

Ghadar Party: Notes for UPSC Modern Indian History.

The Ghadar Party was an international political movement consisting of expatriate Indians to overthrow British rule in India. The official founding has been dated to a meeting on 15 July 1913 in Astoria, Oregon, the United States of America.

This article will give details about the Ghadar Party within the context of the IAS Exam.

Background of the Ghadar Party

At the beginning of the 20th century, the burgeoning Indian Independence Struggle had led to a rise of nationalist sentiments not just in the Indian subcontinent but also among students and emigres around the world belonging to the same region. Revolutionary intellectuals like Lala Har Dayal (Born on October 14, 1884) and Taraknath Das attempted to organize these students while imparting nationalist ideas

The Ghadar Party, initially named the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association was formed in was formed on 15 July 1913 in the United States under the leadership of Lala Har Dayal, Sant Baba Wasakha Singh Dadehar, Baba Jawala Singh, Santokh Singh and Sohan Singh Bhakna as its president. The Ghadar party found a large support base among Indian expatriates living in the United States, Canada, East Africa and Asia.

Activities of the Ghadar Party

Upon the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, some members of the Ghadar Party arrived in Punjab to foment an armed revolution for the independence of India. They were also successful in smuggling arms and inciting the Indian soldiers in the British Army to mutiny. The resultant uprising, now known as the Ghadar Mutiny was harshly put down by the British with 42 mutineers being executed following the Lahore Conspiracy Case trial. Yet, the Ghadar Party continued their fight against colonialism from 1914 to 1917, with the support of Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire as both were part of the Central Powers opposed to the British.

The party was built around the weekly paper The Ghadar, which carried the caption on the masthead: Angrezi Raj Ka Dushman (an enemy of the British rule). "Wanted brave soldiers", the Ghadar declared, "to stir up rebellion in India. Pay-death; Price-martyrdom; Pension-liberty; Field of battle-India.

Following the Komagata Maru Incident in 1914, a direct challenge to Canadian anti-Indian immigration laws, several thousand Indians resident in the United States sold their business and homes ready to drive the British from India, bolstering the ranks of the Ghadar Party.

Legacy of the Ghadar Movement.

The Ghadar Movement began to lose steam following the heavy-handed British crackdown. Upon the conclusion of World War I, 1917 the Ghadar Party fractured into a Communist and a Socialist faction. Despite this setback, the Ghadar Party was a source of inspiration for many revolutionaries of the freedom struggle, the most notable among them being Bhagat Singh.

The Ghadar movement can be described as a tale of extreme valour, hard-work, toil which touched the heart of every Indian settled in distant shores. The powerful speeches by its leaders did shape the expatriate opinion against the misrule of British in India. It truly qualifies for a major struggle which aroused the people to fight for freedom and sowed seeds for any other future course of action.