Ravishankar Shukla – Chief Minister of Central Provinces and Berar

Sir Sikandar Hiyat Khan – Chief Minister of Punjab

Acharya J B Kripalani – President of the Congress Party.

Many others were inspired by deeds and thoughts of Savarkar. Raja Gopalachari (Rajaji) the first Indian Governor General of India (after partition) openly admitted that he was inspired by life of Savarkar.

It is time he was given the credit due to him.

VISITORS TO INDIA HOUSE

Many important leaders visited this house at least once.

Revolutionaries

* Bhai Paramanand - he was a direct descendent of Bhai Matidas who was sawn from head to toe on the orders of Aurangzeb for refusing to embrace Islam in 1676. Like Savarkar, he too was sent to Kalapani on the Andaman islands.

* Lala Hardyal - he was first class first in M.A in English from Punjab University. He came to England on government scholarship to study in Oxford. He went to America and founded the Gadr movement there.

* Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, brother of Sarojini Naidu. He was debarred by the Barristers of Middle Temple for his political activities. He is believed to have been shot dead in Russia on the orders of Stalin.

* Pandurang Mahadev alias Senapati Bapat, a civil engineer. He wrote a small booklet entitled ' We want Home Rule for India ' As the result, University of Bombay withdrew the Seth Mangaladas Nathubhai scholarship. Tilak pleaded with Shyamji, " something ought to be done there to enable him to complete his course. He is a promising young man." Shyamji, provided the funds and Bapat completed his studies.

Bapat and Hemchandra Das were sent to Paris. They contacted Russian revolutionaries and learnt how to make bombs.

* Hemchandra Das was sent to Kalapani on the Andaman Islands.

* Madanlal Dhingra. He went to the gallows in August 1909

* MPT Acharya

* Venkatsubramaniam Iyer (V V S Iyer)

* Gyanchand Varma : secretary of Abhinav Bharat

* Sukhasagar Dutta - his brother Ullhasagar was sent to Andaman to serve the transportation for life, after the Alipore Conspiracy Trial. The most barbaric treatment was meted out to him, including administration of electric shocks. Savarkar did hear his terrifying screams. In the end, a jail superintendent took pity and said, " you would be far better off in a mental hospital." and got him certified and sent him to a lunatic asylum in Madras. He was released after spending 12 years there.

Politicians

* Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of Indian Politics

* Lala Lajpat Rai (Punjab Kesari - Lion of Punjab)

* Bipin Chandra Pal, a prominent leader of Bengal and his son Niranjana Pal.

* Madame Cama.

* Barrister (later Mahatma) Gandhi. He was 14 years older than Savarkar and had no reason to meet him. Gandhi was not new to London, he studied and became a Barrister from Inner Temple in 1891. When Savarkar was in London, Gandhi was in far away South Africa. As compared to today, communications in 1906 were very poor. And yet Savarkar's reputation must have spread so rapidly that Gandhi could not resist the temptation of attending various functions in this house.

* Sardarsingh Rana of Kathiavard. He was a Barrister from the Inner Temple. But he became a merchant in Paris dealing with precious stones and carried out his propaganda from there.

* Dadasaheb Karandikar and Khaparde - both lawyers acting for Tilak.

* Ravishankar Shukla. He became Chief Minister of the Central Provinces in 1947.

* Dr Rajan. He was elected a member of Madras Legislative Assembly in

1937.

* Dr K P Jayaswal. He became famous for his books on the Vijayanagar Empire.

Others

* W V Phadake, Koregavkar and Kunte. They translated Savarkar's book 'Indian War of Independence' from Marathi into English.

* Harnam Singh. He shared a cabin with Savarkar while travelling from Mumbai to London. He was born in Amritsar, lost his father at a young age, obtained a B.A degree. He was offered a scholarship by Maharaja of Nabha. He was debarred from Agricultural college at Cirencester for bearing a badge commemorating the 1857 war. He refused to remove the badge and did not apologise when asked to do so. His Principal John McClellan wrote to India Office 'Harnam Singh should come back without bearing the medal. Not to do so would be a folly, as he is likely to get a gold medal for his studies.' Maharaja of Nabha was forced to withdraw Harnam's scholarship. He later studied Law at Gray's Inn with Savarkar. The benchers had decided not to call him to the Bar. But later they did call him.

* KVR Swami

* Mr Master - correspondent of the paper 'Parsee'

* Shapurjee Saklatwala

(nephew of Jamshetji Tata. He founded the Communist party of Britain)

INDIA HOUSE was constantly in the news during 1906-1910.

Savarkar made history. We were at least able to erect a small memorial to him. In 1983 I had proposed to my friends that a commemorative plaque should be placed on this house to mark his birth centenary. The plaque was placed on this house with the consent of its present owners by the Greater London Council (GLC). This goal was achieved by the efforts of my friends Late Mukund Sonapatki who worked for the GLC as an architect and Late Padmanabh Pendse, the Mayor of London Borough of Brent.

The plaque reads VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR 1883-1966, Indian Patriot and Philosopher lived here. It was unveiled by Lord Fenner Brockway on 8 June 1985. He was then 97. We all suggested that he should not strain himself by standing up. But he refused, stood up and spoke for three minutes. He said, " I am proud to unveil this plaque but this should have been done by your Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi." Sunil Gavaskar, the famous cricket player attended the function at my request. [Lord Brockway died in 1988, aged 100]

After the ceremony we were able to see the ground floor flat by the kind permission of the present owner. YES, it was here that the history was made. It is impossible to describe our feelings.

I had to do some work in London on the previous night and also weather was unpredictable. So, I stayed in London. My wife Vineeta became restless back home in Bedford where we live. The radiator of our car was not working properly and moreover it is difficult for an outsider to find the streets of London. But, even then, she drove 50 miles and came to the India House in our car with our daughters Vaidehi and Varsha, and surprised me with their

unexpected visit. She was very proud of me as I was instrumental in getting the plaque fixed.

Every Indian visiting London ought to pay homage to Savarkar and other freedom fighters in front of this house. It must become a place of pilgrimage.

LET US OBSERVE A 2 MINUTE SILENCE IN THE MEMORY OF OUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

[Centenary of Savarkar's work.

10 May 2008 marked 100th anniversary of the programme organised by Savarkar to commemorate 50th anniversary of the 1857 war against the rule of English East India Company. At my request some 30 men and women gathered outside this house and I explained the important work carried out by Savarkar from this house.]

(5) Grays Inn, Grays Inn Road, London W.C 1

There are four institutions in London where one could study for becoming a Barrister. Grays Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple and Middle Temple. They are all within the walking distance from each other.

Famous Barristers

Middle Temple

| | |
|--|----------|
| Chamanlal Dhingra, elder brother of Madanlal | 1899 |
| Virendranath Chattopadhyaya removed from register | 1909 |
| Sir Stafford Cripps (1889-1952), notorious for Cripps Mission. | 1913 |
| Sardar Patel | 1913 |
| V K Krishna Menon | 1925 (c) |

Inner Temple

| | |
|--|------|
| Shyamji Krishnavarma, debarred in 1909 for political activities. | 1883 |
| Gandhi M K. | 1891 |
| Chittaranjan Das | 1894 |
| Clement Attlee British P.M 1945-51 | 1906 |
| Nehru → Harrow, Trinity College, Cambridge. | 1912 |

Lincoln's Inn

| | |
|--|--------|
| Phirozshah Mehta | 1867 |
| W C Banerjee – First President of Indian National Congress, 1885 | 1867 |
| Morley (1838-1923), Secretary of State for India when Savarkar was in London | 1878 |
| Jinnah M A | 1896 |
| Iqbal → Trinity College. | Year? |
| Minoo Masani – leader of Swatantra Party | 1928 |
| G D Khosla, Chief Justice of East Punjab in 1955 | Year ? |
| Mihir Kumar Sen - He was the first Indian to swim the English | 1954 |

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Channel in 1958. | |
| Nath Pai | 1955 |

Gray's Inn

| | |
|--|------|
| Redmond John Edward (1856-1918) Irish politician, champion of Irish Home Rule | 1886 |
| Bhajan Lal Dhingra, Madanlal's younger brother | 1911 |
| Dr B R Ambedkar | 1920 |
| A N Ray, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India since 1973. | 1939 |

Veer Savarkar joined Gray's Inn on 26 June 1906. After completion of his studies, he should have been called to the Bar on 5th May 1909.

(see Times of 21 April 1909 page 4 – Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Harnam Singh passed final examination). Sir Curzon Wyllie of India Office was trying, behind the scene, to ensure that Savarkar and Harnam Singh were not called to the Bar. This was a wicked act.

From the secret files in India Office, we now know that Mr Douthwaite, Under Treasurer of Grays Inn called on Sir Wyllie on 28 April to enquire about Harnam Singh and Savarkar. As the time was short there followed several frantic meetings between Mr Douthwaite and Sir Wyllie and other officers of India Office and many letters were exchanged.

Gray's Inn

29th April 1909

Dear Sir Curzon Wyllie,

The Benchers at Gray's Inn at their meeting last night adjourned until Wednesday next the further consideration of the eligibility for call to the English Bar of Harnam Singh and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, two students of this society about whom I spoke to you yesterday. Both these students are qualified for the Degree of Barrister according to the ordinary regulations of the Inns of Court and they have applied to be called with other students on the 5th of May - next Wednesday. Their cases have been adjourned because of the intimation I received from you yesterday to the effect that the India Office were aware of certain matters concerning these students, which suggested that they were not fit and proper persons to be called. I know both you and Mr Morison appreciated the fact that *although this intimation was quite sufficient to justify a postponement of the matter for a few days in the period intervening between the consideration of their eligibility and the ceremony of " call ", a refusal to call these students could only rest upon very definite evidence concerning them which could be held to render them ineligible.*

I now write to ask therefore that I may receive as soon as possible any definite information concerning Harnam Singh and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar which is deemed to affect the eligibility of both or either of them for call to the English Bar.

Any document, which I receive, will be submitted to a committee of three Benchers of Gray's Inn who have been appointed to consider the matter.

Believe me yours faithfully

D W Douthwaite

Enclosed are copies of the admission documents of both students.

Gray's Inn

4th May 1909

Dear Sir Curzon Wylie,

Thank you very much indeed for your letter which will be very helpful.

You will be glad to hear that my committee have decided to report to the Benchers tomorrow night that neither Harnam Singh nor Savarkar should be called to the Bar until full enquiry has taken place into the matters alleged against them.

I have no doubt that the committee's report will be adopted. Certainly neither of them will be called this term.

The committee feel (as I expected) that except for the Police report there was a lack of substantial matter against Harnam Singh.

They would not refuse to call him on the Cirencester incident alone. We must remember of course - that they have the Judges to think of.

Yours very truly
D W Douthwaite

Grays Inn

May 6th 1909

Dear Sir Curzon Wylie,

I am directed by the Treasurer of Gray's Inn to inform you that your communication in reference to the case of the two Indian students, Harnam Singh and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was considered by the Benchers of this Inn yesterday in connection with the application from these students then pending before them for admission to the Bar.

It was decided that in face of your communication the consideration of this application should be suspended and that in the meantime the Benchers should investigate the subject matter of your report. *Under the regulations of this society, a preliminary enquiry has to be held by the discipline Committee with a view of ascertaining whether upon the facts there is a case of complaint calling for investigation.*

The Committee will sit for this purpose at Gray's Inn on next Wednesday, May the 12th at 5.30 when it is expected that the Indian office will submit to them the evidence oral and documentary upon which the statements contained in their communication to this society were founded. In dealing with a matter of

such grave importance the Benchers have a serious responsibility to discharge, not merely in the public interest but also in the interest of the students concerned and of the society itself and they cannot take action unless they are satisfied upon evidence of the truth of the matters alleged.

I am, Dear Sir Curzon Wyllie,

Yours faithfully

D W Douthwaite.

Daily News interviewed Bipin Chandra Pal about Savarkar.

Published on Saturday 8th May 1909.

India House carries on a propaganda, and if its sympathisers are not called to the Bar on that ground, then it follows that every member of the Irish Land league should be treated in the same way.

Of course this did not happen. There was one law for whites, one law for blacks.

On 12 May 1909 Wyllie wrote to Douthwaite

You will see from Mr Morison's letter, which I enclose that Mr Lint Smith is prepared to give evidence in support of the statements made by him regarding Savarkar, and I have ascertained that Sergeant Parker and police constable Hallett are prepared to give evidence that Savarkar spoke at the meeting in the Caxton Hall on Dec. 29th as reported in the Govt of India confidential letter to the Secretary of State No. 3 of 4th March 1909 para 5.

Enclosed I send a Scotland Yard special branch report which you possibly care to see.

I dare say you know that Savarkar's brother is now the subject of a criminal prosecution in connexion with sedition in India.

(what had this to do with Savarkar ?)

In the end, on 13 May 1909 Mr Douthwaite wrote to Wyllie --

" Harnam Singh is to be informed that no further proceedings will be taken against him but he will be admonished by the Treasurer in the presence of the Bench."

" Savarkar is to be called on to answer three charges :-

- (1) That by assisting in the circulation of pamphlets and by taking part in seditious meetings, he incited the Nation of India to revolt.
- (2) That he advocated assassination
- (3) That he expressed approval of assassination.

LIBERTY IS LEFT TO ADD TO THIS INDICTMENT OF COURSE WITH NOTICE TO HIM."

" Our enquiry will, I think, be held on 9th June."

" I will let you know, when the date is fixed and it may be that I shall (if you will permit me) trouble you with another visit shortly with reference to Mr Lint Smith's appearance and other matters. "

" I expect that Harnam Singh will be called next term. I shall be writing to both students tomorrow."

Savarkar was allowed time till 22 May in which to frame his reply. The reply was considered on the 26th May by the Benchers.

The trial was HELD IN CAMERA. Therefore, evidence for prosecution which would not have been admitted in an open court was permitted. New charges were being added even when the trial was half way through. Two official detectives who had shadowed Savarkar for two years testified. Their reports were submitted. Letters by Savarkar which were in the possession of Government of India and those used in the Nasik Conspiracy trial of Babarao Savarkar were translated and given to Grays Inn.

It was astonishing that every officer remarked that these papers from India DO NOT ADD MUCH TO THE CASE. But still the Benchers went ahead with the farce.

Savarkar was cross-examined by some of the eminent Barristers on 9th June. Just three weeks later i.e. on 1 July 1909 Sir Wyllie himself was shot dead by Dhingra. On 5 July (Monday), Indians held a meeting at Caxton Hall, condemning Dhingra. Savarkar protested in that meeting. And it appeared that he approved assassination of Wyllie. This naturally affected his case but his letter was published the next day (Tuesday 6th July) in the *Times*. He emphasised that as the matter was subjudice, to discuss it in public and to use the words 'criminal' and 'criminal act' amounted to contempt of the court. Nobody could argue against this.

At the end of all this, the benchers ruled on 14 July 1909, " *None of the charges* was proven. Savarkar is a permanent member of this society (Grays Inn) and would continue to enjoy the privileges of membership. There was still suspicion about him and, as such he would not be called to the Bar as yet.

(What happened to the principle that an accused person is innocent unless proved guilty ? It was conveniently set aside by those who practised and taught law!!) He may be called later, if his behaviour is satisfactory."

On 23 July 1909, Savarkar wrote in his newsletter, " When it became obvious that the evidence was collected by the Government of India, it was clear who was behind this episode."

It was a big farce and great travesty of justice and that too by the benchers of a famous Law Society!

Savarkar eventually withdrew from Grays Inn in 1910.

The decision of the benchers of Grays Inn not to call Savarkar to the bar was so outrageous that hereafter Indians deliberately called him Barrister Savarkar.

It must be emphasized that our history must never be written on the basis of British sources alone. *TIMES* of 15 July 1909 simply reports on page 12 column d, " The benchers of Grays Inn at a meeting held yesterday afternoon resolved that Mr V D Savarkar a student of the society is not eligible for call to the bar. "

" Mr Savarkar is one of the two students whose cases were alluded to in *The Times* of June 30. A letter from him appeared in *The Times* of July 6, explaining a protest, which he had made at a meeting held at Caxton Hall on the day before with reference to the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie. He was for some time one of the managers of "India House" Highgate, which he left, according to his own statement, on April of this year."

One of the benchers, who opposed Savarkar being called to the bar, was Frederick Edwin Smith. He became Solicitor General, six years later; then Attorney General (1915-19), Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain (1919-22) and Secretary of State for India (1924-28). He was made the first Earl of Birkenhead in 1922.

(6) Bow Street Magistrate's Court, Bow Street, London W.C 2

This was built in 1879, i.e. four years before the birth of Savarkar. From Viceroy's telegram of 3 July 1909 it is clear that Bombay Government was most anxious to take proceedings against Savarkar for conspiracy. Their request for sending a Sikh deputy superintendent, Dyal Singh Gyani to London was sanctioned by India Office.

On 8 February 1910, the warrant for the arrest of Savarkar under the Fugitive Offender's Act 1881 was issued from this court at the request of Government of India. Though Savarkar travelled on a passport issued by the Government of India, he suddenly became a fugitive!! That was the British Rule of Law.

Savarkar had known about this warrant through a sympathiser. He was in Paris to recoup his health. After Wylie's assassination in July 1909, Savarkar could not find suitable lodgings in London. He went to Brighton for a while, came to London for Vijayadashami celebrations and then went to Paris.

Despite the opposition from his friends he decided to come to London, even though his health had not yet been recovered. He was arrested at London (Victoria) railway station on 13 March 1910 by the Chief Inspector MacCarthy and Inspector Parker of the Special Branch of the New Scotland Yard. As his health was poor, it was decided by his friends that Miss Periben the granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji should accompany him on his journey. At the time of his arrest, Savarkar pleaded with the police inspectors that he did not

know the lady, but he accompanied her as she was a lonely Indian lady and that she should not be harassed. They agreed.

Savarkar was brought in front of Magistrate Sir A D Rutzen on 14 March 1910 and charged under the Fugitive Offenders Act 1881. He was refused bail. Mr Reginald Vaughan defended Savarkar. Mr Bodkin and Mr William Lewis appeared on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecution.

On 8 May Savarkar was committed to High Court. He was given only 15 days to prepare his defence.

On 24 May Habeas Corpus was granted for Savarkar.

The lawyers who acted for the Government of India in the High Court and the Court of Appeal were, Solicitor General Sir Isaac Rufus K.C, Mr Rowlatt (infamous for the Rowlatt Act of 1919) and Mr Bodkin.

Mr Arthur Powell K.C and Mr J M Parekh appeared on behalf of Savarkar. Court of Appeal decided on 17 June that Savarkar should be sent to India to stand for a trial.

Note on Sir Isaac Rufus

[One year earlier, i.e. in February 1909, Sir Rufus had declined to accept a brief from Tilak for appealing to the Privy Council against his sentence of Transportation to Burma for 6 years

10 years later, Sir Rufus was sent to India as Viceroy with the title Lord Reading. During his reign, Savarkar and his elder brother Babarao were transferred from Andaman Islands (Kalapani) to mainland India.]

Mighty legal case

A 13 year old boy George Archer-Shees was expelled from the Royal Naval Academy at Osborne in 1908 for the theft of a five-shilling postal order.

Archer-Shees Vs Admiralty finally came to court in 1910.

Victory by Edward Carson who acted for the boy.

Government's second Law Officer was Sir Rufus Isaacs

In 1919 Edward Carson acted for Sir Valentine Chirol in his case against Tilak.

>>>>>

George Archer-Shees joined South Staffordshire Regiment, died in 1914 aged 19

Terence Rattigan's play ' The Winslow Boy ' written 1945, first performed in London 1946

Archer-Shees became the Winslows and George became Ronnie

Other court cases

* In February 1909 Vasudev Bhattacharya was accused of physically attacking Sir Lee Warner of India Office.

* In August 1909, Guy Aldred, an English sympathiser of Savarkar was brought in front of this magistrate. Guy had tried to publish the monthly *Indian*

Sociologist of Shyamji, which was proscribed in Britain. As Guy could not produce a surety of 1,000 pounds (40,000 pounds at 1998 prices), he was committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court. Guy Alfred ran the paper *Herald of Revolt* from December 1910 to May 1914.

* In 1909 a case against Metropolitan Police was tried here. Dhingra had given a note to Nitinsen Dwarakadas making him owner of Dhingra's possessions after his death. But the Police would not release trunks with items like Dhingra's clothes and books. Bow Street Magistrate ruled that as Dhingra had not made a will Police can keep the trunks!

* Many women suffragettes were sentenced in this court.

* Several (in) famous court cases started here. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was charged with gross indecency in April 1895, Dr Crippen appeared before this court in 1910.

* The Court is no longer in use. 14 July 2006 was the last day of the court

(7) Bow Street Police Station, Bow Street, London W.C 2

This is next to the Bow Street Magistrate's Court. After his arrest, on 13 March 1910, Savarkar was kept overnight in one of the cells in the basement,. He was brought in front of the Magistrate the next day.

Deputy Superintendent John Power arrived in London from Bombay on 10th April 1910 with necessary papers, which he deposited with Bow Street Police station. After the Court of Appeal gave a verdict that Savarkar should be sent to Bombay to stand trial for sedition, Power took charge of Savarkar and escorted him on board ship *s.s moria* till they arrived at Bombay.

This police station is no longer in use.

[Note :- This street, named because of its bow-shape, was built between 1633 and 1677. It ran from Floral Street to Tavistock Street and was later extended to Long Acre in the north and Wellington Street in south. It gave its name to the Bow Street Runners, the first police force set up in 1750.]

(8) Present India House (Indian High Commission) Aldwych, London W C 2

In the wake of Government of India Act 1935, this building was built as the office of India's Agent in London. It was inaugurated by King George V and Queen Mary on 8 July 1930.

Government of India Act 1935 provided for a Federal Government of India and the above building was intended to be the office of the Agent of that government. Elections were held in 1937. Congress Party came to power in seven provinces, but their ministries resigned after the declaration of the Second World War on 3 September 1939. At the insistence of Jinnah the

Federal part of the Government of India Act 1935 was suspended and this facilitated partition of India. After independence in 1947 the above venue became office of the Indian High Commission.

Above the main door we find 'INDIA', on the right we see the letters Bharat in Devanagari and on the left the letters Hindostan in Urdu. Urdu is of course very important to us, the secularised Hindus. If we look up some forty foot above these letters we see two Royal British insignia still intact.

Compare this with what happened in Hongkong on 1 July 1997. Within seconds of the British rule ending there, the Royal British insignia was removed from the Governor's residence and the Chinese emblem installed in its place. And we still preserve the British Crown!!

On the front and the side of the building, we see several circles which contain symbols of our civilisation e.g. Peacock, Rising Sun, Swastika, Snake, Indian Rhino.

[On the side of Indian High Commission there is a small lane called Montreal Place. Nehru's bust has been erected here. Do you see anything wrong ?]

(9) Pentonville Prison, Caledonian Road, London N 7

This prison was built between 1840 and 1842.

Two Indian revolutionaries went to the gallows here. Madanlal Dhingra on 17 August 1909, and Udham Singh on 31 July 1940.

Dhingra, a contemporary of Savarkar assassinated Sir Curzon Wyllie, Head of the Secret Service of India Office, London. Udham Singh assassinated Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Governor of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, at Amritsar in April 1919.

Dhingra wished that last rites according to Hindu Dharma should be performed on his dead body and it should be cremated. Many Hindus petitioned to the Home Secretary Mr Herbert Gladstone that Dhingra's body should be handed over to them, as Brahmins were ready to perform the last rites. This request was denied! THE LAST WISH OF THE MAN SENT TO THE GALLOWS WAS DENIED. His body was put in a coffin, which was buried within the prison premises.

On 18 August 1909 Times (of London) reported on page 7, column 2

"Dhingra, the Hindoo murderer of Sir Curzon Wyllie and Dr Lalcaca was executed yesterday morning at Pentonville. Shortly after 9 – death was announced. Pierpoint was the executioner. An application for leave to have the body cremated was refused and it will be buried in accordance with the usual custom, within the walls of the prison."

"At the inquest, Mr J.S. Master representing the *Parsee* of Bombay was the only Indian admitted to the inquest."

Afterwards a reporter of the *Daily Mirror* interviewed Mr Master. He asked, "Will Dhingra be considered a Martyr by the Indians ?" Master replied, "Certainly. He has laid down his life for his country's good. Whether his idea of this 'good' was right or wrong is a matter of opinion."

[Note :- The Cremation Society of England was founded in 1874. So, cremation was definitely available in London in 1909]

In 1909, Many Indians had condemned Dhingra but no one protested at the barbaric act of the British Authorities, and even this fact was unknown till I started investigation in 1987.

How important was the act of assassination by Dhingra ?

On 3 August 1909 Viceroy Lord Minto sent a telegram from Simla to India Office, " It is understood that Madanlal Dhingra is to be executed on the 17th August. If body cremated, undesirable that ashes should be sent to India."

31 years later the British Authorities behaved just as barbarously as in 1909. They refused cremation according to the Hindu rites to Udham Singh also. His body too was put in a coffin, which was buried within the prison premises.

Both men came from Amritsar.

Udham Singh's coffin was exhumed on 11 July 1974 and flown back to India by an Air India jet. A huge crowd of people stood in the drizzling rain at Delhi airport to welcome the arrival of the aircraft. As the remains were carried down the landing steps they were formally received by Mr Sharker Dayal Sharma, President of the ruling Congress Party, Mr Swaran Singh, Foreign Minister, and Mr Zail Singh, Chief Minister of the Punjab.

The wooden casket was solemnly carried into the V.I.P. lounge, draped with the National Flag and decked with flowers, garlands and wreaths. Then it was transported in a decorated bus to Kapurthala House where the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, paid homage: 'We are glad that after a gap of 34 years the remains of Udham Singh who sacrificed his life for the independence of the country have reached Indian soil.'

The man who had been forced to slip out of his country under an assumed name and then condemned by Congress leaders was now being accorded a hero's welcome.

Indian newspapers carried large memorial advertisements calling on the people to 'pay homage to the great hero on his last journey'. The story of the massacre was recounted time and time again. Extracts from his letters were published in a special souvenir colour supplement issued by the Punjab Government. There were also passages from the speech he had delivered from the dock at the Old Bailey and which the British Government had suppressed.

After the official ceremony in the capital the remains were taken on an extensive and unprecedented tour of the country. Millions lined the route as the casket was transported from Delhi to the Punjab. Public meetings were held at Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Jullundur and other major cities. There were even night halts to enable people in lesser known places to pay their respects. When the remains reached Amritsar they were taken to the Jallianwala Bagh for a period of lying in state.

The casket was borne along the narrow alley through which General Dyer had marched his small force of men and past a sign bearing the event:

What an irony of fate! Jawaharlal Nehru despised Indian revolutionaries all his life and he condemned them as mental perverts publicly in 1950. And yet 25 years later his own daughter Indira Gandhi praised Udham Singh as a great patriot who avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Madanlal Dhingra's coffin was exhumed on 12 December 1976 in the presence of Natwar Singh, acting High Commissioner for India and that coffin too was flown back to India. (This was confirmed in a letter from Home Office to my friend (late) Mr Sonapatki.)

After cremation, ashes of both were immersed in the river at Amritsar.

In 1992 Government of India honoured Dhingra by issuing a postage stamp in his memory.

PLEASE OBSERVE A 2 MINUTE SILENCE IN THE MEMORY OF DHINGRA AND UDHAM SINGH.

Note – there is a parallel here which shows British Callousness.

In 1821 Napoleon Bonaparte died in exile on the island of St Helena, 1200 miles off the coast of West Africa. But the British did not allow his coffin to be sent to Paris till 1840!

Sir Roger Casement, an Irish freedom fighter was executed in Pentonville Prison on 3 August 1916, aged 51. But his coffin was not sent to Dublin till 3 March 1965!!

(10) 191-195 Piccadilly, London W1

If we stand on the other side of the road and look up we can see the letters ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PAINTERS IN WATERCOLOUR founded 1831. Swami Vivekanand delivered his lectures here in 'Princes Hall' in May 1895 and May 1896. He was also given a warm send off in the same institute on 13 December 1896. The building is located opposite the Royal Academy of Arts. In 1971, the institute moved to its present premises at 17 Carlton House Terrace, London S.W1.

Why did Vivekanand cause such a sensation in America in 1893 when he used the words ' My brothers and sisters' ?

In those days, speakers used to address public meetings and assemblies with the phrase ' My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen.' Those who had achieved the rank of Duke, Marquis, Earl, Viscount or Baron are Lords. Their wives are Ladies. An Army or Navy officer was called *Officer and a Gentleman*. During their training, they were called 'Gentleman cadets.' Even their wives did not count. And what about the rest 99% of the population ? They did not matter. In the words of King Edward the VII, they were ' the lower order.'

Under such circumstances Swamiji started his address with the words ' my brothers and sisters.' This was in Chicago in 1893 at the time of All Religious Conference. Hence the sensation and standing ovation for him.

Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose

Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose invented wireless at the same time as Marconi in 1895, but being an Indian, he was denied the credit.

He was however, well known for his discovery that plants have sensations and feelings just the same as human beings. He gave a demonstration of his findings at the Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, on 10 May 1901. The audience was thrilled. But there was lot of resistance and prejudice against him being an Indian.

He used to come to Berlin and Paris to present his papers. Afterwards, Dr Bose and Mrs Abala Bose used to stay with Margaret Noble's mother in London (21A Wimbledon High street, London S.W 19). Margaret Noble's grandparents were involved in the Irish Home Rule movement. Margaret later became a disciple of Swamiji and took the name Bhagini Nivedita. When she went to work in Calcutta, she became an intimate friend of the Boses.

Dr Bose was knighted in 1916. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society only in 1920.

(11) No.10 Warwick Street, London W1

Gyanchand Varma, the secretary of Abhinav Bharat used to live here.

After the death of Dhingra, Gyanchandji shaved and performed 'shraddha' ceremony for Dhingra

(12) Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London S W 1

A common site for tourists. Some of the important events that occurred here were : -

* In 1875, Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister once declared in the House of Commons, "We must bleed India. The lancets should be applied to those parts where blood is thickest."

* On 20 July 1906, Savarkar came to the House of Commons to listen to the debate on Indian budget.

* On 6 August 1919, Tilak appeared before the Joint Parliamentary Committee as a witness on behalf of the Home Rule League of India. This was in the wake of forthcoming Montford political reforms. Lord Sydenham, the former Governor of Bombay province as well as other right wing leaders were so discourteous as to leave the Committee Room as soon as Tilak's name was announced.

* On 6 June 1984, Savarkar Birth centenary Celebration Committee paid homage to Veer Savarkar in Committee Room number 10 on the occasion of his birth centenary. Rt Hon Reginald Freeson, M.P and Richard A Balfe, Member of European Parliament were members of the celebration committee. Savarkar's famous song '*jayostute shree mahanmangale shivaspade shubhade*' was sung by Mrs Mangla Barve.

Concluding the ceremony, Mr Godbole thanked all the participants and contributors. He specially thanked councillor Norman Howard of Greater London Council (GLC) by whose efforts the council has agreed to put up a plaque on India House in London where Savarkar lived during 1906-09. Godbole also said that in the 1960s, due to Savarkar's inspiration, a well-known universal prayer was formalised, to be sung at such functions. The meeting ended with that prayer sung by Mrs Barve namely, *sarva mangala mangalyam devi sarvartha sadhikam*

* As we stand facing Big Ben, Cannon Row is on our right side. After the Court of Appeal decided that Savarkar should be sent to Bombay to stand trial for treason, he was taken from Brixton prison to Cannon Row Police station. From here he was escorted to Westminster Pier and then by boat to Tilbury on river Thames. He was put on board the ship s.s *Moria*.

(13) Foreign and Commonwealth Office [Former India Office] King Charles Street, London S.W.1

This is situated behind 10 Downing Street, the residence of British Prime Minister. It was built by Sir George Gilbert Scott and Matthew Digby Wyatt during 1861 to 1868

After the 1857 Indian War of Independence, the British Crown took over administration of India from the hands of the East India Company. It was then that The India Office was established and from 1858 to 1947 this building served as the office of Secretary of State for India who was also a member of the British cabinet. In 1906, his salary was £5,000 /year the same as the salary of the British Prime Minister but it was charged to India.

Winston Churchill's father Randolph Churchill was the Secretary of State for India in 1885.

During 1891-92 Curzon was the Under Secretary of State for India.

Morley was the Secretary of State for India when Savarkar was in London.

Council of the Secretary of State for India.

Like British Governors, and Governor Generals, the Secretary of State for India too had his Council.

We should note that Sir Wyllie reported directly to Morley.

Qualifications for membership of this Council were -

At least 9 (out of 15) must have resided in India for 10 years and have not left India for more than 5 years prior to their appointment. Term of employment 7 years, extendable.

In 1909, Mr Gupta (Hindu) and Bilgaria (Muslim) were appointed as members of the Council

Wrangler R P Paranjape (Principal of Fergusson College where Savarkar studied) was a member of this council in 1927.

Salaries in 1905/06

| Position | Annual salary |
|---|---------------|
| | |
| Secretary of State for India | £5,000 |
| Private secretary to S o S | £300 |
| | |
| Political A.D.C | £800 |
| | |
| Under Secretary of State for India Arthur Godley | £2,000 |
| Private secretary to Under S of S | £150 |
| | |
| Parliamentary Secretary | £1,500 |
| Private secretary to P.S. | £150 |
| | |
| Members of the Council Sir John Edge, William Warner etc | £1,200 each |
| | |
| Total cost of India Office establishment | £148,250 |

Savarkar came here on 18 June 1906 to see Sir Curzon Wyllie. He sought a pass from Wyllie to attend the debate on the Indian budget to be held in the House of Commons on 20th July.

In 1906, Gokhale came here to see Morley, the then Secretary of State for India to protest against the partition of Bengal, while Gandhi saw Morley to complain about the discrimination and harassment faced by Indians in South Africa.

India Office Library and Records

Both these were situated in the same buildings. They contained all the records of the East India Company. By various Press Acts, all authors in India were obliged to send a copy of their publications to India Office Library and Records. That was how the collection grew.

Savarkar did his research in this library for his book 'Indian War of Independence 1857.' Indians were not easily admitted to the library in those days. One Mr Mukherjee, the manager of students' hostel India House, was married to an English woman. With his influence, Savarkar obtained a reader's card. From the records of visitors, kept by the Library we know that Savarkar came here 17 times during 3 December 1906 and 13 February 1908

He soon secured the confidence of the librarian by condemning the Indian heroes of that war as villains. The librarian gave Savarkar much more information than otherwise was possible. He showed Savarkar many secret and confidential documents which were not normally available even to English gentlemen. Savarkar outwitted the British! On 11 August 1909, the librarian was surprised to read in the *Times* that Savarkar's book on '**Indian Mutiny**' was proscribed by the Government of India. By that time, it was too late. Savarkar had all the information he needed.

Savarkar also learnt about the Ramsing Kooka movement in Punjab when going through some papers in this library.

Mr Douthwaite, Under Treasurer of Grays Inn called on Sir Wyllie on 28 April 1909 to enquire about Harnam Singh and Savarkar. As the time was short there followed several frantic meetings between Mr Douthwaite and Sir Wyllie and other officers of India Office and many letters were exchanged. Wyllie was suggesting that both Savarkar and Harnam Singh should not be called to the Bar.

On 14 November 1909 meeting of the General Committee of Wyllie Memorial Fund was held here in the council room under the chairmanship of Field Marshall Lord Roberts, Commander in Chief of the British Army.

Tilak used this library when in London during 1918-19. One Mr Thomas was then the librarian.

The library and records moved to 197 Blackfriars Road, London S.E 1 in 1967-68. It has now become a part of the British Library. In 1998, it was moved to its new location at 96 Euston Road, London N.W 1 near St Pancras railway station.

If we walk towards St James's Park, we can see War Cabinet Rooms on the left side. Churchill and his advisers had their offices underground during the Second World War. The rooms are open to public and are worth a visit.

(14) Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, London S.W 1

Caxton Street was named after William Caxton who started the first printing press in England in Westminster in 1476. It was here in this hall, that many stormy meetings of Indians took place.

1908

July

On 23rd, Lokamanya Tilak was sentenced to transportation for 6 years to Mandalay in Burma. The distance Bombay-Cochin-Trivendram-Madras-Rangoon- Mandalay is 3,000 miles (4,800 K.M) whereas the distance between Paris and Moscow is only 1540 miles (2460 K.M)

Average life expectancy for male in Britain in 1908 was only 48 1/2 years, much less in India at that time. In 1908, Tilak was 52 years of age. These facts give us some idea of the barbarity of punishment. He reached Mandalay on 23 September.

A meeting to condemn this sentence was held here under the chairmanship of Barrister Parekh who worked for Dadabhai Naoroji for a number of years. Indians of all persuasions attended.

October

On the, 16th three meetings were held

1st to express sympathies for the plight of Indians in South Africa.

Sir Mancharji Bhavanagari was in the chair. Speakers were – Lala Lajpat Rai, Savarkar, Saklatwala, Bipin Chandra Pal and Khaparde.

2nd to protest against the partition of Bengal (this was the time of the 3rd anniversary of the partition)

Lala Lajpat Rai was in the chair. He explained how the New Party (A faction of the Congress Party seeking direct action) was born when the partition of Bengal came into effect on 16 October 1905.

Speakers were :- Dr Kumaraswami, Karandikar and Khaparde (both lawyers acting for Tilak)

3rd was to celebrate Raksha Bandhan

Bipin Chandra Pal spoke on this occasion.

December 18/19/20

Bipinchandra Pal delivered his lectures. On the 19th Madam Cama unfurled India's national flag and also delivered a lecture.

December 20

Indian National Congress party was to hold its session in Nagpur. This could not happen due to Government stubbornness. It was therefore decided in this hall on 18th to hold that session in London. Dadasaheb Khaparde, lawyer acting for Tilak, was in the chair. Seven resolutions were passed.

1st 'we want swaraj' put forward by Dr Kumaraswami, seconded by Savarkar. He said, ' before passing this resolution, everyone should remember that it means blood, sweat, toil and tears. Think carefully before you raise your hand to support the motion.'

2nd was for the boycott of British goods (Madame Cama spoke on the subject)

3rd was for congratulating Turkey on its progress towards democratic government.

4th one related to the independence movements in Egypt, Ireland and Iran. Egyptian secretary and Bipin babu embraced each other on the stage.

5th one condemned Morley Minto reforms as insignificant / cheating and will encourage the spread of internal disputes and quarrels. Bipin babu spoke eloquently on this topic.

6th one was on Swadeshi and national education.

7th one stated that self appointed Madras Congress is NOT a National Congress Party. Dominion Status will be totally unsatisfactory.

December 29

The birthday of Guru Govind Singh was organised by Savarkar in London. Despite the December cold, wind and snow, many Indians attended.

Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh (uncle of Bhagat Singh) who were exiled from India, attended.

Bipin babu was in the chair. The speakers were Prof Gokulchand, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin babu and Savarkar. Savarkar explained the meaning of the words ' Deg /Teg / Fateh.' which appeared on a banner displayed above the dais. Deg stands for principles, Teg for the sword and Fateh for success. Principles, however noble, need the strength of force behind them to succeed. That is why Guru Govind Singh took to the sword to protect our Dharma.

Most Indians attending this function specially wore turbans.

The Indian national flag first unfurled by Madam Cama at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart in 1907 was hoisted at this function.

'Karaprasad' was distributed at the end.

The invitation card prepared by Savarkar for this function has been preserved by the British Secret Police.

1909

July

On the 5th, a meeting was held in Caxton Hall to condemn Dhingra who had assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie on the 1st.

Agakhan was in the chair. The motion was proposed by Bhavnagari and seconded by Amir Ali. Agakhan put the motion to vote. After seeing many raised hands, he said that the motion was passed unanimously. Savarkar protested and said, " No, not unanimously. There are opponents of the motion as well. Take down my name, Savarkar. I oppose the motion."

There was great uproar. Bhavnagari became furious and wanted to get hold of Savarkar and expel him. Agakhan reprimanded Bhavnagari. An Eurasian named Palmer hit Savarkar near an eye, which started to bleed. But even then, Savarkar said, " I still oppose the motion." M P T Acharya, a friend of Savarkar then hit Palmer with a stick. Surendranath Banerjee expressed his anger. He said " Savarkar had a right to have his say. It was outrageous to attack him." Banerjee left the hall in protest. Women panicked and left the hall. Police rushed in and the meeting ended in disarray.

Afterwards, Savarkar wrote a letter to the *Times* and other newspapers. He maintained that as the matter was subjudice, discussing the case in public and using the words 'crime' and 'criminal' amounted to the contempt of the court. Savarkar's letter was published in the *Times* on Tuesday 6 July 1909.

Dadasaheb Khaparde, one of the lawyers acting for Tilak was present at this meeting. He came to London to plead for clemency for Tilak. So, it was necessary for him to show in public that he disapproved of Dhingra. But at the same time, he provided money for the publication of Savarkar's book '*Indian War of Independence 1857*' It is time we learned such duplicity.

1919

Tilak addressed a meeting of Indians on 25 February 1919, just 4 days after losing his case against Chirol.

Tilak addressed a meeting of Indians in this hall to protest against the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre that took place on 15 April 1919 and also to condemn the Rowlatt Act.

1940

March

On 13th, Udham Singh shot dead Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was the Governor of Punjab at the time of Jalianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919 and thus avenged the Martial Law atrocities of Brigadier General Dyer. At that time, he also shot and wounded Lord Zetland, the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Lamington, the former Governor of Bombay province and Sir Louis Dane, the Governor of Punjab before O'Dwyer.

Lamington died six months later. Lord Zetland was back to work within a few days. But Sir Louis Dane was ordered by doctors to take a long period of convalescence.

General Notes –

Many meetings of Suffragates (votes for women movement) were held here. Winston Churchill delivered some of his speeches in this hall during World War II
It is a 'listed building'.

A note on relations between Indian Revolutionaries and Moderates.

* *Surendranath Banerjee*

The meeting to condemn Dhingra was held here on 5 July 1909.

Savarkar went to jail on Andaman Islands. His first letter from jail is dated 15 December 1912, just 3 ½ years later. Savarkar's younger brother Narayanrao went to see Banerjee with the letter. When Banerjee read the letter tears came to his eyes. He patted the back of Narayanrao to comfort him. One year later, Banerjee fearlessly published a smuggled letter from Andaman written by Hotilal Varma, and exposed the inhuman conditions of political prisoners there (*Bengalee* 27 April 1912, page 4 columns A and B).

In the 1920s Chief Commissioner of Andaman visited Savarkar who was in prison hospital. He told Savarkar, "while travelling from Europe by ship I met S N Banerjee. When he knew who I was he asked, 'How is Savarkar? Is he in good health? If I was to visit Andaman would you allow me to meet Savarkar and observe the general condition of the Political Prisoners?'

In 1937, Savarkar paid tribute to Banerjee and said, " Banerjee opposed the methods of the revolutionaries. But, no one grieved more at their sufferings than Banerjee. It was largely through his efforts that we were released from the Andaman Islands and sent back to mainland India. These Moderates regarded us Revolutionaries as their own children."

* *Barrister J M Parekh*

Parekh was present at the meeting in Caxton Hall to condemn Dhingra on 5 July 1909. But when Savarkar faced extradition to Mumbai to face trial there in 1910, it was same Barrister Parekh who represented Savarkar in the High Court!!

* *Bipinchandra Pal*

After Savarkar was arrested and sent to Mumbai to stand trial, there was a programme to celebrate New Year at the house of Bipin Chandra Pal in January 1911. Large photo of Savarkar was hanging on a wall. Sir Henry Cotton showed sympathy for Savarkar. This was reported in English newspapers and caused quite a stir.

Thus, B C Pal had deep respect for Savarkar and did not hesitate to show it even when Savarkar was being charged with waging war against King Emperor.

Additional Notes –

(1) In addition to the meeting in Caxton Hall on 5 July 1909, there was another meeting of Indians on 4 July in New reform Club, Adelphi Terrace. In his speech, S.N Banerjee said something interesting. Times (of London) reported, " The Government and the Reformers. He (Banerjee) had noticed an appeal made in a great newspaper for the co-operation of Indians in suppressing anarchical conspiracy. He believed that he could say on behalf of

all present that they desired to give a most cordial response to that appeal. But the Government must strengthen their hands. If the Government would not listen to their representations, if their persistent appeals were brushed aside – he was going to say contemptuously brushed aside – as unworthy of consideration, as in such matters as the partition of Bengal, what became of their influence and power to help the Government? They must have effective power to help. He desired strongly to press this consideration upon Lord Morley and the British democracy, who after all, were the uncontrolled masters of Indian destinies.” (Times 5 July 1909, page 8, column a)

(2) Mr S G Khapharde, commonly known as Dadasaheb Khapharde, lawyer of Tilak, was present at the meeting in Caxton Hall. And yet at the same time it was he who provided funds for publishing Savarkar's book *Indian War of Independence, 1857*, We must learn this duplicity.

(15) 14 Greycoat Gardens, Greycoat Street, London S.W. 1

House where Swami Vivekanand lived (October – December 1896)

Swamiji lived in a basement apartment.

(16) 63 St George's Drive (formerly St George's Road), London S.W.1

Lady Isabelle Margesson's Town House

A plaque was installed here on 5 July 2004, by English Heritage.

Lady Margesson attended Swamiji's lecture at Princes Hall and subsequently invited him to speak at her home to a small group (fifteen to sixteen in number). On the afternoon of Sunday 10 November 1985, where Miss Margaret Noble (later Sister Nivedita) was present.

In 1896 Mr Sturdy had rented 63 St George's Drive from Lady Isabel Margesson for five months from 1 May to 1 October for Swami's stay and his classes. They were held in the drawing room on the first floor which could accommodate 100 people.

Sunday lectures on Vedanta Philosophy.

7 June at 3:30 The necessity of religion

14 June at 4:00 The ideal of a universal religion

21 June at 4:00 The Real and Apparent Man

Admission free – no collection

Free class lectures

Tuesdays/ Thursdays

At 11:30 and 8:30

63 St George's Road (now St George's Drive)

London S.W.

**(17) Imperial College - the site of former Imperial Institute
Imperial Institute Road, London S.W 7.**

Victoria Tower is all that remains of the former Imperial Institute, which was founded in 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The Institute covered an area of 7 acres. Foundation stone of the tower was laid on 4 July 1887. The inscription reads

THIS STONE WAS LAID
BY
HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA
EMPERESS OF INDIA
ON THE 4TH DAY OF JULY 1887
IN THE 51ST YEAR OF HER REIGN

PRESIDENT
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS ALBERT EDWARD
PRINCE OF WALES

In 1960 the rest of the buildings were demolished and the present college extended on the site.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Britain granted independence to many African nations such as Gold Coast or Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960), Tanganyika and Zanzibar (1961), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Zambia (1964). Therefore, the Imperial Institute became the Commonwealth Institute in 1962 with its new premises at Kensington High Street.

Note on Imperial College of Science and Technology

It was founded under a Royal Charter granted on 8 July 1907. Foundation stone of the building on the corner of Prince Consort Street and Exhibition Road was laid by King Edward VII on 8 July 1909. His Majesty having applied the level and tapped the stone said, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I declare this stone well and truly laid."

On 1 July 1909, Madanlal Dhingra shot and killed Sir Curzon Wyllie in Jahangir Hall on the first floor of the Imperial Institute. The function was organised by The National Indian Association. The reception was given in the name of Lady Lyall, wife of Sir Alfred Lyall.

Wyllie had received a letter from K L Dhingra (Kundanlal, eldest of Dhingra's brothers). On 13 April Wyllie wrote to Madanlal and suggesting that he should meet Wyllie. Dhingra pretended that he wanted to discuss contents of that letter. That is how he came very close to Wyllie and shot him at 11.10 p.m..

On 8 June 1909, Babarao (Ganesh) Savarkar, elder brother of Veer Savarkar, was sentenced to transportation for life. The prosecution could only prove that he had published four historical poems, which were construed as seditious. Three days later, Viceroy Lord Minto sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for India, "Ganesh Damodar Savarkar convicted under section 121 and 124A of the India Penal Code and sentenced to transportation for life and forfeiture of property."

When the news reached the people of London, it was certain that some high ranking officer would pay the price.

After the assassination

Dhingra was wearing a dark jacket suit and a blue turban. After his arrest, the Police Officer said to Dhingra, " Do you want us to inform any of your friends of your arrest ? He cleverly replied, " There is no need. They will know about my arrest in tomorrow's newspapers." The Police were trying to find out if they could implicate any of Dhingra's friends. He proved a match for them. Dhingra was taken to Walton Street Police station.

Praise and malicious accusations

* Winston Churchill and Lloyd George were, in private, both surprised and admired the courage of Dhingra. How Savarkar knew this is a mystery. But he does mention this fact in an article in 1927. "Courage," Churchill once said, " is the greatest of all human virtues. For, it guarantees all others."

However, in public the British Press made some vicious allegations against Dhingra, taking advantage of remarks made by an ex-Army officer at the inquest on Wyllie. This was held at Kensington Town Hall before Coroner Mr C Luxmoore Drew. Dhingra refused to take part in the proceedings.

At the inquest, Captain Charles Rollerton, an ex-Army officer of Broadhurst Gardens, Hampstead was present. This witness suggested the possibility of Dhingra having taken the Indian drug called *Bhang* because of his half dazed and dreamy manner. He added that natives of India very often took *Bhang* if they were going to perpetrate a deed of this kind.

The Coroner asked Miss Beck, the Secretary of the National Indian Association, if she noticed whether Dhingra was under the influence of some drug; but her reply was in the negative. Dhingra, she said, seemed in a normal condition and was quite calm.

Other witnesses clear Dhingra.

During the trial, Mrs Harris, Dhingra's landlady, said she did not think he took drugs.

Dr John Buchanan of Vauxhall Bridge was the first doctor to arrive at the scene of assassination. Dhingra, said the doctor, was perfectly calm. He seemed the calmest man in the crowd.

New evidence

During his trial Dhingra was examined by Psychiatrists to decide if he was mentally sub-normal. Their tests were negative. Savarkar says so in his newsletter. Now, the files in the public record office (Kew Garden) confirm that such tests were carried out.

Importance of Wyllie

Lt Col Sir Wyllie was Political A.D.C to the Secretary of State for India since 1901. He was also the head of the Secret Police, a fact not mentioned in the contemporary British newspapers. He was trying to get information about Savarkar and the revolutionaries. They, in turn, tried to find about the operations of the British Secret Police. Wyllie planted an informer in India

House. His name was Kirtikar and he pretended to be a student of dentistry. Savarkar found out who Kirtikar really was. When exposed and threatened with life, Kirtikar gave all the information he had about the police operations to Savarkar.

In his newsletter published in India on 30 July 1909, Savarkar wrote, " There was hardly an Indian in England that he did not know. He kept dossier on all British papers are demanding that Indian detectives should be employed to keep an eye on Indian students. What good will that do ? English detectives could not save their own boss."

Harischandra Koregavkar, who helped to translate Savarkar's book Indian War of Independence 1857, turned against him and became a witness for crown in the trial of Savarkar in Bombay. He testified, " Kirtikar was my friend. He stayed in India House. When it was discovered that he was an informer planted by Wyllie I got the blame and my friends did not trust me any more. Wyllie's behaviour had recently become obnoxious. He had appointed informers on activities in India House. He himself was an experienced spy. It was therefore decided to kill him."

On 2 July 1909, Lt Col Sir Arthur Davidson, one of King's (Edward the VIIth) equerries went to Lady Curzon Wyllie's residence in No.10 Onslow Square by the command of the King and Queen to convey an expression of their Majesties deep sympathy with her in her bereavement. Sir Curzon Wyllie was well known at St Stephens, as he often came down with Indian Chiefs and notabilities who were visiting England and took them to seats in the Distinguished Strangers' gallery (of House of Commons).

Note – Stranger means one who is not a member of British Parliament.

(*Daily News* 3 July 1909 pp 7/8)

On 6 July 1909, the funeral service was held at St Paul's church, Onslow Square near Wyllie's residence. Wyllie's body was buried at the Richmond Cemetery, about 1 mile from Tube station. And who was present at the funeral? The Times reported on 7 July -

At the funeral, the King (Edward the VIIth) was represented by Sir Dighton Probyn.

The Prince of Wales (George V) by Mr Edward Wallington

The Duke of Connaught by Major Murray.

Prince and Princess Christian by Major Evans Martin.

Lord Kitchner, Commander in Chief of the Indian Army by Major General Hubert Hamilton.

The Prime Minister Asquith by his private secretary Mr Vaughan Nash.

Lord and Lady Morley arrived early, and the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Althorp also represented in person a department with which Sir Curzon Wyllie has constant official communication. There were also present Lord Middleton (formerly Secretary of State for India) and Lady Middleton, Lord Curzon of Kedleston (former Viceroy of India), Lord George Hamilton (formerly Secretary of State for India) and Lady Hamilton, Lord MacDonnell and Lord Lamington.

** Lady Wyllie*

On 28 July 1909 Lady Wyllie was granted a pension of £500 per year, for life. It was charged to the Indian Revenue of course. She died on 1 October 1931. The Wyllies had no children.

Memorial to Wyllie

A fund was launched for memorial of Wyllie soon after his death. An appeal was launched in *The Times* (of London) by Sir Lee Warner of India Office on 13 July. Times published a list of subscribers for the first time on 9 August when 391 pounds were collected. The contributors were :-

Lord Curzon, the former Viceroy of India,

Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Commander in Chief of the British Army.

Lord George Hamilton, the former Secretary of State for India.

Sir Banfield Fuller, the former Lt Governor of East Bengal after the partition of Bengal in 1905 and who banned *Vande Mataram*.

Lord Lamington, the former Governor of Bombay province.

Fifth list of subscribers was published in the Times on 15 November 1909

Lt Col Sir Donald Robertson – Honorary Secretary reported that a total of 2,700 pounds were collected (about 108,000 pounds at 1998 prices)

On 18 November 1909, Times reported that the following have joined the General Committee :-

Viceroy of India, Lord Minto.

Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.

Some Governors of provinces of India.

The subscription list was closed on 1 March 1910.

Memorial committee held it's meeting on 16 October 1909 in India Office. Lord Curzon proposed that 300 pounds should be spent for a tablet in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. This was agreed and the tablet was inaugurated a year later.

On 14 April 1910, it was reported that the remaining 2,400 pounds should be invested and the interest used for the Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Lime House, West India Docks, London. Wyllie was a member of the Managing Board of this place since 1903.

The tablet can be found in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, London. Follow the signs for the Crypt. At the end of steps we come to an dead end. Turn right to go in the crypt. The tablet is about 10 ft away. It is roughly 20 feet from where Nelson is buried. It is about 6 by 4 foot and depicts Wyllie's head with decorations. It reads

To the Glory of God
and in lasting memory of
LT COL SIR WILLIAM HUTT CURZON WYLLIE, KCIE, CVD
Youngest son of General Sir William Wyllie, GCB

Born October 5th 1848. Assassinated July 1st 1909
while attending an assembly of his Indian fellow subjects
at the Imperial Institute in London.

This tablet is erected in sorrow and in love
by his friends.

Entering the Army in 1866 and the Indian Political
Department in 1879, he earned distinction in the
Afghan War of 1879-80, in Oudh, in Nepal, in
Central India and above all in Rajputana where
He rose to the highest rank in the Service. In
1901 he was chosen to be Political Aide-de-Camp
to the Secretary of State for India
Innocent of all offences.

A devoted public servant, courageous and gentle,
of a winning courtesy, and a constant self-denial.

He was loved by the Princes and people
and died as he had lived
in the Service of India

Jesus said I am the resurrection and life

St John XI 25

His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see his face Rev XXII 34

1869-1870

R.S.R

1866- 1869

106

Bombay Light Infantry

It was unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Roberts on 19 October 1910. At that time it was indeed a very high honour for such a tablet to be placed in one's name in the crypt of St Paul's. (while reporting on this event, the *Times* stated on 20 October that Wyllie knew several Indian languages.)

Sir Wyllie was a very high officer indeed. Moreover, if his assassination was just an ordinary criminal act, why did the leaders all over India had to take a note of it ? Why could they not just ignore it ?

* *Killing of Lalkaka*

During the fight after the shooting, Cawasji Lalkaka, a Parsee doctor was shot dead by Dhingra. Lalkaka was born in Karnavati and educated in Mumbai, London (LRCP 1884) and Brussels (M.D 1886). He practised in Shanghai, China. At the inquest held at Westminster before Coroner Mr John Troutbeck, Dhingra expressed his deep regret for the accidental death of Lalkaka. He stated that had Lalkaka not come in the way he would not have been killed. He had no reason to kill him. On 8th July Lalkaka was buried in the Parsi burial ground in the Brookwood cemetery, Woking, Surrey.

On 18 April 1913, bust of Lalkaka was erected on stairs of the vestibule where he was shot dead.

It seems that Lalkaka was not married.

Few weeks before killing Wyllie, Dhingra had tried to kill Lord Curzon, who was the most arrogant of all Viceroy's. But fate saved Curzon twice. Dhingra then decided to kill Sir Curzon Wyllie. It must be emphasised that it was not the killing of another Englishman just because he had a similar name. Curzon Wyllie was a very ranking officer indeed.

We need not feel any sympathy for Wyllie. Those who are engaged in spying, intelligence gathering work and suppression of freedom movements know the risks. They enjoy good money, prestige and privileges. *Those who live by the sword die by the sword.*

Indian revolutionaries never knowingly shot innocent Englishmen let alone English women and children. On 22 June 1897, Chaphekar brothers shot and killed two British officers, Collector Rand and Lt Ayerst in Pune. Their target was only Rand. But, he changed places with Ayerst whose horse drawn carriage came first. Ayerst was therefore shot dead. After realising their mistake Chaphekar brothers killed Rand. They would not have killed Ayerst if he had not changed places with Rand.

Bengali revolutionaries, never threatened any English businessmen of Calcutta. Only the arrogant and oppressive officers were their targets. Indian revolutionaries stood high above the revolutionaries of other countries in this respect.

(18) 108 Ledbury Road, London W11

Madanlal Dhingra once lived here.

Having decided on his mission, Dhingra left India House to show that he disagreed with Savarkar. He took lodgings with Mrs Harris at the above address after Easter of 1909. In July 1908, he joined the National Indian Association, which was trying to discourage Indian students from the militant path. Important British dignitaries attended their functions. Dhingra denounced Savarkar and other revolutionaries in the company of appropriate persons. He was soon trusted by Miss Emma Josephine Beck, the secretary of the National Indian Association, and came to know the timings of visits of important English guests attending various functions. Eventually the opportunity came and Dhingra took full advantage of it.

When produced before Mr Hoarce Smith the Magistrate of Westminster Police Court, Dhingra said, " I do not plead for mercy: nor do I recognise your authority over me. " Dhingra was committed to the sessions.

Dhingra bluntly asked in the Court, "...If the Germans have no right to rule over England what right have the English got to rule over India ? " Savarkar wrote that during the trial Indians were not allowed inside the court.

In his last days, Dhingra had wished that his clothes, books and other belongings should be sold and the money thus raised be given to the National Fund. However, these were confiscated by the Metropolitan Police (of London). Two trunks were taken away by Chief Inspector McCarthy. Dhingra had given a letter authorising Nitinsen Dwarakadas to be the owner of his

personal belongings. But when the case came to Bow Street Magistrate's court on 31 December 1909 it was ruled that as Dhingra had made no will the police were not bound to return Dhingra's belongings to Nitinsen! (see Times of London 1 January 1910)

In 1992, The Government of India issued a 1 Rupee postal stamp in honour of Madanlal Dhingra.

(19) No.60 Talbot Road, London W11

Tilak lived here from August to November 1919. He went to the British Parliament to testify on behalf of the Home Rule League of India. He also met Mr Chintaman Dwarakanath or C.D.Deshmukh who stood first in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination. But he was not sure whether he should join in the Civil Service or join in freedom movement. He sought advice of Tilak. He told Deshmukh, " Everyone is not cut out for politics. After independence, we will require capable and experienced administrators. So, do join in the Indian Civil Service."

Deshmukh became Finance Minister in Nehru's cabinet in 1952.

Please note that the houses here are given odd numbers on the one side and even numbers on the other.

Story of the plaque

When Tilak's birth centenary was celebrated in 1956, it was decided to make attempts to erect a Blue Plaque on No. 10 Howley Place where he stayed for first ten months. The then owner of the house however, refused permission. The London County Council therefore resolved to erect a plaque on 60 Talbot Road where Tilak stayed for last four months.

In 1960, even 40 years after death of Tilak, there was strong opposition to a memorial to him. On 14 November 1960 The Times (of London) reported on page 7

OBJECTION TO LONDON PLAQUE TO INDIAN

A proposal by the L.C.C (London County Council) to erect a plaque to the Indian nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak has aroused resentment among Conservative members of the council. A decision on the proposal will be taken by the Town and Country Planning Committee of the council at their meeting today.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak died in 1920. The inscription on the proposed plaque on a house in Talbot Road, Paddington, would commemorate the fact that he stayed there in 1919, and describe him as an Indian patriot.

Mr Harold Montefiore, the Conservative deputy chief whip in the council, said at the weekend that Tilak had been imprisoned for publishing seditious literature. He stayed at the house for only two months when he came in England as a petitioner in a libel action, which he lost.

On 15 November 1960 The Times (of London) reported
CONSERVATIVE MOVE ON L.C.C PLAQUE

London County Council Town Planning Committee decided by 12 votes to four yesterday to erect a commemorative plaque to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Indian nationalist leader, at public expense on a house in Talbot Road, Paddington. The conservative members of the committee who had all voted against the proposal then invoked the minority order to ensure that no action is taken on this proposal until the council meets next Tuesday, when the matter will be debated in public.]

A plaque was eventually fixed on this house by the London County Council (LCC) in 1961. It was unveiled by President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Subsequently the Lokmanya Tilak Memorial Trust converted that house into a hostel for research workers and it was opened formally by Lord Mountbatten in January 1962.

Sadly, in 1975, the Westminster City Council purchased this and a number of adjoining houses. Numbers 42 to 106 were all pulled down to make way for flats. The plaque was returned to the GLC. At present, house numbers 57 to 97 are intact. There is a public park in front of the houses 57 to 67.

(20) No. 23 Aldridge Road Villas, London W11

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel lived here from October 1910 to February 1913, while studying to become a Barrister at the Middle Temple.

(21) No.10 Howley Place, Maidaville, London W 2

Lokamanya Tilak stayed in England from 30 October 1918 to 6 November 1919. For the first ten months, he lived at this address. Tilak came to London to attend his libel case against Sir Valentine Chirol.

Chirol was the editor of the foreign department of *The Times* (of London). He was deputed to India to study whether the lull in the storm of Indian unrest indicated a gradual and steady return to more normal and peaceful condition or whether, as in other cyclonic disturbances in tropical climes, it merely presaged fiercer outbursts yet to come.

Tilak was in jail in Mandalay when Chirol's book '*Indian Unrest*' was published. After his return to Pune, Tilak sued Chirol for the defamatory attack made on his personality.

Hearing began on 29 January 1919 and finished on 21 February 1919. In reality, the case became a battle between Tilak and Government of India, Sir Chirol being merely a symbolic target.

The Judge in his summing up observed that he did not think he had ever tried a more serious case having regard to its possible public consequences.

On 21 February after a deliberation of only 27 minutes, the Jury declared a verdict in favour of Sir Chirol. Tilak realised that it was futile to appeal. Sir John Simon, who headed the Simon Commission in 1929, represented Tilak in this case. He too advised against an appeal.

However, in his book '*Indian Unrest*', Chirol quite appropriately stated on page 41, “ **if any one can claim to be truly the father of Indian Unrest, it is Bal Gangadhar Tilak** “ This amounted to a great honour indeed. Tilak's true worth was recognised by his arch enemy. Unfortunately, the negative publicity received during the libel case, badly affected Tilak's appearance in British Parliament in August 1919.

The court case cost Tilak dearly. Cost of studying the brief alone was 4,000 pounds (66,000 pounds at 1998 prices). Barristers fees were 400 pounds / day (6,600 pounds at 1998 prices). He was also ordered to pay legal costs of Sir Chirol. A total bill of 14,000 pounds (231,000 pounds at 1998 prices), a staggering sum indeed. People in India raised the money by public subscription. On his return to Pune he said to the people, “ Oh my friends, you have bought me.”

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First World War had ended on 11 November 1918 when Armistice came into effect. In December 1918, there was landslide victory for the Tories in the General Elections in Britain. Lloyd George was the Prime Minister.

Peace conference was due to be held in Paris on 18 January 1919, just 9 weeks after signing of Armistice.

Tilak had prepared a representation to be submitted to the Peace Conference on behalf of India. He was going to lead a delegation on behalf of Indian National Congress Party. But the India Office returned it to him. He, therefore, applied for the permission to go to Paris as a journalist. On being refused passport to go to the Peace Conference, Tilak sent Edgar Wallace with a memorial, drafted by Baptista his lawyer, to M. Clemenceau, the Premier of France and the President of the Peace Conference. Clemenceau aged 78 remembered the battle of Sedan where France faced a humiliating defeat at hands of Germany.

Tilak also sent a letter to American President Wilson. Tilak claimed that, like the countries of Europe, India too, should have a right of self determination. He got an acknowledgement from Wilson's secretary.

France wanted to keep control of Rhine-land. But USA and Britain guaranteed to come to help of France if there was any trouble from Germany. But, afterwards the US Senate refused to ratify the assurance of its own President. Britain claimed that this invalidated her guarantee also. France felt tricked and betrayed. The treaty of Versailles was signed on 18 June 1919.

Afterwards, Tilak spent his time in establishing contacts with British politicians and waited till the Home Rule and Congress deputations arrived in London. Frequently, he went to Parliament Square to meet the individual M.Ps and other notables. Among them were the members of the Labour Party. Tilak met George Lansbury, the Labour leader, who was also the proprietor of '*The Daily Herald*' and published Tilak's articles in that paper. Tilak also met the Socialist leader Mr Hyndman who inaugurated the INDIA HOUSE in 1905, Mr Rutherford and Col Wedgwood Benn [father of the famous Labour M.P Tony Benn]. Col Benn became Secretary of State for India in 1931.

Tilak donated 2,000 pounds (33,000 pounds at 1998 prices) to the Labour Party, so that they could convert their weekly paper into a Daily one. Rowlatt Act was passed in India in March 1919. Congress delegation arrived in London in May 1919. With the help of Vitthalbhai Patel, Tilak changed the functioning of the British Committee of Congress Party, in London and the administration of the paper entitled '*India*.'

Tilak visited the Royal Asiatic Society Library on many occasions. He visited Cambridge, Oxford, Birmingham, Bristol and some places in Scotland and addressed Indian students, Subhash Chandra Bose being one of them. Bose stood 4th in the ICS examination next year, but decided not to join in and work for Indian independence

Tilak left 10 Howley Place towards the end of July 1919.

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D V Tahmankar, who was one of those trying to put up a plaque on the house where Tilak lived in London, says in his biography of Tilak written in 1956.

LIFE IN LONDON

On his arrival in London Tilak went to live at No.10 Howley Place, Maida Vale, a house rented for him by Joseph Baptista and Sitaram Seth of Manchester. Soon, among the Indian population of London No 10 Howley Place became known as "No. 10 Indian Downing Street". Here Tilak and his party were looked after by a Mr and Mrs McNalty and their daughter Sheila. This family came from Ireland and took a lively interest in politics. The fact that their own country was engaged in a bitter struggle with the British Government no doubt gave zest to their service of Tilak and his friends.

Mrs. McNalty had learned to cook curry and rice in Manchester and so the members of Tilak's party when they arrived in London were able to enjoy their usual dishes right from the first day. Owing to his diabetes, Tilak, of course, had to have specially prepared food —barley bread fried in butter and some leaf vegetables. The party stayed in Howley Place for about ten months before they moved to a larger house, 60 Talbot Road, Bayswater, placed at Tilak's disposal by its wealthy owner, Mr. Deepchand Zaveri, a diamond merchant from Surat with extensive business in London and Paris.

(An anecdote - By the time Tilak returned to India in November the McNalty family had learned enough about Indian food and Indian cooking to be able to open an Indian restaurant. Mr. Parikh, an old Indian resident who recently died in London, used to tell a story about this restaurant, which displayed the sign: UNDER THE BLESSINGS OF LOKAMANYA TILAK, "FATHER OF INDIAN UNREST". One day. Sir Valentine Chirol, who had acquired a taste for hot Indian dishes, went to McNalty's Restaurant and was surprised to read the sign so prominently displayed. He asked to see the proprietor, but he was out; so he asked the head waiter to take down the sign. This he refused to do. It was, of course, Chirol himself who, in his book, had called Tilak "The father

of Indian unrest". But he had used it in a derogatory sense. What he objected to now was seeing it used as a commendation of Tilak.)

Tilak and his friends lived very simple and frugal lives. A man of abstemious habits and a strict vegetarian, Tilak did not find life in England too difficult or even very different from his Indian way of life. He made little change in his daily routine and habits, except perhaps in his dress. In Poona he wore a dhoti and a toga-like shirt, but those garments were obviously unsuitable in the cold climate of London. He therefore wore trousers and thick socks and shoes, and a long coat, buttoned high. He disliked neckties and could conveniently discard them with this kind of coat. Many people mistakenly supposed that he did not wear a tie because he was a priest or in clerical orders.

As far as possible Tilak avoided evening or night engagements. He would leave home about midday, after lunch, and return by about five o'clock in the evening. He would then receive visitors and friends and hold political, social or religious discussions with them. He usually retired early.

N. C. Kelkar, who lived with Tilak for six months and kept him constant company writes: "Tilak's stay in London was unique in many ways. He lived there for nearly thirteen months but hardly ever went to the picture galleries, the Zoo, or the many famous buildings or monuments of which London is justly proud: the only exceptions he made to this were the British Museum, the India Office library, and the House of Commons. Indeed he was perhaps a very rare specimen of traveller, for he did not 'do' London from the tourist point of view."

As was to be expected, Scotland Yard kept a sharp eye on Tilak and his entourage but, says Mr. G. M. Namjoshi, who accompanied him, "the C.I.D. officers in England never made their presence felt". Some of the C.I.D. reports sent to the Government of India and now made available suggest that two or three high-ranking officers were sent to London from India, on special duty, to follow Tilak and keep a close record of his day-to-day activities.

The political reporting of Tilak's activities in the secret file is usually wide of the mark. The C.I.D. officers always seemed to see anti-British and sinister motives in whatever he did or said, either in public or in private conversation. Here, for instance, is a report about the opening of the Home Rule League offices in Adelphi Terrace, off the Strand. The C.I.D. report suggests that the true significance of this "appears to be the establishment of a centre for the student element in Great Britain—a place at which the younger men can be trained and educated in politics of the extremer form.... The students will be of the greatest possible use in furthering and carrying into effect the emancipation of India from the British yoke —consequently, they must be guided and developed along the right lines."

"So far as has been gathered, the general idea of the scheme is to wait patiently for another ten years before the final attempt to overthrow the British domination and meanwhile to work for and develop with every possible

thought and care a plan which must succeed. That it must succeed Mr. Tilak is convinced for a variety of reasons."

"Hitherto, in his opinion, there has not been a great amount of what may be called 'outside' sympathy for the cause of India. This has been changed by the war and the feeling created can, he considers, become a powerful factor for India's freedom if skilfully worked upon and manipulated. There is first the certain sympathy of Germany and her late Allies for anything anti-British. Then there are China and Japan, which ought not to present much difficulty. Then, again, the feeling of the Mohammedan countries, Turkey and her dependencies, Egypt and Persia, can be taken into account. To further this, the Mohammedans in India would be conciliated."

"Again, much could be hoped for from widespread pan-Hindu-Buddhist propaganda, initiated through the influence of the Bengal school of thought of Sir Rabindranath Tagore and his followers."

"The nationalist element in Ceylon, too, could be reached through this means. On the question of propaganda in India herself, Mr. Tilak does not feel that the need is so great now as in the past. In his view, all the returning Labour battalions, the sepoys, the frontier tribes which have been fighting in England's employ, the Imperial Service troops, the prisoners from Germany, etc., from whatever front they come will all ipso facto become and constitute themselves organs of propaganda; in each of their native provinces, districts, towns and villages their influence will be felt and their work will be done. This will count enormously with the rural population of their native places."

"Mr. Tilak relies, too, on the depletion of England's finances, and the fact that through the losses of other nations there is none that can come to her assistance in the future. The losses in skilled labour through casualties, the destruction of her shipping, the competition of Japan and America, the complications of foreign policy for many years to come—all these are factors which will result in the loss of England's power and prestige."

"Such are the opportunities to be watched for and seized by India. The fortune of war has come to her, and she must succeed."

This report concludes: "Mr. Tilak, in spite of his years and somewhat indifferent health is mentally vigorous and alert."

There are many other reports written in a similar vein and sent out to India. Most of them were mere gossip or unfounded speculation, by which the writers hoped to please their superiors. But, after all, the facts about Tilak's stay in England were easy enough to find out. His house was open to anybody at any time of the day. English and Indian friends went to see him without having to make an appointment; he made no secret of his views and willingly discussed them with anybody who cared to go and see him. Many a time Mr. Kelkar or Namjoshi would try to dissuade Tilak from expressing his views too frankly and openly. But his argument was: "You must not forget that discussion is not action. If a subject is introduced for theoretical discussion I

am bound to say what I think about it. Then again, I do not believe in secrecy. I want the English people to know what is in my mind. Let Scotland Yard make their reports—I do not mind so long as those reports are truthful and convey my ideas and not a distorted version of their own."

Tilak's stay in England was described by Joseph Baptista as "one mad rush", with most of his time taken up in addressing meetings, attending social functions and holding political discussions with Indian and British friends. But in May 1919 he slipped in the doorway of his house and sprained his ankle. As a result, for three or four weeks he could hardly stand up, let alone walk. This accident threatened to put an end to his public work in England for some time. But Tilak, unwilling to disappoint the many organizations which had booked dates for him to address them, suggested that he should write his speeches which could then be read to the audience.

To this proposal a secretary of one of the organizations wrote, "I feel terribly distressed at your mishap and wish you a speedy recovery. But having your speech read is not the same thing as appearing in person on the platform. Our members will be most disappointed. However, may I suggest that we carry you to the car and drive you to the meeting? You can, of course, address the meeting seated." From then on, Tilak addressed scores of meetings in this fashion.

His sprained ankle was exploited in India to spread a malicious rumour. *The Englishman* of Calcutta published the story that Tilak was dangerously ill with cerebral haemorrhage at Broadstairs. Telegrams and messages came from all quarters of India inquiring about his health. He was most surprised at this wicked rumour and wrote to his nephew in Poona, "Do not believe a word about my health. The leg is still a little swollen but that does not prevent me from fulfilling my public engagements. Namjoshi gives me a pick-a-back and puts me in a taxi and we go to the meeting, which I address seated in a chair. Tell all my friends that my injured ankle has not affected my powers of speech". He once said to George Lansbury, "I never like to cancel a public engagement. By not fulfilling it you disappoint not one or two individuals but a host of men and women. Whatever be his personal difficulties, a public man has no right to trifle with the time and convenience of so many people".

Tilak devoted himself so whole-heartedly to his campaign that he never had a day off in his thirteen months' stay in England. In that time he had succeeded in reorganizing the British India Committee and putting it on a proper constitutional basis, and regaining control of the newspaper *India* for the Congress, as well as making a firm contact with the Labour Party. But by the end of August 1919, he began to get ready to return home. At one time he had planned to go to America and join his friend Lajpat Rai who, with the help of Dr. Hardikar, was conducting a weekly paper *Young India*. But the journey was out of the question—a Government which would not give him a passport to go to Paris was hardly likely to let him travel to America!

Then again, Tilak could see that the Joint Parliamentary Committee had nearly finished its work. This meant that the Government of India Bill would

probably soon become law. He would therefore need to be back in India to prepare for the elections which would be held. He was also anxious to meet the people of the Punjab, where the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy had recently taken place. He had taken a prominent part in many meetings held in London to condemn General Dyer and the political high-handedness of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. But that was not enough. He wanted to be with the people by attending that year's Congress, which was to be held at Amritsar, the scene of the tragedy. He therefore decided to sail home by *S.S. Egypt* and left England on October 30th, reaching Bombay on November 27th, 1919.

In thirteen months Tilak had accomplished a great deal. In particular, he established such a firm relationship with the Labour Party that from then on India became one of the major planks in the Party's programme. It was the friendship and understanding built up by Tilak in 1918-19 that finally led to a Labour Government under Mr. Attlee granting complete independence to India in 1947.

Tilak with his usual political acumen had seen where power was to lie. The Moderates and the others who had visited England before him had been content to try to influence official circles, and had achieved nothing. It was left to Tilak to discover in the Labour Party the real source of future political power.

(Note - The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy occurred under the martial law administration in the Punjab in April 1919. As everywhere else in India, a public meeting was held in the Jallianwala Bagh of Amritsar on April 13th, to protest against the Rowlatt Act. The Bagh, once a garden but in modern times waste land, is mainly used for holding fairs and public meetings. In size it is no larger than Trafalgar Square and is shut in almost entirely by high walls on all sides. A narrow lane leads to the entrance which also serves as the Bagh's main exit. On April 13th soon after half-past four when the meeting had just started, General Dyer entered the place with armoured cars and troops and without giving any warning "opened fire at about 100 yards' range upon a dense crowd which was estimated by him at 6,000, by others at 10,000 and more, but practically unarmed and all quite defenceless. The panic-stricken multitude broke at once, but for ten consecutive minutes he kept up a merciless fusillade --in all 1,650 rounds --on that seething mass of humanity, caught like rats in a trap, vainly rushing for the few narrow exits or lying flat on the ground to escape the rain of bullets, which he personally directed to the points where the crowd was thickest. The 'targets' to use his own words were good, and when at the end of those ten minutes⁶ having almost exhausted his ammunition, he marched his men off by the way they came, had killed, according to the official figures, only wrung out of Government months later, 379, and left about 1,200 wounded on the ground, for whom, again to use his own word he did not consider it his 'job' to take the slightest thought" (Sir Valentine Chirol: *India Old and New*.)

Lala Girdhari Lal, Deputy Chairman of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce was a reliable eye-witness of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. He watched the scene

from a house overlooking the Bagh. In his evidence before the Congress Inquiry Committee he says, "I saw hundreds of persons killed on the spot. The worst part of the whole thing was that firing was directed towards the gates through which the people were running out....bullets actually rained over the people at all these small outlets (four or five in all) ... Even those who lay flat on the ground were shot. No arrangements were made by the authorities to look after the dead or wounded. . I gave water to the wounded and rendered such assistance as was possible.... I went round the place and saw almost everybody lying there I think there must have been over 1,000 dead bodies in the garden then."

History of the plaque.

As we saw earlier, the owner of above house refused his permission to erect a plaque in 1956. However, 20 years later there was a new owner. After removal of the commemorative plaque on 60 Talbot Road in 1975 Lokamanya Tilak Commemorative Plaque Committee approached the Greater London Council (GLC) with a proposal to fix the plaque on 10 Howley Place. The Historic Committee of the GLC decided to erect a plaque. The new owner, an American, consented. The GLC was abolished by the Conservative government of Mrs Thatcher in 1985. The proposal of plaque was taken up by English Heritage which took over the function of caring for historical building from the GLC.

A commemorative plaque was eventually fixed on this house by the English Heritage. The unveiling ceremony was held on 29 October 1988, because it was the 70th anniversary of the day on which Tilak took up residence in this house. Tilak's grandson Jayantrao Tilak and great grandson Deepak J Tilak came from Mumbai especially for the ceremony.

A large gathering was present when Jayantrao Tilak unveiled the plaque, including Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster, Wing Commander W.H Kearney, Mr Salam Haider, Deputy Indian High Commissioner, Mr John Wheeler, Member of Parliament for Westminster North, senior officials of Indian High Commission and leading members of British and Indian communities. Mr Ankush Kakade, Mayor of Pune and four of his colleagues had also come for the ceremony.

The unveiling ceremony was followed by a reception at the Old Hall of Lincoln's Inn, Holborn. Mr Maurice Oberstein said that, as a member of the New York Bar, he felt that it was a great honour to pay tribute to the memory of Lokamanya Tilak. He also said 'It was a strange phenomenon that he as an American citizen should come a long way to meet the memory of Lokamanya Tilak, an Indian nationalist leader, in London which was the heart of a great commonwealth.' He felt an even greater honour that he should now be living in a house which had hallowed memory of Lokamanya Tilak.

Speaking on behalf of English Heritage, Mr Norman Howard gave an account of the events and preparations leading to the erection of the plaque.

(In June 1984 I had publicly thanked Mr Howard for his assistance in erecting a plaque on 65 Cromwell Avenue, in the name of Veer Savarkar)

Councillor Mr Pendse, former London correspondent of Tilak's paper Kesari, and Secretary of Lokmanya Tilak Commemorative Plaque Committee, proposed a vote of thanks to English Heritage and Mr Maurice Oberstein for their assistance and co-operation.

The plaque has been fixed to the side of the house as there was already a plaque on the front wall fixed by the London County Council. It reads

Antonio
Giovanni
Canaletto
1697 – 1766
Artist
Worked from a studio
on this site
1746-1755

One needs to go to number 12 Howley Place to see plaque in name of Tilak as it is placed on a side wall of house number 10.

Brief career of Sir Valentine Chirol

- * Born 23 May 1852.
- * Joined as a Clerk in the Foreign Office 1872.
- * Became correspondent for the *Standard* and visited Egypt in 1882, Sudan in 1885, Bulgaria in 1886.
- * He became correspondent of the *Times* in 1892 and was posted to Berlin for five years.
- * Chirol first visited India in 1883 and again in 1910. At the end of 1910 he collected the letters he wrote to the *Times* into a book –‘Indian Unrest.’ It was dedicated to Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India ‘as a tribute of private friendship and public service’ and introduced by a short essay from Sir Alfred Lyall.
- * Morley frequently consulted Chirol on Morley-Minto reforms programme.
- * Chirol retired from the Foreign Desk of the *Times* in 1912 aged 60, after nearly 12 years
- * He was knighted in 1912 for his services to India.
He sat on Royal Commission on Indian Public Services for two cold seasons – 1912/13 and 1913/14. The Commission issued its report in 1916.
- * Chirol died on 23 October 1929.

Updated on 10 October 2010