

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: Revolutionary Movement in India [Modern Indian History for UPSC]

Though the Indian freedom struggle post-1857 was largely free of violence, there was a revolutionary movement also aimed at winning India independence involving a lot of young Indian men and women. They believed that only an armed struggle against the government would deliver India from British rule. They employed violent means. They were mainly crushed by the British authorities but they were successful in inspiring many Indians towards the freedom struggle. Their stories of heroism and sacrifice for the motherland motivated and continues to motivate people to live and die for the country.

Revolutionary movement in India for the freedom struggle

The First Case: Chapekar Brothers (1897)

- First political assassination of a British officer in India post 1857 Revolt.
- Brothers Damodar, Balkrishna and Vasudeo Chapekar shot at WC Rand, ICS, Chairman of the Special Plague Committee in 1897.
- Rand's military escort Lieutenant Ayerst died on the spot whereas Rand died a few days later due to wounds.
- The brothers were against the atrocities committed by the British authorities under Rand during the plague epidemic in Pune.
- The government in order to curb the spread of the epidemic ended up harassing Indians and employing extreme measures.
- All the three brothers were hanged for the assassination.

Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case (1908)

- Also called Muraripukur conspiracy or Manicktolla bomb conspiracy.
- Douglas Kingsford was an unpopular British Chief Magistrate who was the target of the bomb thrown at Muzaffarpur (Northern Bihar).
- Unfortunately, the carriage at which the bomb was targeted contained two English ladies and not Kingsford. The two women died in the attack.
- Revolutionaries who threw the bomb were Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose.
- Chaki committed suicide while Bose, then only 18 years of age, was caught and sentenced to death by hanging.
- The other people who were tried in the case were Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother Barin Ghosh, Kanailal Dutt, Satyendranath Bose and more than 30 others.
- They were all members of the Anushilan Samiti in Calcutta.

- Aurobindo Ghosh was acquitted due to lack of evidence and others served varying life-terms in prison.

Curzon Wylie's Assassination (1909)

- The India House was an organisation in London involved in the freedom struggle of India mainly engaging Indian students in the UK as its participants.
- Patrons of this organisation included Shyamji Krishna Varma and Bhikaiji Cama.
- India House became the centre of revolutionary activities for Indian independence outside India.
- The organisation was liquidated after the assassination of an army officer Curzon Wylie by its member Madan Lal Dhillon in 1909.

Howrah Gang Case (1910)

- Also known as Howrah-Sibpur Conspiracy case.
- In this case, 47 revolutionaries associated with the Anushilan Samiti were arrested and tried for the murder of Inspector Shamsul Alam.
- Alam was investigating the revolutionary activities of the Samiti and was trying to link and consolidate the murders and robberies into a single case.
- The case brought to light the work of revolutionary Jatindranath Mukherjee.
- Despite attempts, the case could not establish the links, mainly due to the decentralised nature of the Samiti.
- Of all the accused, only Jatindranath Mukherjee and Narendranath Bhattacharjee were sentenced to one year imprisonment.

Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case (1912)

- Also known as the Delhi Conspiracy Case.
- This was an assassination attempt on Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India.
- The revolutionaries were led by Rashbehari Bose.
- A homemade bomb was thrown into the viceroy's howdah (elephant-carriage) during a ceremonial procession in Delhi. The occasion was the transfer of the British capital from Calcutta to Delhi.
- Lord Hardinge was injured while an Indian attendant was killed.
- Bose escaped being caught whereas a few others were convicted for their roles in the conspiracy.

Kakori Conspiracy (1925)

- This was a case of a train robbery that occurred near Kakori in Uttar Pradesh.
- The attack was led by youth of the Hindustan Republican Association (later renamed Hindustan Socialist Republican Association) including Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajendra Lahiri, Thakur Roshan Singh and others.

- It was believed that the train carried money bags belonging to the British government.
- One person was killed during the robbery.
- The revolutionaries were arrested and tried in court.
- Bismil, Khan, Lahiri and Roshan Singh were sentenced to death. Others were sentenced to deportation or imprisonment.

Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930)

- Also known as Chittagong Uprising.
- This was an attempt by revolutionaries to raid the police armoury and the auxiliary forces armoury from Chittagong (now in Bangladesh).
- They were led by Surya Sen. Others involved were Ganesh Ghosh, Lokenath Bal, Pritilata Waddedar, Kalpana Dutta, Ambika Chakraborty, Subodh Roy, etc.
- The raiders were not able to locate any arms but were able to cut telephone and telegraph wires.
- After the raid, Sen hoisted the Indian flag at the police armoury.
- Many of the revolutionaries involved escaped but some were caught and tried.
- The government came down heavily on the revolutionaries. Many were sentenced to imprisonment, deported to the Andaman, and Surya Sen was sentenced to death by hanging. Sen was brutally tortured by the police before he was hanged.

Central Assembly Bomb Case (1929) & Lahore Conspiracy Case (1931)

- Revolutionaries Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt sought to draw attention to their revolution by throwing a bomb along with leaflets in the Assembly House at Delhi.
- They did not attempt to escape and were arrested and jailed for the act.
- Their intention was not to hurt anyone but to popularise their revolutionary activities and philosophy.
- Bhagat Singh was re-arrested in connection with the murder of a British police officer, JP Saunders. This case was called the Lahore Conspiracy Case.
- Saunders was killed mistakenly as the real target was another police officer, James Scott, who was responsible for the lathi charge that killed Lala Lajpat Rai.
- Others involved in this killing were Sukhdev, Rajguru and Chandrashekhar Azad.
- They were all members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.
- While in prison, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev along with other political prisoners went on a hunger strike to demand better conditions of prisoners in the jails.
- After the trial, all three were sentenced and executed by hanging in March 1931. Azad was martyred the same year in February in a gun battle with the police in a park in Allahabad.