Between Rebellion and Resistance:
A Study of Select Andaman Penal Narratives

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Between Rebellion and Resistance:
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by

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Based on research carried out
under the supervision of

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and teachers.

Ananya Parida

Declaration of Originality

I, Ananya Parida, Roll Number 513HS3053, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Between Rebellion and Resistance: A Study of Select Andaman Penal Narratives* presents my original work carried out as a doctoral student of NIT Rourkela and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor any material presented by me for the award of any degree or diploma of NIT Rourkela or any other institution. Any contribution made to this research by others, with whom I have worked at NIT Rourkela or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the dissertation. Works of other authors cited in this dissertation have been duly acknowledged under the section "Bibliography." I have also submitted my original research records to the scrutiny committee for evaluation of my dissertation.

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Abstract

The 1857 Rebellion has been an unforgettable episode in Indian history and has been a well-documented subject in Indian Archives. Most accounts of the Rebellion—published in volumes of anthologies—hardly follow its aftermath and the way convicts were deported to offshore prisons. Following the Mutiny, the Government sought to transport 'rebel convicts' to stabilize the Empire. The Andaman Islands was inspected and subsequently a penal settlement in the Andamans started operating. Starting 1858 till 1942 (Japanese occupation of the islands), the Empire negotiated with approximately 13,000 Indian convicts to form an elaborate convict society in the penal settlement. The incarceration of political prisoners starting 1909 changed the history of the settlement and the Andamans, as a penal settlement, is gradually nationalized as part of Indian freedom struggle.

Divided into six chapters, the thesis suggests that (auto)biographical narratives of the prisoners incarcerated in the Andaman jails are crucial sites that contest and invert colonial and national historiography and nativize the Andamans to a significant extent. The thesis reads colonial documents and (auto)biographical narratives of select political prisoners to locate a narrative history of the penal settlement. How do (auto)biographical narratives correspond, negotiate, contest and invert colonial history? How do these narratives present the corresponding period of incarceration and put forward a political current of the contemporary period? The thesis maps penal historicity and locates the genesis of an alternative national consciousness in Andaman penal texts in the form of a strong resistance movement. In addition, it argues that the penal narratives under study generate an elaborate national consciousness to invert contemporary Gandhian nationalist discourse. Part-archival and part-literary, the study explores and interprets colonial documents alongside native (auto)biographical texts for a comparative analysis of native and imperial views on the penal culture.

Key Words: (Auto)biography; Penal Culture; 1857 Archives; Cellular Jail; Andamans; Colonialism.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

The 1857 Sepoy Mutiny has been an unforgettable episode in Indian history. Following the Mutiny, a penal settlement in the Andamans was considered which received favouable attention of the imperial government. Starting 1858 till the Japanese occupation of the Andaman Islands in 1942, the Settlement—derived by reward and punishment—started operating to form an elaborate convict society. The settlement, during this period, witnessed massive expansion and is popularly known as 'black water' or Kālā Pāni. The term Kālā Pāni alludes to terrible tales of colonial policies and transportation of political prisoners, now appropriated as freedom fighters, and in the present context it refers to the transportation of political prisoners to the Andamans. The settlement had its genesis in the Uprising of Indian sepoys in 1857. This thesis explores archival documents that indicate penal history of the post-mutiny period and studies the development of a convict society in the Andaman Islands with special reference to political prisoners and their incarceration in the much-hyped Cellular Jail. In addition to books and autobiographies of prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans, archival documents from Andaman and Nicobar Archives, Port Blair, State Archives, Bhubaneswar, National Archives of India, New Delhi, sample documents from State Archives (West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala) and archival documents from Cellular Jail Library, Port Blair, are consulted for the present study. By and large, the thesis—in reading archival records against native portrayal of transportation—seeks to study the post-Mutiny narratives in Indian letters.

The 1857 Mutiny and the Idea of an Offshore Prison

In Indian history, the year 1857 is significant in many ways. A series of events occurred in this year. It began with protests at Dum Dum, Barackpore and Behrampore. On 29 March 1857, Mangal Pandey of the 34th Native Bengal Infantry, being influenced by his compatriots from Berhampore, embraced the idea of 'revolt'

and urged his colleagues to join him. Pandey was hanged on 8 April 1857.[1] On 10 May, the sepoys of the third Native Infantry of Meerut refused to accept military rifles in which, as was believed, cartridge made from pig and cow fat was used. On 11 May the sepoys marched towards Delhi to proclaim Bahadur Shah Zafar as their leader. Mutiny papers suggest that the sepoys declared that they have joined hands "to protect our religion and our faith."[2] The 81-year-old king, though reluctant, agreed to the sepoys' insistence. He wrote letters to all major rulers and influential people of the time to rise against the British rule.[3] The letter stated:

> The English are the people who overthrow all religions.…You should understand well their object of destroying the religions of Hindustan....It is now my firm conviction that if the English continue in Hindustan they will…utterly overthrow our religions. As the English are the common enemy of both (Hindus and Muslims,) we should unite in considering their slaughter...for by this alone will the lives and faiths be both saved."[4] (Chick, 1859)

This act of the emperor transformed and legitimized the 'Mutiny' and the rebellion that started in military cantonments took shape of an elaborate rebellion joined by common people. Revolts broke out at Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi, Bengal, and came in full force throughout North India. Begam Hazrat Mahal and her son Birjis Qadir in Lucknow, Tatya Tope and Nana Saheb in Kanpur, Rani Laxmi Bai in Jhansi, Moulvie Ahmed Oolah in Faizabad, Khan Bahadur Khan in Bareilley, and Kunwar Singh in Bihar led their troops against the British. Markets were looted, prisoners released and officers slaughtered. Colonial records show that many women were

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[1] See Rudranshu Mukherjee's *Mangal Pandey: Brave Martyr Or Accidental Hero?* (University of Michigan: Penguin Books, 2005).

[2] Record No. 830. Mutiny Papers, Collection 60. National Archives of India, New Delhi (henceforth NAI ND).

[3] In Zafar's name, his eldest surviving son, Mirza Mughal, sent out circular letters to the princes and rajas of India asking them to join the revolt. The letters appeal for their loyalty and claim that all faiths were under attack by the British referring specifically to the laws banning Sati and increase in missionary activities. See Dalrymple, William. "Religious Rhetoric in the Delhi Uprising of 1857" *Rethinking 1857*. Ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya. Orient Longman: New Delhi, 2007. 23-43.

[4] Chick, N.A. *Annals of Indian Rebellion, 1857-8*. Calcutta: Sanders, Cones and Company, 1859.

raped and ruthlessly murdered (Ball, 1858).[5] On 16 July, Nana Saheb was defeated; the spirit of the rebellion came down to a significant extent. After just four months from the outbreak of the Mutiny, on 21 September, Red Fort was seized; Bahadur Shah was captured from Humayun Tomb where he took refuge,[6] and convicted by the Imperial court. The next day, two of his sons, Mirza Mughal and Mirza Khizr Sultan, and a grandson Mirza Abu Bakr were shot dead by Major William Hodson at Delhi gate,[7] which is named as *Khooni Darwaja*. In December, Tatya Tope was defeated again by Sir Colin Campbell. On 27 January 1858, Bahadur Shah's trial began. He was sentenced to transportation to Rangoon[8] after the court convicted him guilty of treason and mutiny. On 17 June, the Rani of Jhansi was executed in Gwalior. Hugh Rose, a senior British Army officer, commented that Rani Laxmi Bai was "the most dangerous of all Indian leaders."[9] Hence, with this event the idea of the revolt fainted slowly. The revolt was suppressed within little over a year of its outbreak, as Dalrymple states in his *The Last Mughal* (2006), but in actuality the Imperial government took almost a decade to capture fugitives to completely suppress the idea of a future rebellion which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

There are many causes of revolt. Annexation of princely states such as Awadh for its concocted "spectacle of human misery and careless misrule"[10] and Jhansi, by Doctrine of Lapse, led to political upheaval, and further, abolition of Sati and the introduction of widow remarriage led to social disturbances. Moreover, heavy taxation and pay discrimination discouraged people at large.[11] It is also suggested that religious

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[5] Ball narrates the state of Europeans during the Mutiny as, "Delicate women, mothers and daughters, were stripped of their clothing, violated, turned naked into the streets, beaten with canes, pelted with filth, and abandoned to the beastly lusts of the blood-stained rabble, until death or madness deprived them of all consciousness of their unutterable misery." (1858: 75)

[6] See "Bakht Khan: Shrouded by the Sands of Time" (*The Express Tribune.* 27 January 2011) for a detailed account. Retrieved on 16 June 2018.

[7] Delhi Gate or *Khooni Darwaja* links the Southern gate of Sahajananabad, Old Delhi, and New Delhi.

[8] See William Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal* (Penguin: New Delhi, 2006) for an account of the emperor's transportation (Penguin: New Delhi, 2006).

[9] David, Saul. *The Indian Mutiny: 1857*. London: Penguin, 2003: 367.

[10] From https://holisticthought.com/india-under-the-british-lord-dalhousie/. Retreived on 8 August 2018. For details see Nayar (2007: 21); also see Forrest (2006: 205).

[11] Metcalf, B. D. and Thomas R. Metcalf. *A Concise History of Modern India*. U.K.: Cambridge U.P., 2006. 56.

sentiments were hurt by the implementation of policies, such as Religious Disability Act, 1856, that made conversion to Christianity easy and General Service Enlistment Act, 1856 which required the sepoys to serve overseas if ordered.[12] These policies had outraged people and sepoy mutiny provided a platform to the suppressed voices. In short, it may be termed as a military outbreak, which was taken advantage of by certain discontented merchants, peasants and landlords, whose interests had been affected by the new political orders. Don Randall states: "The Indian revolt, typically, is military not national."[13]

William Dalrymple (2006) quotes from the Azimagarh proclamation, 1857, issued by young prince Feroz Shah, which reads:

> 'Both Hindoos and Mohammedans are being ruined under the tyranny and oppression of the infidels and treacherous English.' While noting that 'at present a war is ranging with the English on account of religion,' and calling on 'pundits and fakirs' to join with Mughal armies, most of its space is given over to complaints that the English have overtaxed the landowners, monopolized 'all the posts of dignitary and emolument' in the civil and armed services and put Indian artisans out of business by flooding the market with cheap British imports.[14] (220)

It is important to note here that a chain of proclamations were issued following Bahadur Shah Zafar's. The emperor's circular set the tone and gravity of the Mutiny that had started from a troop of sepoys, and afterwards accelerated vigorously taking shape of a rebellion carried out by common people. The public proclamations that flooded Delhi are found to be religion-centric that either ignored other causes of revolt, or, by then they were not fully realized by influential people who worked hand in hand with the British deriving benefits from trade and commerce. The rebellion received a distinct religious allusion which gave a sacred cause to 'mutineers.' Moulvie Muhammad Baqir, the Editor of the *Dehli Urdu Akhbar*, explains how the

[12] Ibid. 101. Also see Forrest, G.W. *A History of the Indian Mutiny*. (Vol. 1. Asian Educational Services: New Delhi, 2006. 2-5).

[13] Randall, Don. "Autumn 1857: The Making of the Indian Mutiny." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31.1. (2003): 3-17.

[14] Also see Darlymple, William. "Religious Rhetoric in the Delhi Uprising of 1857," *Rethinking 1857*. (Ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya. Orient Longman: New Delhi, 2009).

rebellion had been sent by God to punish the *Kafirs*. In one of his columns he justifies the violence with a line from the *Koran*: "God does not love the arrogant ones,"[15] and appeals Muslims to unite and rebel. A Hindu Brahmin astrologer, Pandit Harichandra, claims that the divine forces will support the army. An auspicious day was set, on which, a Kurukshetra-like war between the British and the natives was envisioned that would overthrow the British out of Hindustan. He foretold that the sepoys' horses' feet will be drenched in British blood and then victory will dawn upon the heroes of the land. It is noted from Mutiny papers that people had great faith in him, and the time and the place designated by the Pundit was final for the onset of the Mutiny.[16] And Christians also explored their dimension. The Commissioner of Peshawar, Herbert Edwardes, put forward his belief that the British Empire was god-sent. He stated: "The Giver of Empires is indeed God…England had made the greatest effort to preserve the Christian religion in its purest apostolic form."[17] The causes of outbreak of Mutiny were many, so were the reasons of its short life. Apparently, the Mutiny was given a religious colour as it started with the cartridge issue that hurt Indian sepoy's sentiments, both of Hindu and Muslim sepoys. The information that the cartridge used in the new 'Pattern 1853 Enfield riffle' was made of cow and pig fat started the revolt. Nayar (2007) claims that this issue of cartridge "sets in motion the most momentous year in the history of one of the largest empires in the world ever, the British Raj, in its most prized territory, India."[18] But undercurrent there was a growing consciousness among the elites—merchants, zamindars, kings—who were left with a meager pension at the altar of prestige and respect. On the backdrop of a religious uprising, the Mutiny headed towards a bigger goal. It however was suppressed in a very short time and a new episode of colonial subjugation awaited them that would last for another century to come. A shallow understanding of colonialism on the part of native population and lack of proper planning led to the immature closure of the rebellion. By the time the native intelligentsia understood they were colonized, imperialism had already come in full-force. The revolt continues

[15] *Dihli Urdu Akbhar*. Delhi, 17 May 1857.

[16] Record No. 19. Mutiny Papers, Collection 15. Undated. NAI ND.

[17] Quoted in Bhattacharya (2007: 33).

[18] Nayar, Pramod K. *The Penguin 1857 Reader*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007.

to exist as a memory and its reflection can be located in literature, folk tales and colonial historiography.

There is a lot of documentation in British narratives that negate the subjugation of Indians and narrates the plight of the Europeans. The event was a 'national' affair for India, but for Europeans it melts down only to a military uprising. Indian and British perceptions significantly differ in locating and situating the rebellion in Imperial history. The first major challenge to the British historians' approach came from Savarkar.[19] His publication of *The Indian War of Independence of 1857* (1909) gave an Indian perspective to the events of 1857. While V.D. Savarkar has canonized the revolt as the first war of independence, British writers such as Charles Ball, Colin Campbell and C.H. Spurgeon have narrated the series of events in volumes. Spurgeon claims that the Indian Sepoys must be punished for their cruel actions against the British. The Indian soldiers under British service "have been duly pampered and petted, like spoiled children; their mutinous actions, however, are atrocious and demand rigorous punishment—more specifically, death penalties." (Das, 1971: 3) The Mutiny had also generated a fear of loss of power. The *New Englander and Yale Review* writes: "The terrible outbreak of Sepoy vengeance in India, which threatened for a time the very existence of English authority, was marked by atrocities which have excited the horror of the whole civilized world."[20] (Spurgeon, 1859: 357-83) An anxious yet conscious effort on the part of colonial writers is seen when it comes to the subject of 1857 mutiny which to a significant extent restricted the rebellion only to an army's revolt. Whatever the causes may be, it is now established that these events had far-reaching consequences in the history of British rule in India.

The rebellion is a well-documented subject in Indian Archives and materials pertaining to the subject are ample. Although they are published in volumes of anthologies, they hardly take up the subject of convicts who were transported to offshore prisons on the pretext of the Mutiny. The 1857 Mutiny that Savarkar canonized as the first war of Indian independence has been a landmark in Imperial as well as Indian history. The British took cognizance of the events that destabilized the

[19] Das, Michael. "Twentieth Century Approach to the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58," *Journal of Asian History* 5.1 (1971): 3.

[20] "The Sepoy Mutiny," *New Englander and Yale Review* 17.66 (May 1859): 357-383.

power of the East India Company and took many a bold step in suppressing it. The British parliament passed the Government of India Act on 2 August 1858 declaring shift of power to the British queen, and India came under the rule of the Imperial government. One of the steps taken after transfer of power and establishment of British Empire in India was that it convicted several sepoys in open court sessions and hanged many of them without any trial. Many leaders such as Tatya Tope who could pose a threat to the imperial government were executed (April 1859). Indian jails being over-crowded with 'mutiny' convicts, and capital punishment or transportation being the most fearful conviction of the crime of mutiny or murder, it became necessary for the Government to open the Andamans for all such convicts who were to be deported for the 'safety' of the Empire. Transportation as a punishment although existed in law,[21] it was hardly practiced in its original sense before the uprising, and with the opening of the Andaman Penal Settlement, transportation became a common punishment for life and term convicts of 'dangerous' nature.

Formal Genesis of the Penal Settlement

The rebellion of 1857 necessitated the emergence of a penal settlement as an anxious response to colonial triumph. On 20 November 1857, the Governor-General of India appointed the Andaman Commission to examine the Andaman Islands with a view of selecting a suitable site for a penal settlement (Portman, 1899). Dr. F.J. Mouat was appointed the Chief of the Commission, and Dr. George Playfair and Lieut. J.A. Heathcote were to assist him in medical and scientific duties, and to undertake hydrography respectively. The Commission sailed from Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 23 November 1857 for Moulmein. With the company of a few able-bodied Burmese convicts and a European guard, they arrived in Port Cornwallis on 11 December. The chief objective was to select a site for a penal settlement that was secure and that held an accessible harbour having abundance of wood and water. The Commission was to assure that the convicts would not be in a position to run away from the selected site of prison. It was also an objective to maintain entire separation between convicts to be

[21] Prior to 1857, transportation in Indian legal parlance never in actuality meant transportation in its literal sense; it was transportation of a convict from his locality and in extreme case it was beyond his/her own province. See "Release of Life-Convicts Transported for Dacoity" for further information (Record No 177, 17 June 1886. Government order on Superintendent of Port Blair and the Nicobar's communication). National Archives of India, Port Blair (henceforth NAI PB).

kept in close confinement and those to whom some degree of liberty was to be given (Portman, 1899: 214).[22] After a hurry yet careful survey of the Andamans, the Committee visited the Old Harbour where Lieut. Blair had founded the first convict settlement in 1786 and had subsequently abandoned it due to its 'fatal' weather. The Committee recommended this site for the establishment of the new settlement and suggested that Blair's original survey was found to be accurate to the minutest particulars. The Commission's Report was published in 1859 and with the recommendation of the Commission, the name Old Harbour was changed to Port Blair, and a new convict settlement was founded in 1858.

With the recommendation of the Commission,[23] the Government issued orders to Captain Henry Man, Executive Engineer and Superintendent of Convicts at Moulmein, to proceed to the Andamans to formally take possession over the islands on behalf of the British Crown and to form a regular penal settlement. The settlement was initially planned to transport 'mutineers' and 'rebel' convicts from India, and afterwards, it was to be opened for all convicts under sentence of transportation. With executive and judicial power over the islands, Captain Man was also entrusted to make the details of a plan for convicts' location, employment and general control. The Government thought it necessary to instruct that many hundred rebels and mutiny convicts would be deported to the Andamans. Taking into consideration the fact that congregation of "so large a body of male convicts, not held under the strict-discipline which can be enforced only within prison walls, is a gigantic evil," the Government anticipated that with time and rewards, convicts' wives and families would eventually accompany their convict husbands "across the black water."[24] J.P. Walker who had a reputation of 'disciplining' convicts as a jail superintendent became the first Superintendent of Port Blair and carried on the work of receiving and managing convicts initially. In the initial months, as strictest discipline became the only norm in managing the settlement, convicts at Port Blair cared less whether they died at the hands of aborigines in the Andamans or of snake bite. The only concern they had was

[22] No. 2436, 20 November 1857. From C. Beadon, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, to F.J. Mouat, G.R. Playfair and Lieut. J.A. Heathcote. Reprinted in M.V. Portman's *A History of Our Relations with the Andamanese* (Vol I, Calcutta: Govt. of India Printing. 1899. 214). NAI PB.

[23] The Commission submitted its report on 15 January 1858.

[24] No. 87, 15 January 1858. From C. Beadon, to Captain H. Man (Portman 1899, 247). NAI PB.

how to escape. In the first three months, in the new penal settlement, 64 of 773 prisoners died in hospital, and 87 run-away convicts, after being captured, were hanged (Singh, 1978: 76). And further, there was one suicide noted in the settlement and 140 convicts succeeded in running away and their whereabouts could not be traced (Portman 1899). Dr. Walker presumed and reported that they died at the hands of aborigines or of hunger. His assumption, to some extent, proved wrong when run-away convicts such as Dudhnath Tewarry returned to the settlement to tell their adventurous tales. Another reason was also cited for the increasing number of convicts' escape. There was a misconception among convicts that the landmass of Burma (modern Myanmar) was very close by and convicts anticipated employment under the Rajah of Burma. Strictest punishment became an absolute norm in the first three months of the opening of the settlement and Captain Haughton, on his arrival on the islands on 3 October 1859, succeeded Walker as Superintendent of Port Blair.

The account of transportation was to have a 'grand reception' in the next few decades and there were tens of thousands of prisoners confined in the Andamans. The Kālā Pāni saga is a serious chapter in Indian history that is ever glorified and dreaded by both imperial and native subjects. The expression 'Kālā Pāni' which literally means "dark water" or "black water," is associated with the taboo of crossing the ocean in the most orthodox sense of the term. The offshore prison derived its name and the associated meaning from the dreaded transportation projected by political prisoners. It can be located in the first government order of 1857 to Captain H. Man who formally inaugurated the penal settlement hoisting the British flag on the islands.

The Penal Settlement: A Brief Timeline

The transportation of prisoners to the Andamans began in March 1858 with 200 convicts in the first batch. J.P. Walker, formerly Superintendent of Central Jail of Agra, reached with the first batch of convicts to take over from H. Man who was formerly posted for the preliminary preparation of the penal settlement. Since the beginning, stories of convict escape, murder and suicide came to the notice of Walker. On the fourth day after his arrival, a convict named Narain tried to escape from Chatham Island, was fired upon by a boat's crew, was captured and subsequently

sentenced to death. In his first month itself, a convict committed suicide (Portman, 1899: 225).

The *Fire Queen* arrived at Port Blair bringing the second batch of 97 convicts in the same year. Among them were famous convicts such as Lal Singh, Zamindar and formerly Rajah of Mitrowlee in Oude, and Fuzl Hug Moulvie-Kairabadi, a friend of Mirza Ghalib, whose poems project freedom of speech and expression in colonial India. His son translated the poems after his death in the settlement. During this period, female convicts were more sought after than males in the settlement. The need of female convicts remained central to British strategy in the making of a convict society. There are factual stories of female convicts who married on the islands which opens up another episode of the formation of a penal culture. The need of copulation and libidinal care in the settlement was envisioned and the Government made elaborate arrangements for it. The first female convict deported from Karachi died mysteriously only within ten days after her arrival. In 1860, 35 female convicts, who were willing to relocate themselves to the Andamans, were sent from Bengal to Port Blair. These women were transported either for the purpose of marriage or prostitution. After marriage, these convicts could get the status of self-supporters in the settlement. The administration also witnessed several changes related to financial constraints. The administration of the islands was transferred to the Chief Commissioner of Burma in 1861. In 1868, the administration was placed directly under the control of the Government of India, and from January 1869, the Home Department regulated all affairs of the settlement. In 1870, for juridical purpose, the settlement was placed under the High Court of Calcutta. The settlement witnessed standardization of norms in all aspects of governance during 1864-65. The Superintendent of the settlement, Col. Ford, wrote its first Annual Report. This practice of writing annual report continued till the Japanese occupation of the Andaman Islands in 1942. Wahabi prisoners were transported in the 1865. In February 1872, the islands witnessed Lord Mayo's assassination during his visit. Lord Mayo was the then Viceroy and Governor General of India, and he was assassinated by Sher Ali, a Wahabi convict. This event shook the administration of the settlement,

and an account of the report—from the Government's perspective—can be located in F.A.M. Dass' *The Andaman Islands* (1937).[25]

It was recorded in 1873 that there were 6518 males and 802 females in the settlement. In the same year, Home Secretary Scarlett Campbell visited the Andamans to inspect the overall functioning of the settlement. General Stewart became the first Chief Commissioner of the islands in April that year and he visited Little Andaman. His observations to make the settlement a full-scale human habitat remained significant. Two years later, in 1875, the Andaman Nicobar Police Force was constituted under Act V of 1861 which was extended to the whole of islands. Syphilis was discovered in 1876 among the Andamanese which became a serious issue for their survival. Many other issues came in the way of the development of settlement as a convict habitat, but with reformative measures undertaken from time to time, the place grew as a full-fledged society. The Committee of Sir Lyall and Major Lethbridge that inspected the islands in 1890 brought a turning point to the establishment. With their recommendation, the much-hyped Cellular Jail was constructed so as to make punishment more penal. 'Political' prisoners were transported from the year 1909; hunger strike started from 1912 and their voices were heard in 'mainland' India through their resistance movements against the Government. They resisted through refusing to labour for the administration and refusing food. Most of the times, the prisoners were force fed by the administration to conceal the news of hunger strike from reaching 'mainland.' But the news of hunger strike was 'smuggled' from the Cellular Jail that was extensively covered by newspapers and magazines and led to a pan-Indian resistance movement. Recurrent hunger strikes in the Andamans, between 1912 and 1937, were instrumental in raising a 'nationalist'consciousness among 'mainland' population and the case of political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans was viewed sympathetically. Voices were heard from each corner that demanded political prisoners' repatriation to 'mainland', and there was an increasing demand to shut down the penal settlement. Finally, political prisoners were repatriated in 1938 after Gandhi and the Congress were forced to take up the issue with the Government. Japanese forces after invading the Islands on 23 March 1942 reopened

[25] Dass, F.A.M. *The Andaman Islands.* Good Shepherd Convent Press: Bangalore, 1937.

the Cellular Jail for war prisoners till Subhash Chandra Bose negotiated with them and captured the Islands hoisting the Indian national flag on its shores.

Texts and Sources

There are primarily two distinct categories of texts that one encounters in Andaman archives. Colonial documents—reports, memorandums, various departmental proceedings, juridical files—form the first category, whereas native sources—(auto)biographies, letters, memoirs, petitions, statements—devise the other. In addition, there are also some tertiary source texts such as newspaper articles, pamphlets, journals, etc., that provide information about the events occurring in the settlement. The tertiary sources, such as *Bengalee*, *Statesman*, *Hitabadi*, *India*, *Jugantar*, *Bande Mataram*, *Kesari*, stay in-between the two extreme perspectives and follow the colonial trajectories. These newspapers were highly instrumental in presenting the information of the settlement that was long suppressed by the Andaman administration and promote a sense of nationalism among 'mainland' population. In 'mainland' voices, newspaper reports and repatriation speeches delivered for the release of political prisoners remain important. These sources—administrative reports, (auto)biographical narratives and voices from newspapers and different meetings—are consulted for consequential discussion in the subsequent chapters.

Methodology

An extensive archival work was carried out for the thesis, chiefly at the Port Blair Archive and Cellular Jail Library, Port Blair; National Archives of India and Nehru Museum and Library, New Delhi; and Odisha State Archives, Bhubaneswar. Further, archival documents pertaining to prison transportation from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala state archives were collected as sample documents for individual cases. In addition, books and reference materials on the settlement are consulted to locate a narrative history of the Andaman penal settlement.

Objectives of Research

1. To explore colonial archives and penal (auto)biographies to locate a

historicity of the Andaman penal settlement.

2. To highlight how history is recreated in autobiographical narratives and to map how autobiographical narratives correspond to colonial historicity.
3. To explore how a neo-convict society is established in the Andamans and how political prisoners responded to the penal culture.
4. To study Andaman resistance movement on the backdrop of popular Indian struggle for freedom.

Research Questions

Andaman penal narratives negotiate colonial ideologue of 'disciplining' the Empire, and native sources—written years after the period of solitary confinement and away from the recorded knowledge of penal governance—interpret penal experiences. In what ways do penal (colonial) sources govern the convict-culture and how do native sources respond and invert them? How do (auto)biographical narratives contest, correspond and invert colonial history? In what ways do native texts of the political prisoners present an alternative national consciousness? Since Andaman protests—continuous hunger strikes by political prisoners—were supported by general public, how does Gandhian 'liberal' politic collaborate with 'militant' nationalism? In contemporary times, the Indian nation has commemorated the Cellular Jail as a national memorial and the 'political'/'militant' prisoners are appropriated as 'freedom fighters.' With such transgressions—political and cultural—how would penal narratology provide a historicity to the postcolonial nation?

Further Chapterization

The second chapter is entitled "Penal Settlement in the Andamans: Texts and Contexts" and locates the growth of the penal settlement that started operating owing to the Rebellion of 1857. It is divided into three sections, viz., "The Making of a Convict Society," "The Kālā Pāni Saga" and "Political Prisoners in the Andamans." It shows how early measures were taken so that the settlement became profitable, and suggests that the Empire negotiated with transported convicts to form an elaborate convict society in the Andamans. With archival sources, it presents the governing of the settlement and the way the much-hyped Cellular Jail was devised for solitary

confinement of prisoners where, on a later period, political prisoners were incarcerated.

The third chapter, entitled "Voices of Dissent: (Auto)biographical Narratives" explores native voices—chiefly, prison sketches and (auto)biographical accounts of political prisoners—to argue that a voice of dissent operated in the settlement. It is divided into three sections, viz., "The 1857-Hunt for Runaway Convicts," "Early Accounts," and "Accounts of Political Prisoners." The prison narratives—composed after the period of incarceration and away from recorded historical facts—are alternative sites of prison narratives that invert the popular Gandhian liberal nationalism. While early native narratives of the penal settlement negotiate with colonial authorities for penal favours, later narratives put forward a strong resistance to colonial policies as well as the strategies of Indian freedom struggle. It suggests that in later penal voices put forward by the educated political prisoners an alternative national consciousness remains operative.

The fourth chapter is entitled "Nationalising Hunger Strikes in the Andamans" and focuses on the period between 1910 and 1937. During this period, devoid of penal favours and united owing to the denial of repatriation, several 'elite' prisoners in the Andaman penal settlement took to the path of resistance through multiple hunger-strikes and denial for work. Through the hunger strikes by convicts imprisoned in the Cellular Jail, an elaborate form of penal voice echoed in the Empire. Significant among them is the 1937 hunger strike that redefined nationalism in the Indian context. These events drew mass adherence and were intended towards political recognition. This chapter focuses on recurrent hunger strikes during the early decades of the twentieth century in the settlement and subsequent effects of it as witnessed in India that brought forth women revolutionists to the fore. Divided into three sections—"Hunger strikes in the Andamans: Politics and Praxis," "Locating Hunger Strikes in Indian Nationalist Movement," "Politics of the Other," it argues that hunger strikes in the Andamans were mediated by personal and political motives and are institutionalized in the Indian nationalist discourse.

The fifth chapter, "Voices of Resistance in Indian Archives," explores juridical petitions and native speeches pertaining to the political prisoners incarcerated in the

Cellular Jail. The first category includes, but is not limited to, petitions by Yamuna Bai, the wife of V.D. Savarkar and Nand Gopal Verma; the second includes 'Proposed prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta' (1937) by Indian women for repatriation of political prisoners. Imperial communication regarding the case files of prisoners and the way 'militant' activities are interpreted in such communications form the basis of the chapter. These texts address complex issues of contemporary Indian politics and the way Gandhian 'liberal' nationalism viewed its alternative 'militant' nationalism. First, the native tongues found a splendid political move in juridical literature. Second, the eventuality of native expressions provides a serious transgression of native ideology. In short, this chapter addresses the question of 'militant' resistance with its nuances in Indian archives. The chapter is divided into three sections, viz., "Native Petitions," "Repatriation Speeches," and "The 'Nationalist' question for Andaman Prisoners."

The last chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis. It suggests that in immortalizing the political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans, the postcolonial nation has commemorated the Cellular Jail as a national memorial, and has recognized their "sacrifices" for the "love of their beloved nation." Two significant phenomena occur during this period. First, it is established that between 1857 (Mutiny / First War of Independence) and 1942 (Japanese Occupation), the Empire negotiated with Indian convicts to establish an elaborate convict society in the Andamans. The second part of the factual "tale", with which the thesis concludes, is lost in oblivion. Though the postcolonial Indian nation romanticizes the sacrifice of freedom fighters incarcerated in the Cellular Jail, the contribution of hard convicts and women criminals—convicted chiefly for the purpose of developing the Andamans as a full-scale human habitat—remains significant yet undocumented owing to the absence of their personal narratives. The Andaman history is thus a problematic site which needs further research and critical investigation.

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Chapter 2

Penal Settlement in the Andamans: Texts and Context

Abstract: This chapter locates different narratives of the growth of the penal settlement. It is divided into three sections, viz., "The Making of a Convict Society," "The Kālā Pāni Saga" and "Political Prisoners in the Andamans." It shows how early measures were taken so that the settlement became profitable, and suggests that the Empire negotiated with transported convicts to form an elaborate convict society in the Andamans. With archival sources, it presents the governing of the settlement and the way the Cellular Jail was devised for solitary confinement of prisoners where, on a later period, political prisoners were incarcerated nativizing the Andamans.

Key Words: Andamans; Cellular Jail; Empire; Sepoy Mutiny; Nativity.

Introduction

In 1857, when Indian sepoys started revolting against the British, the Empire had to formulate new policies to control the revolutionaries and suppress the rebellion. The revolting zeal posed a serious threat to political and social governance of the Empire and the idea of any further revolt was to be wiped out completely. When the Government noticed the earlier docile sepoys raising a voice against the Empire, it had understood the intensity of the movement and the need for making changes in their existing policies. Followed by the Mutiny, several drastic changes were witnessed. One of them was deportation of 'rebel' convicts to an off-shore prison away from India. So, starting 1857, the Government necessitated a settlement to house the convicts, far away from the spatial site of the rebellion. The transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown was another such move that aspired to stabilize the Empire.[26] Consequently, a penal settlement in the Andamans

[26] The East India Company (1600-1874) played commercial and political roles for pecuniary ends. The outbreak of the 1857 Mutiny is one consequence of it. The Mutiny had incurred great economic and political loss to the Crown, and so, the state took its most decisive measure of withdrawing power from the Company. The British Parliament passed the Government of India Act 1858 conferring power to the British Crown. See Binda Preet Sahni (2013: 317-330) for further details.

was envisioned to restrict growth of revolutionary ideas by implanting the fear of exile and ostracism among Indian population. By then the Administration was well aware of the taboos Indians associated with crossing the ocean. The Empire was conscious of social and cultural taboos associated with crossing the 'black water' in India and found the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the most suitable place for transportation of prisoners as severe punishment. Consequently, a penal settlement in the Andamans evolved as a disciplining mechanism post 1857 sepoy Mutiny. Its formal beginning in 1858 added a new chapter to imperial punishment and governance of native subjects.

Starting 1858 till the Japanese Occupation of the Islands (1938-42), the British Empire negotiated with approximately 13,000 Indian convicts to govern the settlement and to control its land and water. Convicts were chiefly transported from the United Provinces, Bengal, Bombay and Madras presidencies and records show that there were Burmese convicts transported to the settlement as well. Among them were the 'mutineers' of 1857, 'rebel convicts,' and other convicts who were deported for 'greater safety' of the Empire. The planned conviction of the mutineers would form an alternative site that not only propagated a sense of terror, it also created an alternative settlement of servitude away from 'mainland' India. Petty and murderous criminals, habitual offenders such as convicted thugs, infanticide mothers, maniacs, and other criminals labeled and convicted by the colonial court were transported to the settlement. During this time, with the large congregated body of convicts, a society was formed devised by reward and punishment, and discipline and surveillance. The formation of this society—constantly patrolled and continually monitored—witnessed much negotiation in water and land use, ocean politics, ecological patronage and most importantly human copulation for libidinal care owing to the great demand of a workforce at the penal site. With convict-labourers from all presidencies of the Indian Empire, the society formed became multi-lingual and multi-cultural.

The Making of a Convict Society

Due to its location away from 'mainland' India and being an isolated place with land and water, the Andamans provided a lot of scope for the growth of the penal colony.

So gradually, the convict society, devised by reward and punishment and supervision and discipline, initiated a different penal culture. The Empire projected the settlement as a disciplining machine to correct the 'incorrigible' prisoners, and civilize the aborigines (Mouat, 1862). This offshore transportation served a dual purpose in the maintenance of everyday affairs of the Empire: to keep the 'rebels' away from other prisoners and to maintain fear in 'mainland' that a similar treatment would be meted out to anyone who disobeyed the British Government. Satadru Sen claims in *Disciplining Punishment* (2000) that, to rule over thousands of rebel convicts and indigenous Andamanese, the colonial administrators devised a complex order of punishment and reward, control and patronage through the systems of labour, segregation, surveillance, medical supervision, and family-based rehabilitation (1-30).

To deal with the over-populated condition of Indian jails with mutineers and to subside unpleasant situations in 'mainland' India, a Commission led by Dr. F.J. Mouat was appointed by the Governor General of India instructing him to select a suitable spot to start a penal settlement in the Andamans.[27] The Commission, upon survey, recommended the Old Harbour at the Andamans, the place earlier selected for a settlement by Lt. Blair in 1789 as the most convenient place for location, separation and management of convicts of different classes.[28] Thereafter, Captain H. Man, Executive Engineer and Superintendent of Convicts at Moulmein, was ordered to arrange the islands for transported convicts—rebels, bandits, thugs, mutineers—for the greater 'safety' of the Empire. The first Government order to Captain Man suggests the formal beginning of a penal culture:

> For the reception, in the first instance, of Mutineers, Deserters, and Rebels sentenced to imprisonment in banishment, and eventually for the reception of all convicts under sentence of transportation, whom, for any reason, it may not

[27] This is in fact not the first time when a penal settlement in the Andamans was considered. Records show that the first settlement on the Islands dates back to the year 1791, which was planned to be established near the southern extremity, after Lieutenant Colebrooke of the Bengal Engineers and Lieutenant Archibald Blair of the Indian Navy were sent to survey and report. The settlement was abandoned in 1796 owing to bad weather.

[28] Record No. 87. 15 January 1858. From C. Beadon, to Captain H. Man. Rpt. in Portman's *A History of Our Relations with the Andamanese*, Vol.1 (1899): 208.

> be thought expedient to send to the Straits Settlements or to the Tenasserim Provinces. (Portman, 1899: 213)[29]

There were several objectives that governed the site of penal culture. The Government sought to have a friendly relation with the native Andamanese so that they would become "jungle police in recapturing escaped convicts" (Ibid., 49). With this employment, the Government hoped to cease their hostile behaviour towards the settlers. It was earlier reported that the native Andamanese were fatally hostile to shipwrecked mariners and with the beginning of the settlement the Government sought to control it to a significant extent. Additionally, since the Andaman Islands could have a strong military base with the opening of the settlement, the Indian ports relatively grew secured. A report states:

> In 1858 the penal settlement at Port Blair in the Andamans was again reopened, partly to stop atrocities which the Andamanese were reported to be in the habit of committing on shipwrecked sailors, principally in order to provide a place of banishment for mutineer…It appears to be agreed amongst the more advanced nations, that the only way to deal with this class is to banish its members in perpetuity or to lead them so harassing and burdensome a life, that they voluntarily emigrate.[30]

In addition, there were multiple missions of profit devised by the Government in developing the Andamans as a full-scale habitat of convicts. The plea of the ship-wrecked mariners against the arrows of the aborigines, protection of the southern part of the Empire through a harbour and military base, and the controlling of the sea passage hoped to provide benefit apart from gaining land and resources of the islands. A number of measures were taken from the beginning of the settlement in this direction. The first Government order of 1857 to Captain Man records:

> There is plenty of room for the wives and families of the prisoners. There is no free community to whom their presence can be objectionable…the colony

[29] Record No. 89, 15 January 1858. "C. Beadon, to H. Man." Home Dept. NAI (PB) (reproduced in Portman 1899).

[30] Nos. 90-91. Foreign Departmental notes. Internal-b, September 1906. NAI PB.

> should receive a certain proportion of women as well as men, should not be kept in view in the present instance. You will, therefore, understand it to be the desire of the Governor General in Council that eventually the wives and children of some of the mutineers should follow them from India. (Portman 1899, 247)

On 10 March 1858, J.P. Walker, the newly appointed Jail Superintendent, arrived with 200 convicts, one overseer, two doctors, fifteen Naval Brigadesmen to take over from Captain Man. Walker took over from H. Man and aspired to receive about 10,000 convicts per year for four consecutive years.[31] Apparently, from 1858 to the third decade of the twentieth century, the Empire emphatically collaborated with Indian convicts to form an elaborate convict society.[32] Initially the penal settlement worked in the form of an open gaol. So, convicts could run away easily from the settlement, either to be hunted by the aborigines or to be caught to face the gallows.[33] Walker, able and enthusiastic, provided a strict hand to control the convicts and a very repressive history of penal culture can be witnessed during the period. During the initial decades of the settlement, existing sources of convict records are British and European documentation, and there is a serious dearth of native records that present prisoners' life from native perspective.

During this period convicts were fascinated with the idea of running away thinking it would put an end to their misery. But very soon they realized that they were in worse condition than in jail or were recaptured. Portman records, "In every case of recapture the runaway convicts returned and delivered themselves up, finding it impossible to withstand the savages or exist in the jungle" (1899: 276). During the initial period of transportations, due to lack to resources and strict rules of the penal settlement, convicts were more vulnerable to both jail authorities and native Andamanese. They either tried to run away from the settlement or became vulnerable to 'criminal'

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[31] See F.J. Mouat's "Narrative of an Expedition to the Andaman Islands in 1857" (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 32 (1862): 109-126).

[32] See Satadru Sen's "Context, Representation and the Colonised Convict: MaulanaThanesari in the Andaman Islands" in *Crime, Historie & Societies*. (Berg: Oxford, 2004: 117-139).

[33] Among the first generation of run-away convicts, convict no- 276, Dudhnath Tewarry's case is significant which will be discussed in Chapter No. 3. [Romulus Whitaker "The Andaman Tribes–Victims of Development," *Journal of Cultural Survival Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1986): 13-18.]

activities. Murder and suicide were also at a rise. Apart from this, the death rate of the period was alarming and required quick redressal. The first reformation initiative of the settlement was hastily taken up in 1863 led by Sir Robert Napier who, upon the inspection of the islands, had found 3,382 convicts, including 500 self-supporters.[34] The committee reported that the place had a very high mortality rate, and consequently the responsibility of controlling and managing the settlement was given to British Burma in 1864. This reformation initiative brought about significant changes in the relationship among the aborigines, the British and the convict employees at work. The employees' friendship with the aborigines gave rise to a number of cases leading to convict escape. So, tactfully, the administration encouraged the aborigines to recapture the runaway convicts, bring them back unharmed and for that they were rewarded. They were also encouraged to help the shipwrecked people and to construct buildings on the Islands (Ibid. 492-493), but slowly, with time, it was found that the aborigines were more abused by the Burmese administrators than used for the improvement of the islands. Dr. Hopkinson's report on Andamans and treatment of the aborigines indicates that the Burmese populace was on the way to form an independent colony for them. He opined that not only the Andamans be brought back under the British Government in India, but also the Nicobars be annexed.[35] Finally, the whole of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was annexed, and control over the settlement was resumed by the British Government in 1869 (Ibid. 186). Captain H. Man was given the charge of Superintendent of Port Blair for a second time. In 1872, Sir Donald Martin Stewart, after an inspection of the penal settlement, succeeded Captain Man as the Superintendent of Port Blair. He recommended measures for the fulfilment of sentences attached to the commission of certain crimes and secured profitable employment of the convicts in transportation. Moving away from the traditional strictures of jail administration, he suggested a reformation that would motivate the prisoners to work for a profitable outcome. He stated: "I am no advocate for a system of mere jail discipline. The circumstances do

[34] Record Nos. 51-84, August 1874. "Past Reforms: From 1858 to 1912." *The Reform of the Andaman Penal Settlement*. NAI PB.

[35] Letter No. 96. February 1856. "From W. Grey, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India." Foreign Department. NAI PB.

not require it, and it would be a wanton waste of power to enforce it."[36] In his report on the islands for the year 1872-73, Stewart records that the Andamanese were behaving well; they were instrumental in capturing runaway convicts; they were of help in farming and in factories; and Stewart claims that Port Blair Settlement had transformed them into honest, trustworthy and faithful labourers. It is noteworthy to mention here that the 'reformation' programmes and measures taken in the first decades of the opening of the settlement had tamed the convicts and native population to a significant degree.

Amid transportation process and making of a neo-convict society, the British had to give attention to male-female proportion in the settlement as that would, in future, help in the making of a balanced society. There was a growing concern in official correspondence over the improvement in the number of female transportation. During Colonel R.C. Tyler's regime, from 1862 onwards, the transportation of female convicts commenced.[37] There remain several official letters and correspondences that propose a persistent transportation of female convicts to the Andamans. For instance, in November 1886, Colonel T. Cadell, Superintendent of Port Blair and the Nicobars, perceived that there was a serious decrease in female transportation during the years.[38] Colonel T. Cadell, while envisioning severe consequences of an imbalanced male-female ratio which was then seven for one, requested the Government to make female transportation a compelling ambition (Roychowdhury, 2004: 62). Although there was a provision of marriage in the penal settlement, the scope was little as the male-female convicts' ratio hardly matched the demand. There were other associated issues that troubled the Victorian administration in these decades. Unnatural offences and murderous assaults, the Administration concluded, were the direct indicators of the

[36] Record Nos. 51-84, August 1874. "Sir Donald Stewart's Report upon Inspection of the Islands." NAI PB.

[37] Roychowdhury, Robin. *Black Days in Andaman and Nicobar Islands*. New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2004: 62.

[38] While during 1883-84, a total of 65 female prisoners were received from India, the number came down to 58 during 1884-85. The number decreased considerably during 1885-86 and only 34 female prisoners were received (No 497, 1 November 1886. "From Colonel T. Cadell, Superintendent of Port Blair and the Nicobars, to the Offg. Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department." Home Department Proceedings. NAI PB).

imbalanced society.[39] Owing to Colonel T. Cadell's plea, a committee was formed in 1886 led by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the aim of which was to suggest measures for the control of unnatural offences. The Mackenzie committee sat upon the subject and concluded that female transportation has become a necessity to maintain the convict liaison project.[40] Earlier it was recorded that Bhiekie, convict no. 2521, transported from Karachee, was the only female convict on board who arrived in the settlement and had died on 19 May 1859 under mysterious circumstances.[41] And thereafter, every effort to balance the convict society with an equal proportion of female convicts had become a failure. The Andamans attracted a scandalous reputation with a high number of incidences of 'unnatural vices,' and it also triggered to multiple cases of murders and rapes growing out of jealousy.[42] To control such 'evil,' H. Man's successor, General Stewart had proposed to the Government 'strict supervision coupled with the encouragement of marriage' along with arrangement of public women / 'regimented prostitution' for Port Blair.[43] Thus, the importation of prostitutes was asked to be arranged. At least it would mitigate and modify serious 'evils' if it does not wholly suppress it. Certain other facilities were also introduced. The policemen were asked to import their families with them. All impediments to the marriage of women were sedulously removed. This did not solve the problem of the settlement either. Apparently, several other serious problems came into existence. This gave rise to 'immoral' trend in folds, such as, desertion of marriage vows upon reaching 'mainland' India, prostitution, and invalid marriages on the islands. The

[39] See Manju Lidwig's "Murder in the Andamans: A colonial Narrative of Sodomy, Jealousy and Violence." *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (2013).

[40] Colonel T. Cadel, Superintendent of Port Blair and the Nicobars in the Letter No. 497, 1 November 1886, gives justification for the female transportation stating "it will be impossible to carry out the system of permitting female convicts to marry, after five years' imprisonment, convicts who have obtained tickets as self-supporters, and to carry on the weaving manufactory which is productive of large savings to Government."

[41] Home Dept. A 26 / 1861, 20 April P.7, page 21. NAI PB.

[42] See Weston (2008) and Lidwig (2013) for a detailed discussion on 'unnatural offences' in the Andamans that disturbed the colonial administration to a significant extent.

[43] In 1870 itself, H. Man, foreseeing the 'evils' of an all-men penal settlement, hinted upon the need of women to control 'unnatural crimes' that prevailed in the settlement. Lyall and Lethbridge report, "The excessive disproportion of sexes which exists at present leads, directly or indirectly (by encouraging unnatural vices), to nearby all the murders and attempts to murder which occur annually." ("Report on the Working of the Penal Settlement of Port Blair by Mr. C.J. Lyall and Major A.S. Lethbridge," 26 April 1890, NAI PB).

subject of validity of marriage was also taken care of in great detail and the Empire initiated consequential work to make the settlement a full scale convict habitat.[44]

As the Empire's one of the intentions behind transportation was to make the Andamans an elaborate convict society, the theme of "home"—'mainland' India—continued to play a crucial role in convicts' life during their term of transportation and imprisonment. The settlement was never psychologically a part of Indian territory or culture earlier. This created among the convicts a sense of alienation as transportation to the Andamans exiled them from their 'native' homeland. A constant urge to return to the place they belonged to was witnessed and this urge was strategically used as a tool to manage them in the Andamans. In the year 1874, Sir Henry Norman, while inspecting the settlement, realized that the absence of 'hope' has made the convicts vulnerable. He could understand the first-hand psychological impression the settlement had upon the transported convicts. Firstly, the convicts knew that returning home was uncertain, close to impossibility. And secondly, the settlement propounded a vicious present and a hopeless future. Based upon this assumption, Norman recommended that "some sort of hope, however remote, should be kept alive" in the hearts of majority of the prisoners.[45] This would help the Andaman administration tame them so that they would not take fatal steps and pose threat to the management of the settlement. This "hope" of returning "home" is a significant case in point in Andaman penal narratives which shall be discussed in subsequent chapters.

[44] As desertion of marriage vows became a serious issue, it prompted the Government to prescribe additional rules for marriage. For example, if two convicts wanted to marry and if both of them were either divorced or single, their application would be sanctioned directly by the Superintendent. But if any one of them was married at the time of transportation, the Superintendent would inquire whether the husband or wife of the married applicant was still alive, and if alive, whether a second marriage was admissible. Rules of marriage for female convicts were stricter than the rules meant for their male counterparts. The Magistrate would inquire of the marital status of the female convict in the settlement according to the law or custom of the caste to which she belonged before a marriage was sanctioned. The Home Department sided with the Hindu law that a woman cannot legally be divorced. It sanctioned a re-marriage only when the husband had permanently given up all claims on the woman. The subject of convict marriage in the Andamans was a much discussed issue in the overall governance of settlement. For further details, see Samita Sen's "Cohabitation and Conflict: Legalizing the Convict Marriage System in the Andamans, 1860-1890" (2011).

[45] No. 8-307. 7 July 1875, "From A. Howell, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Port Blair, to the Hon. D.F. Carmichael, Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George." Judicial Department (Jail). NAI PB (TN).

On the ground that hope of pardon "is one of the strongest inducements to good conduct,"[46] the subject of pardon for life-convicts was agreed upon. It was believed that this would keep the prisoners away from sympathetic unity and disturbances in the settlement. This provision of pardon was given to prisoners who earned it either for their devotion and faithfulness towards the British Government or who had spent a long period in confinement with good character: "who have for at least five years been either in positions of trust or on ticket-of-leave."[47] Such facilities were not extended to criminals of hereditary nature such as thugs and dacoits who—it was perceived—were 'criminals of dangerous nature.'[48] On the other hand, a consistent effort was made by the Administration to present the Andamans as part of India. Consequently, a feeling of 'home' was channelized into the perception of settlers ranging from the penal overseers to the transported convicts through the metaphor of 'Andaman' as 'home.' The Empire worked hard to increase the number of convict settlers by luring them with family, job and money that would institutionalize the convicts as settlers because there was a pressing need for institutionalizing the settlement as part of India.[49]

It was in 1890 that Sir C.J. Lyall and Surgeon-Major A. Lethbridge inspected the islands and introduced numerous measures.[50] The committee, upon inspection,

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] During this period, dacoits and thugs were rarely released. In December 1909, instructions were issued to the Superintendent, Port Blair, to treat "seditionist" prisoners as specially dangerous men and not to allow them to work in the same group with each other or with other Bengali convicts since Bengali convicts were considered 'very dangerous' during this period. Again on 10 October the Superintendent was further instructed to issue orders that these prisoners should be separated from each other as far as possible, that they should not be employed on any other but hard gang labour without his special permission and that special vigilance should be enjoined on those in charge of them. (Record No. 84-87, December, Pol A. NAI PB).

[49] Record No. 87. 15 January 1858, "From C. Beadon, to Captain H. Man; Record No. 688, 5 September 1873, "From Major-General D.M. Stewart, Supdt.of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, to A.C. Lyall., Secy. to the Government of India." Home Department Proceedings, December 1873. Cellular Jail Library, PB; Record No. 497, 1 November 1886. "From Colonel T. Cadell, Superintendent of Port Blair and the Nicobars, to the Offg. Secretary to the Government of India." Home Department, NAI PB.

[50] With Lyall and Lethbridge committee's inspection, penal system in the Andamans took a new turn. The committee proposed that the convicts, released after the completion of their term, were to stay in the Andamans rather than being sent back to India. They claimed that transportation to the Andamans did not serve the purpose of rigorous punishment and suggested that the sentence should be more penal than before. In their report submitted on 26 April 1890, confinement of

claimed that the punishment inflicted upon the 'incorrigible convicts' was not penal enough and suggested that a cellular jail be constructed to separately confine the prisoners in their initial period of transportation.[51] To make the earlier stage of imprisonment more penal, a separate confinement for a period of six months in solitary cells modeled on the plan adopted in the Madras close prison was recommended, and the proposal was accepted by the Government. The original plan was to construct a prison with 600 cells. The construction work started in 1896 and completed in 1906 with 703 cells. With the committee's recommendation, a second stage of confinement in a restricted area and employment on intramural industries were introduced. In the subsequent five years, they were employed in hard labour by day and were confined in barracks at night. After completing ten years—five years of solitary confinement and five years of extramural labour—they became eligible for ticket-of-leave.[52] The recommendation of a jail complex was complemented by the idea that detention of convicts would reform them by setting them aloof and it would give them a disciplined life thereby developing 'good conduct' and 'faithfulness' towards the colonial administration. Penal culture and penal servitude were being categorized during this period so that the settlement would develop and mature with such different reformative recommendations. But this idea hardly gave any result as the Andamans was not a place for positive reformation of the convicts, nor was it psychologically a part of the Indian subcontinent, and it proved instrumental in the rise of a new class of convicts. Hence, devised by reward and punishment the settlement gradually matured to house a convict society for the colonization of the Andamans.

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prisoners in solitary cells was recommended to increase the penal deterrence. Record No 12, 3 March 1892. "Secretary of State Despatch." Home Dept. NAI PB.

[51] Record No 12. 3 March 1892. "Secretary of State Despatch." Home Dept. NAI PB.

[52] For reference, see Record No. 12, 3 March 1892, Juridical Department. NAI ND. The third paragraph of the report suggests the aim of the penal settlement: "'…to effect his reformation by removing him for a long period from the scene of his crimes, and by placing before him the prospect of the substantial advantages which he can earn by continued good conduct,' and 'the reformatory character of the ticket-of-leave rules by which a prisoner is encouraged to start life afresh, and gradually train himself to habits of self-reliance, industry, and thrift' to be 'certainly the most wholesome and successful part of the transportation system.'"

The Kālā Pāni Saga

About forty years after the opening of the Andaman penal settlement, the Government realized the necessity of a jail complex and ordered to start the construction of a cellular jail on the recommendation of C.J. Lyall and A.S. Lethbridge's commission that visited the Andamans in the year 1890. It had crucial observations regarding the working of the Andaman penal settlement with a special concern for the growing 'unnatural' vices. This committee, after investigation, proposed to build a cellular jail. The proposal received favourable attention of the Government owing to several reasons. First, the new convicts were to undergo solitary confinement to understand the 'gravity' of being in a strict penal culture. Secondly, the 'incorrigible' prisoners needed to be kept separately and the Empire thought sodomy and unnatural offences could be prevented to a significant degree so that 'gentlemen's morality' could be achieved in the settlement. The original plan was to construct a jail of 600 cells. Accordingly, the construction work started in 1896 and completed in 1906 with 703 cells, and the prisoners were shifted to cells from cubicles. Each single cell size was 4.5/2.7 metres (14.8 ft × 8.9 ft) with a ventilator at 3 metres high (9.8 ft). The size the place was so small that one could not sleep straight and often, autobiographies of 'political' prisoners suggest that they would answer nature's call in the cell itself. A pot was given for that purpose that was not cleaned every day. The ventilator was placed at a height that prisoners could not even try to see from their cell.

A close view of the penal settlement in the Andamans confirms that the prison was built according to the Benthamite ideas of prison management which was known as a model for prisoners' control and surveillance about which Foucault writes:

> At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other on the outer side, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other (1975: 200).

Panopticon operates as a power structure that assures proper surveillance.[53] The panopticon as a form of power creates a consciousness of permanent gaze over the occupants of cells who were to be 'disciplined.' The mere threat of gaze that serves the purpose of surveillance is what makes the members behave as instructed. It is, thus, a laboratory of power, the structure of which assures correction in behaviour and stands as a symbol of the disciplinary society of surveillance (208). This type of a structure keeps one "alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (200). Foucault aptly puts it: "Visibility is a trap" (200). A consciousness of constant surveillance is internalized even if prisoners are not seen. The structure itself becomes a powerful devise of control and 'civilize.' Panopticon is "this marvelous machine," Foucault adds, where "in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (202). The Cellular Jail in the Andamans moreover followed is a structure that ensures proper functioning of power by conscious and permanent visibility. Prior to the cellular jail complex in the Andamans, Madras Jail had also followed a similar model of construction. The cellular Jail devised such a plan for the prisoners. The central tower, built in such a way, ensured visibility of prisoners. Guards could move from one floor to the other; further, a guard with a lantern did his periodical rounds of the wings for constant monitoring of the prisoners and their nightly activities. Constantly threatened and constantly monitored, the prisoners had their nightmare since they could neither see the iron lock outside the cell, nor could they communicate with the prisoner next cell. Every wing had its own yard for intramural labour, so it was practically impossible to know the prisoners housed in a different wing. For instance, V.D. Savarkar had spent almost a year in the Cellular Jail before his elder brother G.D. Savarkar could find out that they were incarcerated in the same Cellular Jail.

Reginald Craddock described the Cellular Jail as "a large star shaped three storeyed brick structure, with an encircling wall" containing "cells to accommodate 703 convicts and work sheds between the radiating arms" (Singh, 1978, 169). With the committee's recommendation, a second stage of confinement in a restricted area and

[53] The Panopticon is a coercion theory that is put into practice by assuring constant observation of prisoners who are put behind individual cells, separated from each other, devoid of any scope of interaction and communication. This would allow guards of a prison to continually see inside each cell from the central tower, unseen by the prisoners. This caters to the motive of building a prison following the model proposed by Bentham.

employment on intramural industries was introduced. The next five years they were employed in hard labour by day and were confined in barracks at night. After completing ten years, five years of solitary confinement and five years of extramural labour, they became eligible for ticket-of-leave. Convicts, specifically the ordinary ones, were rewarded in rank with time and service. After the completion of their term, an absolute release was also introduced for ordinary convicts. A report by C.W.E. Cotton stated that "they were deliberately sent to the Andamans, it is true, but they certainly have not suffered in the matter of severity of discipline, in fact the contrary."[54] Therefore, the Administration realized the need of rigorous penal punishment for the transported prisoners. Hence the Cellular Jail functioned to cause terror among the prisoners. Accordingly the intensity and the nature of punishment were modified to spell terror. The gruesome picture of the Andaman jail, notoriously projected as the Cellular Jail, was expected to serve as the 'right place' for the 'rebels' raising voices against the Empire.

In addition, the Administration was of the view that the penal culture and penal detention at the Andamans were more liberal than in 'mainland' jails. There are colonial representations that project the Andamans' jail-life as a relatively 'freer' punishment.[55] It was suggested that prisoners at the Andamans could move or work in free spaces, earn money, have a wife, could become free-settlers acquiring land, they paid tax and could have a profession; unlike any other prison-system, they were allowed to import their families as well. After six months of solitary confinement they were allowed to do extra-mural labour, and after some years of 'faithful' service, they were provided with jobs and could become free settlers and thereafter they could live there with their family. In Indian jails, on the other hand, there was no scope of such a development. C.J. Lyall and Surgeon-Major A. Lethbridge reported that the punishment inflicted upon the 'incorrigible' convicts transported to the Andamans was not penal enough and suggested the construction of a cellular jail to separately confine the prisoners in their initial period of transportation.[56] Earlier it is stated that to make the early stage of imprisonment more penal, separate confinement for a

[54] Record Nos. 68-160, February 1914, "Report by C.W.E. Cotton." Political. NAI PB.

[55] Report dated 26 April 1890, Home Dept. Proceedings. "From O.J. Lyall and A.S. Lethbridge to the Secretary to the Government of India". NAI PB.

[56] Record No. 12. 3 March 1892. "Secretary of State Despatch." Home Dept. NAI PB.

period of six months in solitary cells was recommended and was accepted by the Government. Lyall and Lethbridge made a complete survey of the overall functioning of the penal system and suggested numerous measures to effectively penalize the convicts as well as drew plans for profitable writing of the settlement. They report: "Our inspections of the stations of the Penal Settlement have left no doubt in our minds that confinement within the walls of an Indian prison is now a much more severe form of punishment than transportation, and we are convinced that this fact is well known to the criminal classes."[57]

Lyall and Lethbridge's report suggested the emergence of a new class of convicts in the jail. The implementation of the changes suggested in the report would "improve the general management of the Settlement and to increase the discipline and supervision by reorganising the superior and subordinate establishments."[58] There was a significant observation on the difference between term and life convicts. He has found that all those who take interest in and out are efficient in their work, whether as petty officers, artificers, fishermen, boatmen and servants, are term-convicts; and he has come to the conclusion that no discipline, training, or treatment can produce their equivalent from a class composed of life-prisoners. He also thinks that the mixture of the class who know that if they behave well they will return to India with those who are more or less without hope in his respect is an important element of safety. The report suggested use of convicts in positions where they must be trusted, while a body composed of only life-convicts can never be trusted with certainty.[59]

The year 1905 brought dissatisfaction among the people who agitated against the order of partition of Bengal. With the ongoing agitations, the influx of prisoners in Indian jails multiplied. To control and properly regulate the agitating mass, they were

[57] Ibid.

[58] Report dated 26 April 1890, Home Deptartment Proceedings. "From O.J. Lyall and A.S. Lethbridge to the Secretary to the Government of India." NAI PB.

[59] It was not until 1874 that the practice of sending term-convicts to the Andamans was established with the declared object of supplying reliable men to act as petty officers. It was then also considered that life-convicts could not be placed in positions of trust at the settlement because they had no hope of release, and might be led to combine with other equally desparate men against the authorities. This danger has disappeared owing to the rule which enables ordinary life-convicts to obtain release after 20 years and life convict convicted of organised crime such as *dakaiti* after 25 years. Record Nos. 100/3/ 830-864 A. "Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department" (Port Blair, 15 August 1891).

transported to the Andamans. This phase, starting about 1909, marks the transportation and imprisonment of political prisoners popularly known as 'militant nationalists' in the Cellular Jail. The political prisoners convicted of cases such as Alipore Bomb Case (1908), Nasik Conspiracy Case (1910) and Gadar Movement (1915) dealt with arms and weapons to counter colonial hegemony in India. As a result of their agitation, they were put behind the bars, designated as political prisoners, and transported to the Andamans. First to be sent to the Andamans in 1909 as political prisoners, among others, were Hoti Lal Verma and Ram Hari, the editors of *Swarajya*, and Ganesh Damodar Savarkar for publishing two seditious poems. In 1910, a verdict came out that these three men were ordered to be sent to the Andamans on the ground that it was "dangerous to keep them in the central jails and the only real chance of preventing them from disseminating their ideas even while in prison was to remove them to the Andamans."[60]

After the transportation of the first batch of 'seditionist' prisoners,[61] a colonial record notes the instruction given for their treatment: "When the first batch was sent there in 1909 it was observed that they 'should be treated as especially dangerous prisoners and should not be allowed to work in the same group with each other or with other Bengali convicts.'"[62] When the Government observed increase in the number of this category of prisoners, Lieutenant-Colonel Browning instructed: "They were to be kept permanently in the Cellular Jail and debarred from the extra-mural employment" as "it was impossible to keep them from communicating with other Bengali convicts and one another."[63] These three 'seditionist' prisoners were followed by Barindra Kumar Ghose and six others convicted in the Alipore Bomb Case (1908-09). Among other popular names were V.D. Savarkar convicted in Nasik Conspiracy Case and Bhai Parmanand, a participant of the Ghadar Movement. Numerous other cases—

[60] See "Summary" of Record no. 68-160. Political A. February 1914. NAI PB.

[61] Under 124 A of the Indian Penal Code, a person is charged with sedition. For instance, the law of sedition was applied to prosecute the editors of *Bengalee* (Surendranath Banerjee), *Kesari* (Bal Gangadhar Tilak) and *Swarajya* (eight successive editors such as Ram Hari, Hoti Lal Verma and Ladha Ram Kapur). Banerjee was imprisoned in Bengal, Tilak deported to Mandalay and the *Swarajya* editors to the Andamans (24). They are also known as 'political' prisoners. The thesis presents the discourse of 'political' prison-hood in the next section. Also see Majumdar's "Come the Political Prisoners" (1978): 188-198 for a record of their activities in the Cellular Jail.

[62] See "Summary" of Record nos. 68-160. Political A. February 1914. NAI PB.

[63] Ibid.

individual or collective—also witnessed transportation. The Cellular Jail received the highest number of political prisoners during the first two decades of the twentieth century. This period witnessed a visible transformation in the way the settlement worked and formed a new penal culture altogether.

Political Prisoners in the Andamans

While transportation of convicts began as an aftermath of Sepoy Mutiny, the transportation of political prisoners as a new category of prisoners started only during the first decade of the twentieth century. It is established that jail-going was perceived as a political act in Indian nationalist discourse and hunger strike was an act of resistance that circulated during the freedom struggle movement (Singh 1998).[64] The twentieth century began with the partition of Bengal (1905), formation of All India Muslim League (1909) and shift in Indian capital from Calcutta to Delhi (1911). These incidents, generating a degree of insecurity, gave impetus to a number of movements and formation of secret societies such as Anushilan Samiti (1902), Abhinav Bharat (1904) and Yugantar (1906) among others.[65] These societies were formed in sub-urban areas of Bengal and Maharashtra, and appeared as youth fitness clubs from the outset. Members of these societies originally belonged to high castes, were educated, and their messages affected young and influential people to participate in the contemporary social and political movements. Their voice was well received among people, and the Government, anticipating future uprisings, initiated different measures to suppress the dissent voices. One such measure was to restart transportation of term prisoners, which included political prisoners, to the Andamans.[66] Ujjwal K. Singh states that while the ordinary penal law treated political

[64] Ujjwal K. Singh in *Political Prisoners in India* (1998) notes, "Jail going and individual or collective acts of resistance within jails combined both a public language of equality as well as of private suffering….The idea of 'jail-going' in the nationalistic dictum, and the attendant notion of political prisonerhood, combined the language of equality / modernity with the notion of sacrifice" (8).

[65] The secret societies worked primarily as youth fitness clubs called as *akharas* / *gymkhanas* for young people. The first secret society Bharat Anushilan Samiti was formed in 1902, and was later renamed as Anushilan Samiti. This became a parent society from where a number of other secret societies branched out. Significant among them is Bharat Stree Mahamandal led by Sarada Devi, which took the struggle to a new level with women at its forefront.

[66] The history of transportation to the Andamans may be divided into three phases. The first phase was marked by the 1858 Sepoy Mutiny till the partition of Bengal in 1905. During this phase,

offenders as 'exceptional,' the colonial government took recourse to extraordinary laws in order to detain them. He calls it 'preventive detention' that can be traced back to the 'East India Company Act, 1793'. The act had empowered the Governor General to secure and detain any person or persons suspected of carrying on any 'illicit correspondence or activities prejudicial to the interest of British settlements and possessions in India' (1998: 26).[67] And when detained the treatment meted out to them was again 'extraordinary.'

Several reformative measures were undertaken prior to the political prisoners' arrival in the Andamans to assure proper penal servitude. The settlement that had started working as an open gaol, was later transformed into a full-scale convict habitat with barracks, prisons, asylums and a large cellular panopticon building which awaited the political prisoners. It had seen numerous reformations on the recommendation of several committees led by Scarlett Campbell (1873), Henry Norman (1874) and Alexander Mackenzie (1886), had seen the visit of Lord Mayo, who succumbed to Sher Ali's knife in the year 1872, and the proposal for building a cellular jail was taken up during Lyall and Lethbridge's visit in 1890. The Cellular Jail was ready by 1906 to house habitual offenders, the sodomites, and to accommodate all new convicts who were to be disciplined with its reformatory programmes and were to be tamed.[68] This is where the political prisoners were to spend their complete term unlike other prisoners who were allowed to visit the relatively freer spaces for extramular labour.

The period after the Bengal partition was volatile. In total, ten terrorist actions were undertaken in by Bengali extremists and many lives were put at risk, although nine of them were failed attempts. The last one took the lives of two English women that resulted in the arrest of a large number of people. (Heehs, 1998: 5) So, the

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Mutiny and Wahabi convicts along with habitual offenders such as the thugs were transported. Post Bengal partition, the year 1908 marks the second stage when political 'agitators' were transported and this phase was put to an end by the suggestion made by the Indian Jails Committee in 1920. And the third and last phase starts in 1932 when 'terrorist' prisoners were transported till 1938. For further reference, see R.V.R. Murthy's *Andaman and Nicobar Islands* (2011: 82).

[67] See Faqir Hussain's *Personal Liberty and Preventive Detention* (Peshawar, 1989: 83) for further details.

[68] Roychowdhury, 2004: 64.

Government started taking initiatives to check the growth and spread of terrorist ideas on mainland. In 1908, the then Governor of the United Provinces Sir J.P. Hewett for instance wrote to the Secretary, Government of India, seeking his permission to transport the seditionist prisoners, because he thought it was "desirable to get these people out of the country" as it was a valid practice after Mutiny.[69] With early measures, the government had suspended the transportation of term convicts to Port Blair in 1906, and Hewett's proposal was disapproved. Transportation of term convicts was discontinued in order to restrict transportation and to prevent overcrowding in the penal settlement. The then Governor General Lord Minto perceived it "difficult to defend exceptional treatment being accorded to persons sentenced to transportation for the offence punishable under section 124 A."[70] Referring to the two convicts in question, namely, Hoti Lal Verma and Ram Hari, the Government desired that they be dealt with the usual way (Singh 1978: 189). With repeated pleas from different provinces, the proposal to send seditionist prisoners to the Andamans finally got a nod in 1909 on an exceptional ground of 'sedition.' So, between 1906 and 1909 only life-prisoners were sent to the Andamans except Ram Hari and Hoti Lal Verma. Hoti Lal Verma and Ram Hari, the editors of *Swarajya*, were the first among the political prisoners to be transported and imprisoned in the newly built Cellular Jail (1909) and significantly, Hoti Lal Verma was the first prisoner recorded to go on a hunger strike in 1912. The two editors were convicted for writing seditious articles and poems. Ram Hari wrote a seditious poem for which he was transported to the Andamans for a term of twenty-one years. A translation of the poem goes like this:

> Oh! My dear Motherland why
> are you crying?
> The rule of the foreigners is
> about to end.
> They are packing up!
> The national shame and misfortune

[69] Record No. 84-8, Political A. December 1909, NAI PB; Record No. 68-160, Political A, February 1914. NAI PB.

[70] File nos. 51-2, H (P), Part B, February 1909. NAI ND. Reproduced in Ujjwal K. Singh's *Political Prisoners in India* (1998).

will not last long!
The wind of freedom has
begun to blow,
Old and young are yearning for freedom!
When India becomes free,
"Hari" will also enjoy his freedom. (Singh, 1978: 189)

This decade is marked for its ideas on nation and nationhood, appropriated as 'mother' and 'motherland' in revolutionary writing. Singh in *Political Prisoners in India* (1998) adds, "Burgeoning nationalism in the twentieth century threw up a situation where the colonial authorities seemed apprehensive of confining the nationalists on the mainland where they could spread their 'dangerous ideas'" (51). With the Alipore Bomb Case (1908-09), where a group of young college students including Barindra Kumar Ghose, the younger brother of Aurobindo Ghose, was found making bombs in Maniktola Garden, Bengal, the Government sensed conspiracies and restarted usual transportation of batches of term convicts. The second batch of six 'political' prisoners convicted in Alipore Bomb Case was transported in December 1909.

The year 1910 saw convicts from the Alipore Conspiracy Case, Khulna Conspiracy Case, and the first and second Nasik Conspiracy cases populating the Cellular Jail. Among them Barindra K. Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt and V.D. Savarkar remain famous prisoners who composed their autobiographies after their release. Meanwhile, another prominent 'elite' leader Bhai Parmanand was transported for Ghadar movement in 1915 from the Punjab. It is observed from the colonial account of the cases that the Empire was apprehensive of confining them in the 'mainland' jails as there was a possibility of spreading their 'dangerous' ideas (Singh, 1998: 51). In making a reference to the Khulna Conspiracy Case prisoners, the Government of Bengal gave statement in favour of transportation and confinement of these prisoners in individual cells. It reads: "It was desirable to prevent them from mixing with the prisoners in other jails in India and inflaming the minds of ordinary criminals with their revolutionary doctrines."[71] Interestingly, eight successive editors of *Swarajya* were

[71] See "Summary" of Record no. 68-160. Political A. February 1914. NAI PB.

also prosecuted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for 'objectionable' publication. G.D. Savarkar, Nand Gopal and Ladha Ram were among other seditionist prisoners transported to the Andamans for sedition.

Starting 1909, seditionist and political prisoners were introduced in the penal space with exceptional treatment and multiple ways of segregation—through labour, caste and religion. A different approach to duties and regular work awaited the political prisoners in the penal space. A title called 'political' was ascribed to a class of prisoners who were convicted for their involvement in political uprisings. They, in Indian jails, were treated superior to other prisoners, were provided with newspapers, books, kitchen and a relatively freer space than 'hard convicts.' On the contrary, to the political prisoners' dismay, upon reaching the Cellular Jail, the transported political prisoners were tagged as 'ordinary' prisoners, and were governed by an alternative class of petty convict-officers. Moreover, the elite Hindu prisoners were supposedly intimidated by the presence of the Muslim warders, who as convict officers, could have their say over the educated prisoners. In most cases, Muslim prisoners, as Parmanand states, "proverbially cruel and merciless" (2003: 124), were made warders to govern Hindu prisoners. So in penal autobiographies, there is a constant vocalization of religious differences that existed in the Andamans. In addition, the autobiographies of political prisoners suggest they were denied many privileges enjoyed by other ordinary prisoners. They had to spend their whole term of imprisonment in solitary cells. Political prisoners were neither granted remuneration nor were they employed for extramural labour, and a ticket-of-leave for them was impossible to earn. Each confined in solitary cell, and they were strictly forbidden to sit together, or to speak with each other. Any communication between them was treated as a punishable offence.[72] As communication was strictly monitored, transfer of information from one cell to the other was difficult. This led to a lack of media coverage for which the atrocities and happenings in the settlement could get less attention till hunger strikes were carried out in the Andamans. Transfer of information from the Andamans to 'mainland' India happened to be a mission for a united group of prisoners which hit a success only after constant trials in the form of hunger strike.

[72] For further reference, see R.C. Majumdar's "Political Prisoners (1910-1916)" in *Penal Settlement in Andamans* (Gazetters Unit, Govt. Publication. 1975).

There are phases of agitation; some succumbed to colonial bureaucracy, and some found ways to repatriation through multiple united efforts, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

In Indian jails a class system of convicts existed to accommodate and facilitate the prisoners according to their offence. Political prisoners were differentiated from other prisoners and they formed the privileged class. The term 'political prisoner' cannot be defined uniformly. The definition and treatment of political prisoners have been modified from time to time according to suitability of the Administration, and for personal or national need of the political prisoners. In the contemporary time, during the nationalist period, the convicts who were tried under Section 121of the IPC for waging war against the Government of India, Section 123 for concealing the information of waging a war and under Section 124 for sedition that could possibly instigate an agitation were sent to the Andamans, and from India transported as 'political' prisoners.[73] The 'political' prisoners' life becomes a platform of theorization of power, and they constantly break and make identities selectively where often prisoner-criminal image intersects with prisoner-citizen image. The construction of the image is represented ambivalently throughout the period as opposed to the 'ordinary/criminal' prisoner image.

It is important to note here that in the Andamans, there was a constant interaction of institutionalized power among different classes of convicts which can better be located in autobiographical narratives. While less educated hard convicts enjoyed "power" over the educated political prisoners as *tandeels* and *jamadars*, there is a gradual development of a relatively oppositional society that presented the criminal culture. Consequently, set against the backdrop of Sepoy Mutiny, the very consciousness of nationalism took its inception in the settlement and it gradually matured to what is later termed as militant nationalism in detention. Satadru Sen writes:

> The labor regime in the Andaman Islands was divided very broadly into two

[73] See N. Iqbal Singh's "Come the Political Prisoner" in *The Andaman Story* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

> phases: a painful phase of closely supervised forced labor, which lasted up to ten years, followed by a period of rehabilitative labor, when the convict worked under conditions of great autonomy, and was given a tangible share in the fruits of his or her exertions (2004: 121).

In jails in India there was no scope of such developments. Accordingly the intensity and the nature of punishment were modified in the Andamans to spell 'terror.' This gruesome picture of the Andaman jail was expected to serve as the right place for the rebels raising a voice against the Empire. With the ongoing agitations after the Sepoy Mutiny and all the more after the Bengal partition (1905), influx of prisoners in the Indian jails raised. To control and properly regulate the agitating mass, they were transported to the Andamans. So before the arrival of political prisoners, a lot of transformation had already taken place about which native documentation is rare, and when the political prisoners in the first decades of the twentieth century saw the Cellular Jail, little did they know of its actual work-culture.

Apparently, as opposed to ordinary prisoners who were facilitated with sexual and economic privileges, political prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular jail were deprived of any such penal fortune and were subjected to rigorous punishment, solitary confinement and severe atrocities such as coir pounding and oil pressing. While the literate prisoners in Indian jails generally could find a way into the press, or into some form of employment for which his / her education fits him / her, in Cellular Jail, they were put into only hard intra-mural labour, shutting down all ways towards personal development.[74] Consequent upon this differentiating system of law, a new category of prisoners, the promoted convicts, grew in the settlement, who sought to serve the administration for personal gains. Convicts, specifically the ordinary ones, were rewarded in rank with time and service. Not only were they provided with jobs, they were also promoted according to their sincerity towards the penal governance. An ordinary convict during this period, after five years of penal servitude, was allowed to work outside in the open space, and after ten years of extra-mural labour, an ordinary convict could become a free settler.[75] But political prisoners received solitary

[74] Record Nos 68-160, February 1914, Political, NAI PB.

[75] According to the Andaman Manual, every ordinary prisoner, after passing an initial stage of five years in hard labour in the third class could be promoted to the second class if his/her conduct was

confinement for the entire duration of their sentence and were never promoted. N. Iqbal Singh notes: "It frequently happens that men of notoriously bad conduct are liberated at the expiration of a limited period of transportation, whilst others, whose general conduct is perhaps unexceptional, are doomed to servitude till the end of their lives" (1978: 74). The prisoners were treated on the basis of the class they were segregated into upon arrival. Political prisoners were classified into the 'dangerous' (X) and 'less dangerous' (Y) classes. While treatment of both the categories remained same, comparatively the X class prisoners had to strictly follow the penal rules. All the political prisoners were put in separate cells with strict supervision. They were not allowed to communicate with the 'ordinary' or 'criminal' class of prisoners. Communication was possible only with written request. (Singh: 1998, 32-33)

The convict culture of penal inequality, penal favours and perpetual servitude is a chapter that is hardly found in the colonist texts, the deep impact of it can only be located from the first-hand narration of native convicts who experienced the trauma of penal servitude. To be naked to be cleaned up in front of other fellow prisoners, timely and supervised urination and excreting according to prison timing are subjects, the implication of which the autobiographical literatures possibly narrate better. This treatment also hampered their self-respect and led to serious self-critical analysis of penal misfortune. Behind the bars and in fetters, the political prisoners in defense protested against "this life of suffering and sorrow, of vice and pollution" through hunger strikes and refusal for work (Ghose, 1922: 128). There are narratives of such degraded treatment which flow through autobiographies of the political prisoners. The manual jobs they were forced to do were coir-pounding, oil-grinding, etc., also possess a history of penal work-force desired for productivity. These systems played a major role in the formation of an alternative site, remote from the 'mainland,' against the moral and social codes of conduct, at large. And this suppression had become fate for the educated mass of prisoners who took to hunger strikes and presented their agony which was later stimulated as various political movements for their repatriation.

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recorded satisfactory. On promotion, such prisoners could be granted an allowance of 12 annas a month added to other daily requirements and a pay. And after ten years, they became free settlers when they could get a profession and have a family.

While the settlement advocated for equality among prisoners, it simultaneously challenged the notion of sanctity among educated prisoners. Another comparison of a relative freedom came into prominence. Ordinary and hard convicts were released to fields for extra-mural labour—after six months of solitary confinement—and the settlement allowed them a degree of freedom which elite convicts envied upon. On a later stage, to fulfill demand of newspapers, library, kitchen and remuneration, numerous other hunger strikes were carried out in the Cellular Jail. To stand at par with the facilities extended to political prisoners in Indian jails, the prisoners transported as 'political' prisoners demanded the same position to ascertain those privileges and facilities.

During the period, taking aid of caste and class, the Empire formulated the system of penal settlement in order to control and monitor the elite convicts. This is evident from the first hunger strike itself. Brahmin convicts were not allowed to wear sacred thread and if they demanded it they were put under hard labour and beaten up by Muslim warders. So in most writings of the period, Muslim-hatred is a subject directly put forward by Hindu prisoners. R.C. Majumdar in *Penal Settlement in Andamans* states: "Even almost illiterate prisoners were appointed to desk work in office, but the highly educated political prisoners were not entitled to such relief from ordinary prisoners' fate of hard labour" (1975: 148).[76] This religious exploitation was more evident during Barry's tenure as Jail Superintendent. Majumdar while quoting Savarkar and other prisoners states: "Mr. Barry tried to create bitterness between Hindus and the Muslim prisoners—not to put it more bluntly" (149). Satadru Sen explores the effect of colonial punishment on them and in *Disciplining Punishment* (2000) he suggests that because the colonial power had little hope of turning its subjects into disciplined, self-policing citizens, its aim was to manoeuvre Indians into positions where they could be more easily policed, or where they could be co-opted as collaborators who would in turn police others.

[76] The autobiographies Savarkar and Ghose tell us a similar story. Savarkar claims, "The Pathans…were bigoted Mohomedans, and were especially notorious for their fanatical hatred of the Hindus...The Hindu prisoners and the Hindu warders had a hell of their lives in that place. (Savarkar. 1927: 68) Recounting Barry's reign, Ghose states, "In his reign the only people that were happy were the Pathans and those who gave themselves completely up to him. For the rest it was a terrible purgatory (Ghose, 1922: 142).

Conclusion

During this period, the Empire negotiated with about 12,000 Indian convicts to form a convict society. Following the Mutiny, the Government initiated consequential work to resettle rebels and transported people to offshore prisons for ecological and political patronage.[77] Moreover, convict workers were preferred to free employees because the convicts were to acquire their positions by demonstrating their obedience and also because it was easier to train and manage the convict labour force as per the prison regime.[78] With convict-labourers coming from all presidencies of the Indian Empire, the society formed was free from any linguistic or cultural boundary, an intermingling of variety of people was seen, which the Empire presented as philanthropic and utilitarian. F.J. Mouat writes:

> At all events, the standing reproach of so great a scandal to humanity in the track of the commerce of one of the greatest and most frequented highways of the world has been permanently removed, and the reclaiming of its wretched population from their present misery and degradation is brought within the reach of the Christian and the philanthropist. (1857: 126)

As is presented, batches of convicts from different provinces were transported to the Andamans, and the highest intakes were recorded from Bengal, Punjab and the United Province.[79] It led to the amalgamation of multiple sections of people from different regions, castes and cultures.

In the Indian context, following the Mutiny of 1857, the Andaman penal colony started operating that has been an unforgettable chapter in (post)colonial history and is

[77] Prior to 1857, numerous attempts were made to colonize the Islands but due to low survival rate and lack of man-power, the idea could not be materialized till Sepoy Mutiny when there was a dire requirement of more jail-space. With the help of convict-labour, the islands were made suitable for the establishment of an off-shore prison.

[78] Record No. 60-62. October 1873. Home Department, Port Blair.Reproduced in Sen's Context, Representation and the Colonized Convict (2000).

[79] See R.V.R. Murthy's *Andaman and Nicobar Islands: A Saga of Freedom Struggle* (2011) that records the names of political prisoners transported to the Andamans.

termed by M.V. Portman as “the first reforming penal settlement in the world” (1899: 79). Moreover, the settlement worked by maintaining fear, strict punishment and excommunication of convicts to a significant degree to promulgate discipline, as the British archives suggest. The native representation of the colonial-penal culture differs markedly. The next chapter of the thesis explores native narratives to present a detailed analysis of convict hunt, transportation and prison life in the Andamans.

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Chapter 3

Voices of Dissent:
(Auto)biographical Narratives

Abstract: This chapter explores native voices—chiefly, prison sketches and (auto)biographical accounts of political prisoners—to argue that a voice of dissent operated in the settlement. It is divided into three sections, viz., "The 1857-Hunt for Runaway Convicts," "Early Accounts," and "Accounts of the Political Prisoners." The prison narratives—composed after the period of incarceration and away from historical facts—are alternative sites of 'nationalist' narratives that invert the popular Gandhian liberal nationalism. While early native narratives of the penal settlement negotiate with colonial authorities for penal favours, later narratives put forward a strong resistance of colonial policies as well as the strategies of Indian freedom struggle. It suggests that an alternative national consciousness remains operative in later penal voices put forward by the educated political prisoners.

Key Words: Autobiographical Accounts; Political Prisoners; Prison Narratives; Cellular Jail; Nationalist Movement.

Introduction

In penal narratives, a nightmare of another 1857-like rebellion that would overthrow the Empire is seen to threaten the colonial modern, and consequently anxiety and fear govern the site of colonial correspondence. How did the effect of 1857 continue for decades and across generations among officials in the Indian Empire? How does one read between the conviction files of the 'mutineers' and make sense of the effect of the rebellion? How did the polemics affect future-life of convicts who were transported to offshore prisons? One of the ways to locate the effect of the Rebellion is to explore the site of convict hunt after the 1857 Mutiny was suppressed and to locate the fate of the convicts transported or imprisoned on the backdrop of the Rebellion. Most accounts of the rebellion, published in volumes of anthologies, do not follow the subsequent action taken on the convicts (Ball, 1858). There is a relative lack of scholarly representation of the penal culture that saw its genesis owing to the 1857 rebellion. In historical-critical analyses, narrative, narrating and story-telling

form major elements of understanding and interpreting a text. This chapter focuses on (auto)biographical texts—chiefly, prison sketches and accounts of political prisoners—to interpret the voice of dissent that echoed in the Andaman penal settlement during the first half of the twentieth century. Narrative, specifically (auto)biographical narrative, has been a medium of translating human experience into knowledge of the contemporary period that constructs history in return by transforming personal chronicle into historical events. Several canonical writers such as Daniel Defoe, Oscar Wilde, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Camus, Jean Genet, to name a few, wrote extensively on their penal / penal experiences. Through their past employment of history and their own experiences, the author-historian becomes a story-teller to give meaning to the sequence of events.[80] The political prisoners' (auto)biographies provide meaningful substances to penal history through the expression of their lived experiences in the form of story-telling.

This chapter reads select Andaman prisoners' (auto)biographies written after their repatriation to 'mainland' India. The texts fall under two broad categories—early accounts that give ample evidence of the working of penal settlement during the beginning phase of its establishment till the construction of the much-hyped Cellular Jail. The other section focuses on the period after 1909 when political prisoners were transported, and that marks a turning point in the history of the Andaman penal settlement. These texts are penal memorabilia and remembrance as well as 'anticipatory' and 'emancipator' as Munslow argues historical narratives ought to be (2007, 25). Knowing the significance of life-narrative of a prisoner and the role of prison in human society, Victor Brombert in his *The Romantic Prison* (2015) writes: "Prison haunts our civilization" (3). The political prisoners in question also seem to rehearse the statement as would Fyodor Dostoevsky suggest it is prison that mirrors a society. The subjugation of the colonized through applying a strategy—that puts forward the idea of discipline and punishment in order to 'civilize' the convicts—remains the undercurrent subject in these autobiographical accounts. This 'disciplining' culture in the Indian context came into full force after the 1857 Mutiny

[80] Paul Riceour rightly asserts that understanding a series of events demands telling a story. Without story-telling, the content of the past remains just things that happened in time and space and literally has no meaning. For Frank Ankersmit, however, meaning emerges from the historian's construction of a story (Munslow 2007: 31).

when Indian population, reaching a threshold point, agitated against the Government, and the Empire alike needed to house the convicts away from 'mainland' for its own safety.

The 1857 Mutiny has been an unforgettable episode in Imperial history and has been a well-documented subject in the Indian Archives.[81] While on the one hand the Empire recognized this Uprising as a resistance to colonial policies,[82] on the other, Savarkar and the other nationalists have canonized the Mutiny as the First War of Independence and a pan-Indian resistance movement.[83] Undoubtedly, the Mutiny commanded a lot of attention and necessary action, and all possible measures were taken by the Government to sabotage the same. Consequently, the Mutiny was suppressed soon and the Government ensured punishment for the 'mutineers.' It is evident from (auto)biographical narratives that during and after the suppression of the Mutiny, the Raj, being heavily destabilized in political and cultural scenarios, awarded stringent punishments for the 'mutineers.' The Andaman penal settlement stands as a witness to the treatment meted out to the prisoners, and the writings of political prisoners bear testimony to it. This period momentously continues to find a place in historical discourses pertaining to colonial policies.

[81] The Mutiny of 1857-58 is marked by resistance, rebellion and a period of heavy political Uprising. A well-researched field in colonial discourse, the Uprising of 1857 changed the course of Indian governance forever. Numerous colonial and native accounts project the Uprising from different points of views. There exist letters, journals, diary entries, official communication, archival records relating the causes of the rebellion and its aftermath. For a British account, see Charles Ball's the *History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving a Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India* (1858) and *A Concise History of the Great Military Events Which Have Tended to Consolidate British Empire in Hindostan* (1858) and for a sample of native as well as British account, see Pramod Nayar's *The Penguin 1857 Reader* (2007) and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya's *Rethinking 1857: A Reader* (2012).

[82] Historians have claimed that Indian Mutiny has been suppressed by colouring the event imperially, naming it just an unrest aroused in the Bengal army during 1857. Media helped to implant such a thought among people, especially, reports of the British press worked as a biased "imperialised institution" (Dalrymple, 2006). Newspapers such as *The Times* legitimised the legacy of the imperial British, detracted the Upsurge by limiting it to a small-scale movement of resistance against colonial policies which, according to Indian nationalists, is a war for their Independence. For further reference, see Ball (1858a) and (1858b).

[83] Savarkar rejects the idea that 1857 upsurge is merely a Mutiny, rather he canonized it as a revolutionary movement, a war of independence at a larger scale (Savarkar, 1927: 150). For further details, see Savarkar's *The Story of My Transportation for Life* (1927) and *The Indian War of Independence 1857* (1908).

With the Japanese occupation of the Andaman Islands in 1942 during World War II, many documents and monuments were destroyed. Four wings of the Cellular Jail were demolished. It proved to be disastrous for the country as history of the time could not remain intact and it is left with a handful of written evidences. Still, there remain various categories of records that present the colonial mission. Proceedings of the Home, Political and Judicial Departments as well as Revenue and Agricultural Department proceedings are indicators. There are case files of individual and collective prisoners and there exist records against the political prisoners, now commemorated as freedom fighters. Newspaper coverage of specific cases and personal representations of family and well-wishers of the convicts to the colonial court form other sources. A distinct category of sources—(auto)biographical narratives—is crucial among those surviving texts that project the prisoners' perspective towards the politics of transportation. In short, the existing autobiographical sources include—but are not limited to—Barindra Ghose's *The Tale of My Exile* (1922), V.D. Savarkar's *My Transportation for Life* (1927), Ullaskar Dutt's *Twelve Years of Prison Life* (1924),Bhai Parmanand's *The Story of My Life* (2003), and this chapter reads the available documents to present the voice of dissent in penal narratives.

The 1857 Hunt for Runaway Convicts

The events of 1857 had a lasting effect on Indian populace as well as British minds that resulted in a series of confrontations between the two for almost a century. There is no denial that these incidences led to a gruesome environment and consequently, the 1857 events are revisited in modern scholarship to study contemporary people and the period. Rebels met different fates in the post-Mutiny search on their hideouts. Some were caught and tried, others languished without a trial in the Andaman penal colony and the lucky ones managed to escape, taking refuge on the North West frontier bordering Afghanistan and the Russian Empire, on the Hijaz, and the Arabian provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Alavi, 2011: 1340). Seema Alavi in "Fugitive Mullahs and Outlawed Fanatics" (2011) explains the careers and transitional network of Muslim outlaws. Travel and trade formed two key practices leading towards networking and connectivity. Diplomacy, kinship ties, the writing of commentaries on

Islam and its sacred texts in unique ways, madrasas, and student contacts—all exploited and used to communicate and fight against the British Empire.

Peter Robb (2007) argues that growth in trade and commerce added immensely as an infrastructure to allow people to communicate and gross money to be smuggled across hundreds of miles. He claims that there were definite codes for communication and transfer of money and information and states:

> Bankers and hide merchants in particular occupied key roles in the regional network of the Wahhabis, trade routes and dakgharis (post-chaises) were used, the hundi system of commercial paper was relied upon to transfer funds, and even the rather obvious codes used in correspondence were expressed in terms which related to trade—the mujahidin as *beparis* or *soudagar sahib* (merchants), the Wahhabi party as the 'firm', its leader as the agent, Patna as the 'little bazaar', supplies for the 'rebels' as 'Casmere and Cabul goods, shoes, &C.' and transfers of money as books, jewellery or hides. Moreover, in the conspiracy as in trade, family members travelled widely, so that long-distance contacts were reinforced by kinship ties (166).[84]

Two significant phenomena developed during this period. On the one hand, the Empire took substantial measures to capture the 'mutineers,' and when caught, brought to trial to suppress the substance of a future Uprising. On the other, on native front, an elaborate nexus was established on different levels – family, business, region and religion – to take the cause of personal and social freedom from different perspectives. These institutions worked as connecting points to aid a further protest or at least the British Empire kept an eye on these institutions to reach out to suspicious activities. Nonetheless, each dimension would be investigated and put to test once it came to the notice of the Government.

After a decade of correspondence, surveillance and watch-out, the capture of Moulvie Ahmed Oollah, Moulvie Ala-ud-Din, Mohammad Jafar Thanesari, Fazl-e-Haqq

[84] Rich traders used to donate a percentage of their profits, and those who were too poor would donate a handful of grain, which were periodically collected by itinerant Maulvies and transmitted to Patna.

Khairabadi and Dudhnath Tewarry – who were dubbed run-away convicts of the 1857 Rebellion – facilitated in complete suppression of the Mutiny and Andaman penal settlement saw the influx of such convicts who were 'wanted criminals' of the period. A careful perusal of life narratives and colonial documents reveals not only an encounter between the British and the organized mutineers but also presents imperial anxiety to completely suppress all elements of a future rebellion. Among the available records, Indian archives present the narratives of Moulvie Ahmed Oollah, caught in September 1869 as a state prisoner after a decade of correspondence, surveillance and watch-out; Moulvie Ala-ud-Din, sentenced to transportation in April 1859, who completed a life-term imprisonment at the Andamans but was denied repatriation forever owing to imperial fear; Mohammad Jafar Thanesari, a Wahhabi convict charged for smuggling money to Afghanistan and transported to the settlement in 1863 who returned to 'mainland' as an elite and wealthy prisoner; Fazl-e-Haqq Khairabadi, who was transported in 1859 and whose prison writings in the form of poetry and letters sent home, though obscure, remain a site of postcolonial knowledge; and lastly, Dudhnath Tewarry, received by the penal settlement on 6 April 1858, who had escaped from the settlement, lived a year with Andamanese tribes and returned to the settlement to inform about a systematic attack that the aborigines plotted on the settlement. Each of these accounts presents a unique narrative of penal settlement and has to be read within the context of imperial strategies of suppressing different voices.

Peter Robb Suggests: "Many of the 'conspirators' held posts of responsibility within the new structures, which, no doubt, reinforced their status, secured their income, and facilitated a familiarity with technological advances such as the telegraph" (2007: 166). Other participants included but were not limited to, lambadars (headmen), opium gomastha (agent), and daroga (chief of a police circle), meat contractors to British forces, and other contractors, as well as sepoys, jamadars, and risaladars (as these military personnel might apply). Moulvie Ahmadullah himself was working as a District Magistrate. These men were linked intricately and symbolically. They did possess a coded language to communicate and often their communication used symbolic words to represent arms, weapons, payment and rebellion to naturalize the nexus between people in government and the revolutionaries. After the rebellion, the Government read these communications to unearth the surface-cover of symbolic

language to track the Muslim revolutionaries as well as to systematically suppress them. Moulvie Ahmadullah's remittances to the frontier, for example, had to await the 'autumn harvest' which in fact meant the 'wait for the right opportunity'; some of his supposed purchases were of 'good milk cows'; one letter promised a visit once the agricultural work was over (167). Another letter written about a court case stated, "The cost has been great; had money or labour been spared we should have been disposed" (172). Undercurrent the letter there is an indication of the right force to run the rebellion. And moreover, the long tradition of free movement of service elites and religious preachers across the Muslim world was helpful in community-building—"Information and ideas passed accordingly" (169). These secret codes reflect perceptions of the system and project the seriousness of the struggle they were engaged in. Another device, employed in the letters, was to write of criminal and revenue cases, suggestive of the military battles won or lost. The metaphor was carried in circumstantial detail pertaining to agents and people of business or court who were preparing the mission (172). The colonial administration kept therefore a vigilant eye on the movements of religious preachers to decode their language and initiated an elaborate communication to bring them to court.

During this period, Muslim 'outlaws' made progressive careers and were engaged in meaningful networking by travelling across the imperial boundary to Hijaz, Istanbul and the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and Burma as well as Acheh in the East.[85] Islamic connection and its repertoire knowledge and communication skills were easily grafted through diplomacy, kinship ties along with writing commentaries on Islam and its sacred texts in unique ways. And further contacts of madrasas and students developed a bond that took decades to be decoded by British officials. In the nineteenth century, Muslim reformists adopted print culture and information passed through several sources and different languages. In addition, travel by train, communication by telegraph and postal services were sought to form transnational communication in a novel way and later these practices moved towards the formation

[85] Seema Alavi discusses in her "Fugitive Mullahs and 'Outlawed Fanatics': Indian Muslims in Nineteenth Century Trans-Asiatic Imperial Rivalries" (2011) about some of the known fugitives of the period. In her paper, she explains how travel played a vital role in revolutionary communication and carrying out the movement, specifically Wahhabi movement (1337-1382).

of 'Muslim international.'[86] Such men always travelled to the North West frontier provinces into Afghanistan and Central Asia. This travel increased with the leadership of Syed Ahmad Shahid of Rae Bareily. The message of the Indian Wahhabis was spread by travelling preachers and consolidated by institutional means. One such man whose case file becomes the locale of our study is Muhammad Jafar Thanesari of Thanesar who smuggled money to Afganistan and was later captured by the British. His autobiography talks much about this period and the Muslim reformist community. These men were often termed as 'Wahhabi', 'fanatic', 'outlaw,' and 'fugitive mullahs' in imperial communication and claimed thereafter as reformists (2011:1340). It is only with W.W. Hunter's elaboration on the political implications of their presence in India and on the North West frontier that they came to limelight. And, henceforth, an elaborate tradition of searching the hideouts started, as well as juridical supervision, hunt and finally their capture. This process of capture was long as it involved doubt about their crime and problem in identification of actual individuals since the revolutionists changed their identity frequently. Nonetheless, the episode of imperial communication about these 'fugitives' shows the nature of curiosity the Government attached to their movement. Documents pertaining to convicts' capture and trial bring to the fore the play of hide and seek among the convicts and the police.

It is noteworthy to mention that Moulvie Ahmed Oollah's past activities were highly under scrutiny and documented in great detail. Moreover, these documents obliquely indicate that spies and agents were deployed to keep a watch on several such suspects of the Mutiny, not only to capture them, but to suppress any anticipated mutiny of the future. It is evident from a letter from J.W. Chisolm, Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, which states, "The original intention was to arrest him after he had started on his journey from Raipur, so that any papers he might have would be found in his possession."[87] Moreover, it was concluded that the suspect also had managed to know

[86] This term explains the careers of the Muslim men who journeyed out of India and located themselves at the intersection of the British, Ottoman and Dutch empire. Barbar D. Metcalf and Barbara Daly's *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (1982) and U. Stark's *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press & the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (2007).

[87] Letter No. 4585, 30 September 1869. From J.W. Chisholm, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur to Colonel J.G. Balmain, Commissioner, Chutteesghur Division. He writes, "The District Superintendent had men secretely placed to watch the Moulvie and on the 26th we were informed that he was making preparations for a start."

that his actions were spied upon and could foresee his subsequent fate after conviction. In the same letter Chisolm describes Moulvie's action before his arrest, "Before dawn on the 27thAhmed Oollah set himself to discover before starting whether he was watched by walking backwards and forwards with sudden stops and turns, and having thus satisfied himself that he was, he countermanded his horse which had been got ready" (Chisholm, 1869, Letter 4585). Detailing such character and behavioural traits has been one of the serious affairs in the aftermath of the Rebellion. This process of capturing institutional suspects found ample justification that the Empire anticipated a rebellion of this sort throughout the decades. The account of Moulvie Ahmed Oollah's arrest is a significant case in point in this direction.

Establishing a convict's identity during 1857 generates serious questions as the Government either hurriedly transported many convicts to the Andamans or felt reluctant to repatriate them after their term was over. The Home Department proceedings of Port Blair testify the claim. In 1862, Officiating Superintendent of Allipore Jail J.P.H. Ward, writes to the Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal enquiring about the real nature of the original offence, for which Kirthea Rajowar was sentenced to transportation to the Andamans on 13 July 1858.[88] Upon investigation it was found that the prisoner was convicted on 28 October 1857 by the Principal Assistant Commissioner at Hazareebaug of rape and robbery and was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment with labour in irons.[89] Later, in December 1873, a person who had passed seven years at Port Blair as Ethula Gunga and who was convicted at Nellore on 17 July 1866 turned out having a fake identity. In documentation, there remain, thus, two sets of erroneous stories: that the colonial government hurriedly convicted many people to strengthen the settlement and that the postcolonial nation paid homage to many a petty rapist and murderer as the nation's martyrs. Referring to colonial documents Major General D.M. Stewart wrote, in 1863, to the Government of India that "Men who are now alive in the settlement had been years ago reported

[88] Record No. 13, 29 July 1862 (Home). NAI PB.

[89] Government of Bengal, Judicial Department Proceeding, September 1862. Proceeding no 13/8. NAI PB.

dead or escaped, and others who had really died or escaped or supposed to be alive are still at Port Blair according to the records"[90]

One of the earliest autobiographies by Maulana Muhammad Jafar Thanesari, a Wahhabi convict, who spent his years during 1866-84, is a fortunate account that survives in Urdu. Rebel Fazl-e-Haqq Khairabadi, a friend to Mirza Ghalib, who was transported in 1859 and died in the Andaman jail in 1861, has composed prison sketches that provide a picaresque account of early history of settlement life.[91] Through these early accounts the chapter firstly highlights the way imperial communication took place regarding convicts in the Empire and the way such communications led to the capture of 'seditious' prisoners of the Rebellion. Secondly, it throws light on their life in the settlement, after their capture, which remains oppositional to the life of 'political' prisoners who were transported in the first decades of the twentieth century. Though it is one of the most serious issues in the development and overall governance of the Empire and contributes momentously to colonial histories, scholarship pertaining to the Andaman penal culture is rare. So in what follows the chapter contextualizes the narratives of prisoners from both colonial and native records to contextualize the voice of resistance.

Early Accounts

Colonial archive presents the site of punishment and correction, transportation and exile, debates on repatriation and further surveillance as a detestable memory of 1857. The accounts often allude to past violence and cruelty that were deeply rooted in the colonial psyche and get reflected in colonial documentation. In addition, it also suggests how the prisoners adopted and mimicked the Andaman authority with the employment of different survival strategies which constituted the formation of a criminal hierarchy among the convicts. Two categories of convicts, who were constantly antithetical to the other group, are found to be present in the settlement.

[90] Home Department Proceedings, NAI. December 1873. 637. PB.

[91] Although there is no substantial Government proof, his letters, prison sketches and autobiographical literature give ample reference to the colonial practices. See Jamal Malik's "Letters, Prison Sketches and Autobiographical Literature: The Cases of Fazl-e-Haqq Khirabadi in the Andaman Penal Colony" (Erfurt, Jan 2005) for further details.

One category approached the penal culture in a spirit of submission and they compromised much on all fronts and received penal favours. Consequently, they were promoted to position of some power in the penal colony resulting in their mobility towards the top of the convict-hierarchical structure. Conversely, another group of prisoners hovered on the periphery of the penal hierarchy. They were castigated in such a manner that they became a metaphor of Andaman penal servitude. But the margin acts as a site of threat in colonial imagination.

During the initial decades of the settlement, most existing sources of convict records are British and European documentation, and there is rarely any native record that presents prisoners' life from the native's perspective. The earliest texts on the settlement are court records, correspondences on convicts or convict management, letters and memoirs, journal entries by settlement officers, and thereby native representation exists only in colonial voices. In the absence of freedom to write, frequent deaths and full-scale oppression, such records, if at all they existed, hardly came to the fore. There are native memorandums to the settlement officers or the Government of India moreover. Only a few statements and colonial accounts in native voices are available.

In the beginning of the settlement, there are multiple reports of convict escape from the settlement that governed the penal site since there were no prisoners. Convicts were fascinated with the idea of running away thinking it would put an end to the punishment and thereby their misery. But very soon they realized that they were in worse condition than in jail or were recaptured. M.V. Portman writes, "In every case of recapture the runaway convicts returned and delivered themselves up, finding it impossible to withstand the savages or exist in the jungle" (1899: 276). But Dudhnath Tewarry's case is different. The statement of Dudhnath Tewarry was recorded after his return to the settlement during J.P. Walker's tenure. This statement served as a first-hand narrative about the aborigines.[92] His statement becomes the first such text

[92] Tewarry states, "I think it is highly probable that, with few exceptions, all the convicts who have escaped from the penal settlement at Port Blair, during the last twelve months, and who have not returned and given themselves up, have either perished in the jungle from hunger and thirst, or been murdered by the aborigines." "Statement Recorded at Ross Island, Superintendent's Court, by J.P. Walker, Esquire, M.D., Superintendent of Port Blair and Commissioner in the Andamans," (Henceforth, Tewarry's statement) 1859, NAI PB.

about the relationship among the aborigines, the convicts and the British who tactfully encouraged the relationship in order to coexist on the Islands. Tewarry's statement gives us ample information about the aborigines' life on the Islands, and little about his own life concerning rebellion and imprisonment. Primary texts of this kind form the basis of the research as they explain the strategy of coexistence among the aborigines, natives and the British, and also provide us with an understanding of colonial policies. Noteworthy however is the case of Dudhnath Tewarry who ran away from the settlement and lived with Andaman aborigines for a year before retiring to the settlement to betray the aborigines and receive penal favours.

Dudhnath Tewarry, a Brahmin Sepoy of the 14th regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, convicted of the crimes of 'Mutiny' and 'desertion,' was sentenced on the 27 September 1857, by the Commission at Jhelum, to be transported beyond seas for life. He was received by the penal settlement on 6 April 1858. He had run away from the settlement on Ross Island 15 days after his arrival on 23 April only to return after a year. Convicts, who ran away during the period, were either killed by Andaman aborigines or wild animals or were caught by the tribes who were employed by the jail superintendent through barter system. But, it is surprising to note that Tewarry lived for more than a year in the jungles before returning to Ross Island voluntarily. His fellow prisoners who had escaped with him succumbed to the aborigines' arrows. After being repeatedly wounded by arrows, Tewarry showed signs of life. The aborigines felt pity on his deteriorated health condition, nursed him back to life with indigenous medication and took him to Turmooglee. He states:

> For some reason unknown to me, they not only spared me but took a kindly interest in me, assisted me up, put my arms under theirs, and helped me along to their boats, in the bottom of one of which I was placed with care; red earth moisted with water was applied all round my neck and about my nostrils, and wet earth of a light colour was rubbed all over my body […].[93]

Tewarry took up the tribal lifestyle, married two times while living on the Turmooglee island. He married two women, Leepa, a 20-year-old woman and Jigah, a

[93] Tewarry's Statement.

16-year-old, narrated in detail their customs, practices on birth, marriage and funeral. The recorded statement is all about their marriage, child-birth, death and lifestyle of the tribes on Turmooglee. He then left Leepa during her eighth month of pregnancy with his child to give information of an intended organized attack on the convict station at Aberdeen.[94]

In this connection, Vishvajit Pandya in *In the Forest: Visual and Material Worlds of Andamanese History (1858-2006)* claims that Tewarry had married two women, living in two different locations who turned out to be mother and daughter (2009, 66-98). When this fact came to light, he was left with no other option but to surrender and save his life. Interestingly, in his statement Tewarry states that the reason of his return was to inform J.P. Walker about a massive attack that was being planned by the aborigines, which came to be true. The attack is popularly known as the Battle of Aberdeen at Aberdeen Bazaar but there was less damage to the settlement since, with Tewarry's warning, the settlement could get the time to prepare itself for a counter attack. M.V. Portman in *A History of our Relations with the Andamanese* (1899) records:

> Had not Dr. Walker received notice regarding it from life convict Dudhnath Tewarry, No. 276, who had escaped almost immediately after his arrival, on the 23rd April, 1858, and had lived with the Andamanese ever since, had learnt their language, and had become cognizant of the arrangements for the flight which had been arranged in detail for some time previously, very serious damage might have been caused. (279)

Tewarry was celebrated by the Andaman authorities and an account of his life and exploits appeared in *London Chamber's Journal* in March 1860. His statement contained long narration about the aborigines and their culture pertaining to child birth, food, marriage and death which till then were mysteries for the colonial modern. Tewarry's statement was undoubtedly an exaggerated one, but his service towards the Andaman administration was appreciated which earned him a full pardon and repatriation to 'mainland' India. Under surveillance he could flee and after escaping

[94] Ibid.

he could survive and return back, so, Dudhnath Tewarry's case is exceptional. And, that he returned to the settlement to inform British officers about the aborigines' plan of attack was an extraordinary affair. He states, "Our special object in leaving the aborigines was to save the lives of our fellow convicts and my fellow soldiers."[95] For his 'noble' job of saving the Aberdeen bazaar and the settlement from attack, he was praised by the British and is remembered in colonial history since the settlement could document the tradition and custom of these tribes in detail.

Another case in point is the account of Muhammad Jafar Thanesari who not only survived the jail atmosphere but also returned to India with wealth and fame. One of the earliest accounts of native representation of the Islands is that of Wahhabi convict Maulana Thanesari's. Originally written in Urdu, Thanesari's account of the settlement is presented in *Kalapani* (1964). His autobiography in Urdu *Tavarikh-e 'Ajib* is the first among the published autobiographical narratives on the settlement that presents the tale of Kālā Pāni. Later it was translated as *Kala Pani* (1964). His autobiography provides an interesting narration of events meticulously. Satadru Sen argues in "Context, Representation and the Colonized Convict: Maulana Thanesari at the Andaman Islands" that there were some fortunate convicts who had got jobs and were allowed to marry at the Andaman penal settlement and life for them was completely different form other unfortunate prisoners. One such example of docile prisoner was Thanesari who spent his time in the Andamans during 1866 and 1884. For such prisoners, Kālā Pāni transformed them into fortunate men.[96]But political prisoners received solitary confinement for the entire duration of their sentence and were never promoted. N. Iqbal Singh notes: "It frequently happens that men of notoriously bad conduct are liberated at the expiration of a limited period of transportation, whilst others, whose general conduct is perhaps unexceptional, are doomed to servitude till the end of their lives" (1978: 74).

[95] Ibid.

[96] While Thanesari returned to 'mainland' with wealth and wives, there were prisoners who could not return to 'mainland.' And for the educated political prisoners such as Barindra Kumar Ghose and V.D. Savarkar, it was an unfruitful place as they had no scope to go out of their jail premises to work and earn for themselves independently. This kind of a story is different than the lives of political prisoners in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Thanesari was arrested in 1863 and transported to the Andamans for smuggling arms and money to the anti-British Mujahideen in Afghanistan. He was the *nambardar* or chief accountant of the Municipal administration of Thanesari who forms the example of a docile prisoner in the Andamans. Throughout his stay in the Andamans he excelled in his career and life, and returned as a rich person who found respect and a high Government position. With time the need of labourers grew in the Andaman penal settlement. Educated convicts were employed to do office work such as record keeping and translation and convicts who were keen to receive favours of the Administration were instructed to keep watch over other prisoners. Accordingly, a new class of convicts emerged in the penal space. Maulana Jafar Thanesari and Moulvie Ala-ud-Din are examples of this class. They had transformed their fate at the Andamans, with a difference that Thanesari was repatriated and Ala-ud-Din was not in spite of receiving favours from almost all officers of the settlement. Like Thanesari and Ala-ud-Din, during this period following 1857, prisoners were employed by the British Government for years together. Upon release they would go back and lead an independent life but the taboos in Indian caste system prohibited them to enter their social and cultural spheres. Crossing the sea 'defiled' their caste and upon returning they were not accepted by society. Therefore, many of them were forced to settle in the islands as well after their release.

Thanesari's capture was planned and the process and manner of hunt for his capture proposes that suspected persons were kept under strict watch. When Ghazan Khan, a Sergeant of the mounted Police posted at Panipat station in the Karnal district doubted on the activity of Thanesari, action was taken instantly. The moment the information reached Ambala through telegram, a search warrant of his house was issued and two of his fellow workers, one was Munshi 'Abdu'–Gafur, a resident of the district of Gaya and a clerk in his office, the other was Abbas, a Bengali boy who used to sleep in his sitting suite, were arrested. Although Thanesari was a strong suspect, without an arrest warrant they had to leave him. In the process, the police received a letter that would prove Thanesari's involvement in the case clearly. In Delhi, he had to carry out his "sacred consignment" of smuggling guineas. Finally, Thanesari was captured on his arrival in Aligarh and was sent to the detention room and his trial began. In his autobiography, Thanesari recounts to what extent the officers would go to torture, threaten and abuse the suspects to extract information from them. Thanesari states that

he was offered "a written guarantee to free and appoint him to a high government position if he told them the names of the people involved in or assisting the jihad movement".[97] They also had warned him that if he refused to cooperate, he would be hanged.[98]

Thanesari pleaded people to vouch for him but they were helpless and threatened. Later he claims that his act of seeking people for suggestions and advice was, of course, a deception and the trial being public, its court proceedings were a spectacle for many Europeans and natives. The case of Thanesari gives precise information about the trial and proceedings. Finally in 1863, he was transported to Kālā Pāni and then his fortune shined. He comprehended the working of the penal settlement and in the very beginning he was told "This place is effectively run by secretaries! They have the power to do whatever they want."[99] The moment he came to know about the system of reward and punishment, he subtly accommodated himself into the penal culture in the Andamans. In his autobiography, he states that: "On that island, we saw thousands of men and women whose foreheads were branded with their name, the nature of their crime, and the punishment notation 'Life Imprisonment.' The branding was like the Writ of Destiny that can never be erased" (192). It is surprising to know that Thanesari did not find the Islands unhealthy. He writes that in twenty years of his stay in the Andamans he did not come across a single report of anyone affected by any disease though official documents mourn its mortality rate to a significant extent. Native representations and also colonial records indicate epidemics, deaths and unbearable climatic condition during that time (Portman, 1899). It can be assumed that Thanesari had understood the tactics to achieve colonial hegemony. Therefore, he had very soon gained status and property on the islands.[100] He later married a Kashmiri girl, another convict, and he noticed "in place of whatever was taken from

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[97] Thanesari, Muhammad Jafar. *Kala Pani: Tavarikh-e Ajib*. Trans. by S. Kamal Abdali. *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, No. 26, 2011: 180.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid 191.

[100] He writes, "Almost as soon as I landed, I was appointed Deputy Head Clerk in the Court attached to the offices of the Superintendent and the Chief Commissioner. The benefits of this position included a servant whose wages were fully paid by the Government. Also [unlike the prisoners living in the barracks] I was free to move about, with no restrictions whatever" (1964: 200).

me in India, I was beginning to be given back something better" (1964: 200). In the settlement, marriage was encouraged, as it was perceived, to add to the population of the islands leading to the increase of labour force. He states that the person who wanted to get a wife only had to visit the island of female prisoners and choose a woman. After taking her consent and paying her something he had to meet the Chief Commissioner. Afterwards, a formal ceremony in the presence of the Chief Commissioner would be organized where a testament of their mutual consent would be produced and marriage solemnized. Thanesari had married multiple times in the Andamans and had ten children there. With eight children and one wife, a Hindu Brahmin converted to Islam, he returned to India. Position, wealth, family, he achieved everything in the Andamans and afterwards he lived a prestigious life in 'mainland' as is suggested by his autobiography. While nativity is a concern here, a first-hand narration and the time-period when it was composed show the complexity of Thanesari's authenticity. Written many years later after the events occurred, the autobiography presents an approach that is nationalist though a growing desire to achieve "freedom" or "penal favours" remains part of the case files during detention.

In the postcolonial era, stories of colonial imprisonment are carved out of letters, statements or poems of the prisoners transported just after the Mutiny. Interestingly, many were written in the jail premises. This indicates to in principle that a relatively good degree of freedom was given to the early prisoners who submitted to the demands of the Andaman administration. Prison literature of the post Mutiny period specifically includes letters and poems written after years of penal subjugation or after smuggling and refining the documents written secretly in prison. Fazl-e-Haqq Khairabadi's conviction and his narratives are a case in point. The Indian Muslim scholar from United Provinces, Fazl-e-Haqq Khairabadi was deported to the Andamans on charges of "instigation to murder" and "high treason." He has left some letters, autobiographical literature and prison sketches that signify unconscious and non-deliberate instances of historical events. His unpublished letters to his father provide us with the knowledge about British services and his joining the service under the British as a chief record-keeper in 1815. For instance, in one such letter, (Sept 1816), he complains to his father against British arrogance and British way of dishonouring him despite his belonging to the Muslim noble class. He wrote letters to his father in Arabic which were later translated into English. One of his letters that got

published after hundred years indicates that Indians had to face economic depression after the British set up their company in India. As the British monopolised trade in India, Indians working in administration, trade, craft and agriculture suffered from unemployment. Implementation of surveillance tax and replacement of manual labour with mechanical ones added to the misery. His letters focus chiefly on Delhi and the issues discussed include Indian trade and economy that were on a path of decay. The letters suggest his strong dissatisfaction of British administration in India. He was a friend of famous poet Mirza Ghalib who later writes that Fazl-e-Haqq—famously known Khairabadi—left Civil Service holding the post of a Record Keeper because of the rudeness and arrogance of the British rulers and followed an offer from the prince of Jhajjar.[101]

It is believed that Khairabadi called upon all Muslims to participate in a Holy War (Jihad) against the colonial rulers. His writings in Urdu and Persian were read by his followers and consequently, a holy war was evident during his period of active resistance. His intentions were soon revealed and he was first detained in Alipur Jail and then transported to the Andaman penal settlement. Jamal Malik notes that relevant court files and documents pertaining to his case were missing, but only petition files were found which are vital to the understanding of the penal culture of the time. His son Abd al-Haqq succeeded in granting his release order in 1861 only to find his father dead in the Andamans when he arrived. His family claims that he died on 20 August 1861 before his release from the settlement. Before his death, he had left behind stories of his life in prison. He wrote with pencil and charcoal on shreds of cloth and papers coded Arabic notes in prose and poetry, notably Qasidas,[102] which were smuggled out from the settlement by a prisoner at the time of his release known as Mufti ‘Inayat Ullah Kakorwi. The notes were handed over to his son who had put the writing meaningfully together and named it as *Tarikh Ghadr Hindustan* which is popularly known as *Story of the Indian Mutiny* which provide the reasons for the revolt, the misery of the prisoners and the situation after the deportation to the Andaman islands (2005: 3).

[101] Letter to Saraj al-Din Ahmed, 31 January 1832, in Wazir al-Hassan ‘Abidi (ed.), Pankaj Ahang. Lahawr 1969, 335 (as cited in Jamal Malik: 2005).

[102] An Arabic word often translated as ‘ode.’ He is said to have written at least 4,000 verses in Arabic which cannot be traced.

Khairabadi wrote extensively on the features and morals of prison life which must be an outcome of his recollection of experiences and indulgence in self-reflection. But it is strikingly peculiar that his participation in the Mutiny of 1857 is still debatable. There is no such proof of the same. His letters, poems and statements do not indicate that either. Nonetheless, Haqq's case was not unique as the colonial records could not prove many convicts guilty of the act of Mutiny as in the case of Haqq but due to the fear of a war anew, they were transported. Kakorwi's release from the Andamans puts this doubt into perspective. Kakorwi's release throws light on another aspect of penal culture. From Malik's introspection it is established that Kakorwi was released as he translated a standard Arabic book into English. Such penal fortune was bestowed upon docile prisoners who helped the Empire in some way or the other unlike Fail-e-Haqq's, who despite several petitions was not repatriated. Although from his writing no conclusion of his conviction, trial or release order can be derived, it only implies penal servitude that devastated his Mutiny writing career. His role in the Mutiny was only alleged. It is thus the Empire was under a threat and to reduce the risk of a further uprising, transportation seemed to be the only way out for suspected convicts. His writings only impart crucial information pertaining to prison life that adds to the prison literature of the early period in the Andamans.

In his prose text, *Risala al-thaurat al-hindiya a qissah*, which was later translated into English, Khairabadi presents his life story that puts forward his disliking towards the British government in India. He writes:

> He, who had been living a life of luxury, was betrayed and made a pauper, handed over to a tyrant who had taken from him his last amenities and bestowed harsh punishment upon him. This white skinned tyrant (the gaoler) with a black heart, blue eyes, with a grim facial expression, red hair and bad mood had taken away all his fancy clothes and instead had given him rags to wear." (2005: 5)

Khairabadi concludes from his plight that all his suffering was only because of his religion. Because he was a Muslim, he was left without any defence council and prosecutor, and he also claims that the British were trying to eradicate all traces of Muslim scholarly tradition and knowledge. He later declares: "It was only because of

lies and false promises of the Christian sovereign that he was detained and deported" (Ibid 5). And about the condition of the penal settlement he writes:

> The air was contaminated and therefore a constant source of ailments. Sickness was cheap, cure very expensive. Often there were epidemics. The sick had no chance to be cured; the sane was bereft of security. The one who cured diseases became ill, and the one who was sick was a definite prey for death. There was no empathy and pity....If a prisoner died, an unclean person from the impure looking like a devil or monster would come to drag the corps away by the feet, take off his clothes and dig the corps into a sand hill without coffin or abolition. There was no grave, no burial. (6)

Khairabadi asserts that the British targeted on the Hindu and the Muslim units of the British armed forces because this act would scare others to raise a voice. So, they were given to taste animal fat, especially pig fat, that would defile their religion.[103] His prose piece is a detailed narration of the 1857 war, which he calls a 'holy war.' It is noteworthy that a letter to the Nawab of Rampur claims that he was mistaken for Mir Fazl-e Haqq Shahjahanpuri who worked as a Tehsildar of Anolah and was to be caught for his activities in Bareili or Pilibhit, rather than in Bundi where he was trapped. Establishing a convict's identity during 1857 generates serious questions—as the fact which has already been mentioned that the Government either hurriedly transported many convicts to the Andamans or felt reluctant to repatriate them after their term was over. It may be concluded drawing from what Malik suggests at last that Khairabadi's is a case of judicial error that implies profound ignorance of the British and their vindictive administration.

The case of Moulvie Ahmed Oolah[104]and his less known papers are an integral site to understand how, with decades of labour and juridical proceedings, the Empire initiated work to eliminate the discourse of sedition from the Indian Empire. In

[103] Change in policies suggested by Dalhousie and Canning had a greater impact on "two main classes of natives"—Hindus and Muslims. The replacement of Christendom seemed "unintelligible" to them. Hindus could not appreciate the curb of the polygamy of "certain classes of Brahmins" and feared that English babus would corrupt Bengal. At the same time, Muslims were alarmed at the deposing of the Nawab of Awadh, the devastation of Delhi, and the loss of elite employment (Robb, 2007: 1696).

[104] Ahmed Oolah and Ahmadullah are different spellings used in colonial archive for the Moulavi.

colonial documentation, Ahmed Oollah was presented as a notorious Wahhabi preacher charged with sedition. This case also explains the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion—convict search, look out for suspects and their subsequent convictions. In July 1869, the Chief Commissioner of Police of Raipur received instructions from the Secretary to the Government, Military Department, to pursue and arrest a fugitive for sedition.[105] The police were ordered to look out for a man who had a scar on his head. The description of the man suggested that he was wounded with a distinct cut visible on his head fighting against the British during the Mutiny. It was reported that for some years he had his head-quarters at Kamptee. But he, it was presented, wandered from place to place. Consequently, his character and behaviour were kept under watch, and his activities monitored. From different provinces his accounts were recounted and read upon to regulate any sense of rebellion in future. Each action of the Moulvie was recorded by the government in great detail with the help of a designated local Indian man. It is surprising that the authority did not have proper knowledge of his crime and even his physical description. It was through letters that he was identified as Moulvie Ahmed Oollah. The first intimation regarding his character was conveyed in a circular from Army Head Quarters, Madras. The communication described his appearance warning that his "object is to stir up the sepoys of the army to sedition" and that he was "engaged in travelling from place to place where Madras Regiments are stationed, and carrying on seditious communication."[106]After a long watch out—of twelve years—the police found out a man whose appearance was to "tally so well" with the description provided by the military authority. The suspect, with a scar on his head, had reached Raipur on 16September 1869. Since then, the man was kept under surveillance and each of his steps was recorded with minute observation. Consequently, on 25 September he was seen conversing with "'Mohammedans' of the 'Wahabi' sect" and the following day the police received information that the Moulvie was found making preparation to move to somewhere from Raipur. The original idea was to capture him after he had started his journey but the idea was rejected and he was captured to be convicted and deported to the Andamans. That information called for an immediate action by the

[105] Vide letter No. 161, 13 May 1869. From Special Deputy Inspector of Police, Lower Provinces; noted in the Proceedings of the Madras Government, 13 July 1869, page 27. NAI PB.

[106] Letter No. 4585, 30 September 1869. From J.W. Chisholm, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur to Colonel J.G. Balmain, Commissioner, Chutteesghur Division. NAI PB.

police. Hence, in few hours he was captured and arrested on the ground of sedition on 27 September 1869.[107]

Upon arrest, Moulvie Ahmed Oollah submitted that he was a trader of horns and hides. He stated that he was on a religious pilgrimage to Mecca but due to ill-health, he spent a year at Saugor and then returned to Bhopal. He settled down there keeping a hardware shop. After that he went to Kamptee and had been there since. He used to move from place to place to arrange material for trading. During the time of his arrest, there was, in fact, no concrete proof of his crime. To prove that he was potentially dangerous and could cause a rebellion the Government evoked his concocted past. The police gathered information by an agent that his preaching had once caused disturbance at Vellore. Further, three years prior to this incident, he was held responsible for another agitation in the 11th Madras Native Infantry at Berhampore. It was said that both the times he had escaped the scene after instigating his followers. On the basis of such information gathered from local sources he was convicted as a state prisoner and deported.

Peter Robb suggests during the trials of Ahmadullah (before the Sessions Judge in Patna, and on appeal to the High Court in Calcutta), there was a controversy regarding whether he could be charged with 'waging war' in respect of acts occurring outside British territory, a charge on which he was convicted on other grounds. It was admitted by the Defense Counsel that Ahmadullah was 'a subject of the British Government.' It followed British law that he, therefore, owed a 'public servant.'[108] Hence Ahmadullah was liable for offences against the Penal Code, such as aiding the 'rebels', whether or not the rebellion took place within British India—under a "secular" definition, rebellion was a breach of the allegiance a 'subject' owed, and at the same time he was permitted to lead a sophisticated lifestyle. By this time they had actually foreshadowed the involvement of these religious and peasant communities. After Ahmadullah's conviction, T.E. Ravenshaw, the Magistrate of Patna, who was placed on special duty for the investigation and prosecution of the case, called in the

[107] Ibid.

[108] Oolah served on several government bodies. He was a member of the Patna Committee of Public Instruction, and was a Deputy Collector and Income Tax Assessor 'despite having been arrested on suspicion of disloyalty in 1857.'

witness and 'carefully explained' to them 'the error they had committed.'[109] He told them that "although the Government had made no possible wish or intention of interfering with the religious opinions, yet the open preaching of sedition and any overt acts of hostility would not fail to be taken serious notice of, and I warned them to publish in their villages and among their sect the result of the late prosecution" (167)

After capture and trial, consequently, on the charge of sedition, on 25 April 1859, Moulvie Ahmedullah was sentenced for transportation and he reached the Andaman penal settlement in January 1860. After completing a life-term, he filed a series of petitions for repatriation. He even got recommendations from almost all the serving superintendents of the jail. The recommendation of Home Secretary, Alexender Mackenzie, is significant among other recommendations. In his "Memorandum" he writes, "He is a man of much Oriental culture, and wishes to earn his bread by literary work in India…. He has been for past twenty-seven years a quiet well-behaved prisoner, and always ready to give assistance to the officers of Government" ("Note on Mr. Mackenzi's Memorandum on Port Blair"). He further insists on recommending his name for consideration stating "I do not believe that any harm could result from allowing him to live at Calcutta, reporting himself weekly to the Deputy Commissioner of Police." (Ibid.) For his failing health and good conduct throughout his term, the superintendents had always fovoured his petitions, but they were repeatedly rejected by the Government in anticipation of his instigating people. The usual term at the Andamans during this period was 20 years, but Ala-ud-Din, as records suggest, stayed there for at least thirty years. There is no record further, of his repatriation or death. Several reasons were cited for the rejection of his repatriation, viz., Shiah-Sunni fight and Sir Salar Jung's disapproval, and recommendation of Andaman authorities about his repatriation could convince the Government. For instance, one of the petitions was rejected stating, "I am Sorry for the Moulvie who seems to have merited the approbation of yourself and others by his good conduct, but politics is a live-edged tool and dangerous to handle" (sic).[110]There are even cases

[109] Witnesses were being paid a good sum of money to produce forged documents or give false statements. See Peter Robb (2007) for further details.

[110] Extract from MacDonnell's letter to Colonel T. Cadok R, C. Supdt, Port Blair, 28 June 1886. NAI PB.

where convicts were arrested and transported beyond the sea just after the Mutiny. These convicts were often found to be leading a crime scene and documents suggest that they were seldom repatriated. Moulvie Ala-ud-Din's case is prominent in this light. He was accused of leading an attack on the Residency at Hyderabad. His files present the trajectory of the rebellion and his condition at the Andamans after Mutiny and subsequent transportation.

This case evokes several important questions about the colonial administration: Why was an 1857 convict detained even after twenty-seven years of imprisonment? What was the imminent danger perceived? On 7 February 1871, he was granted "Ticket of Leave"[111] that permitted him to reside at large within the limits of Port Blair Settlement. Punishment and correction have succeeded here to a significant extent as he holds behaviour certificates from almost all officers of the settlement. How and under what circumstances was his correspondence regulated? What regulations, on such a docile convict who was approaching his old age fast, can be undertaken? What challenges would the Government face if he was approved of a residency at Calcutta? The chances and predictions are many. It was apprehended that firstly, his status as an 1857 convict was sufficient to command leadership and it could lead to a further rebellion. Secondly, with Rs. 50 a month from Nizam's Government, he could gain a celebrity status among others who supported the Mutiny and could inspire people for protests. And he could also utilise this money and image against the Empire. Thirdly, as he is described in letters as a man possessing "Oriental culture, and wishes to earn his bread by literary work in India" he could generate a large community of rebels against the British drawing on his indigenous culture through the dissemination of protests on the narrative space. Writing and literary activities here, thus, become another threat invoking agitation. Therefore, with the fact that it took twelve years after the rebellion to identify and capture Moulvie Oollah and on the other hand, even 30 years after the transportation Moulvie Ala-ud-Din was never repatriated, there was

[111] According to the Andaman Manual, every ordinary prisoner, after passing an initial stage of five years in hard labour in the 3rd class could be promoted to the second class if his/her conduct was recorded satisfactory. On promotion such prisoners could be granted an allowance of 12 annas a month added to other daily requirements and a pay. And after ten years they became free settlers when they could get a profession and have a family. Getting into this stage a prisoner is said to be on "Ticket of Leave."

a higher political agenda that prevailed in the colonial period other than the aim of correcting the convicts as colonial documents project.

These early accounts present an insight into the working of the penal settlement in the early days of the settlement, starting 1858. These are the documents that narrate a history of penal servitude surrounded by penal favours and fortune. Muhammad Jafar Thanesari, Moulvie Ala-ud-in and Dudhnath Tewarry are the convicts whose fortune shined after transportation. But, during the same stretch of time, the other two convicts' narratives are different. They were never sent back, and while waiting which they breathed their last. Numerous petitions and letters were written that show the culture of servitude. Although they do not show stricture in punishment, an additional political plot, possibly from 'mainland' grips these case files. Specially the case of Ahmadullah focuses on the political dimension of transportation and repatriation. When the present section is an integral part to understand how convicts were captured and transported to the penal settlement making it a convict society, the next section explore how 'political' prisoners perceived the events that occurred during the first half of twentieth century in the settlement.

Accounts of the Political Prisoners

Andaman culture of penal inequality, penal favours and perpetual servitude is a chapter that cannot be found in the colonist texts, and the deep impact of it can only be located from the first-hand narration of native convicts who experienced the trauma of penal servitude. A handful of penal texts are available to locate the culture of servitude and condition of life in the Cellular Jail, and significant among them are autobiographies of political prisoners. A significant form of resistance, applauded by a sense of nationalist reconstruction, was recorded by a few political prisoners who composed their autobiographies after their period of penal detention. A growing national consciousness is visible in their writing—self-critical and self-analytical—which cannot be articulated in any other form of penal documentation but autobiographies. So during or after the penal servitude political prisoners wrote their autobiographies that serve as a distinct category of document to present a narrative history of the penal culture. And these autobiographies suggest a growing need for nationalism and national consciousness during this period.

Penal autobiographies as alternative source-material of history claim that in the name of 'civilizing' the convicts the Administration extracted work from the prisoners to increase their industrial productivity and decrease the cost of living at the Andamans. Convicts, specifically the ordinary ones, were rewarded in rank with time and service as the last section gives ample number of exemplary prisoners. Not only were they provided with jobs, they were also promoted according to their faithfulness towards the Empire. A convict after five years of penal punishment was allowed to work outside in the open space, and after ten years of extra-mural labour, a convict could become a free settler.[112] But political prisoners received solitary confinement for the entire duration of their sentence and were never promoted. N. Iqbal Singh notes: "It frequently happens that men of notoriously bad conduct are liberated at the expiration of a limited period of transportation, whilst others, whose general conduct is perhaps unexceptional, are doomed to servitude till the end of their lives" (1978: 74). It is earlier stated that to be naked to be cleaned up in front of other fellow prisoners, timely urination and excreting according to penal discipline are subjects, the implication of which the autobiographical literatures possibly narrate better. This treatment hampered their self-respect and led to a serious self-critical analysis of penal misfortune. There are narratives of such degraded treatment which flow through autobiographies of the political prisoners. The manual jobs they were forced to do were coir-pounding, oil-grinding, etc., also possess a history of penal work-force desired for productivity. Satadru Sen claims in *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands* (2000) that to rule over thousands of rebel convicts and the indigenous Andamanese, the colonial Administrators devised a complex order of punishment and reward, control and patronage through the systems of labour, segregation, surveillance, medical supervision, and family-based rehabilitation (30). Political prisoners were considered privileged and at the same time they were an alternative category of prisoners deprived of all penal favours. The incidences narrated by these political prisoners sharply contrast with the idea of reformation projected by the imperial Government.

[112] It is earlier stated that according to the Andaman Manual, every ordinary prisoner, after passing an initial stage of five years in hard labour in the 3rd class could be promoted to the second class if his/her conduct was recorded satisfactory. On promotion such prisoners could be granted an allowance of 12 annas a month added to other daily requirements and a pay. And after ten years they became free settlers when they could get a profession and have a family.

Trilokya Nath Chakravorty wrote his autobiography in Bengali which was later translated into English by Nirod Datta as *Thirty Years in Prison: Sensational Confessions of Revolutionary* (1963). He records incidences starting from the partition of Bengal on 16 October 1905[113] till 1921 repatriation of a few political prisoners. Being an active member of the Anushilan Samity, he narrates the incidences that took place during the time. He recounts from his memory how they would recruit members to work with the Samity. He remembers that first of all the concerned person's movements would be observed carefully, then they would befriend the person, then he would be given history texts relating to revolution to read, and finally when his discussion satisfied them they would ask him to join the group. They had to follow proper protocols to offer membership to a new person. These tactics and serious observation of the situation intensified a revolutionary zeal in them. He focuses more about the unhygienic condition of the Cellular Jail and provides detailed information of the place. He states: "An earthen pot would be supplied in each cell at night. Its capacity would not exceed one seer. Anyone wanting to pass stool would have to search for the pot in the darkness first and locating its mouth would pass urine and stool one after the other" (1963: 123). And even if with such a system the floor was soiled, that place would be cleaned once in two to three months and if the sweeper or scavenger would report about this act of nuisance, the prisoner would be punished (Ibid. 124).

Autobiographical narratives of political prisoners are key texts that project the colonial archive from a native point of view. Barindra Kumar Ghose, in his autobiography *Dwipantarer Katha* (1920), written six decades after the penal settlement was established in the Andamans and later translated into English as *The Tale of My Exile*, projects all the more that the jail atmosphere was vicious and the jail itself provoked "unnatural crimes" to happen. He defines the state of convicts as "there was no such thing as gentleman, not even perhaps a thing as man, here were only convicts" (46). With the process of disciplining, they inserted shame and fear in

[113] He argues that the national movement originated from the anti-partition movement in Bengal and the leaders had the aim of undoing this partition with minor reformation of the administration. He clarifies that the youths had greater aims—they wanted full independence for the country (1963:90).

the prisoners as the jailers were the lowest kind of 'brute force.' He recounts: "When it becomes physically impossible to grind out 30 lbs of oil, one is forced to seek the aid of the more robust ruffians in order to avoid punishment and that means to sell, in return, one's body for the most abject end" (108). Without parents, wife and children they became lonely, yearned for love and affection, and he writes: "The want of home influence, the shutting of all ways of natural satisfaction turns a man gradually into a sheer brute" (109). They suffered physical as well as emotional breakdown due to this putrid atmosphere of 'sin,' 'vice,' and 'misery.' Ghose preached for the need of a religious life, which he perceived, to be the only immediate solace to the miserable life: "There are a thousand ways in the prison leading to vice, but not the least arrangement to instill knowledge, to evoke the higher susceptibilities" and "…the prison shuts out all these wholesome influences and opens to the unfortunate prisoner the gate of heaven or hell?" (127). The natural 'hunger' of the mind and body could not be repressed by prison rules and constant supervision. This autobiography is a record of the lives of prisoners in the Andamans though he does not take an inclusive perspective towards other prisoners. Among them resided murderous and petty criminals, habitual offenders such as thugs, infanticide mothers, maniacs and criminals labelled by the colonial court, serving for the benefit of the Empire.

On the one hand, Ghose distinguishes a lot between these two categories of convicts and on the other, he looks down upon them as "real criminals" having no sense of nationalist or patriotic feeling. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's autobiography *My Transportation for Life* (1927) takes a similar perspective. He presents the dehumanized condition of the educated convicts and exclaims: "What a heavy price this, to pay for bare existence!" (12). Earlier it is stated that a new class of Indian yet colonial convict was formed who constantly proved their superiority to the political prisoners, and all autobiographical narratives present a section on the issue at length. Bhai Parmanand, in his *The Story of My Life* (2003), talks about promotion in the jails and claims:

> The whole system is worked by the convicts themselves. Though these convicts come here as exiles to work out their terms, little of happiness they get and their being clothed with some authority over their fellows convert them into such trustworthy servants of the jail administration that they come to

> regard their erstwhile companions as their enemies…at a nod from them, are ready in order to please them, even to take their lives. (103)

There is a constant interaction of institutionalized power among different classes of convicts which autobiographical narratives present in detail. While less educated hard convicts enjoyed "power" over the educated political prisoners as *tandeels* and *jamadars*, there is a gradual development of a relatively oppositional society presenting the criminal culture. Consequently, set against the backdrop of Sepoy Mutiny, the very consciousness of nationalism took its inception in the settlement and it gradually matured to what can be termed as 'militant' nationalism in detention which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Savarkar presents that despite several attempts to conceal the administrative flaws, the jail authority started receiving complaints with regard to the treatment meted out to the political prisoners in the penal settlement in large numbers. The cases of a young prisoner from Bengal Indu Bhusan Roy who committed suicide in 1912 and Ullaskar Dutt, convicted in Alipore Conspiracy Case who turned insane owing to penal torture, became political issues in "mainland" India. On 11 June he absolutely refused work, saying that he had come to the conclusion that all forced labour was degrading. The district judge gave him a day to reconsider his position. But the next day he again refused to work, so he was awarded three months of solitary confinement as punishment for refusal to work. Again as he refused to work absolutely, he was given seven days' standing handcuffs. From 16 June, Dutt fell ill and gradually developed symptoms of insanity, and on 17 August he was considered as 'undoubtedly insane,' and the form of insanity was declared as 'melancholia.' Till 12 October his mental condition did not change.[114] So, his father filed a petition. The petition was filed for Ullaskar Dutt's transfer to India to facilitate his recovery.[115] Dutt's narrative of his experience is historical with an element of romanticized account of his insanity. He narrates in his autobiography *Twelve Years of Prison Life* (1924): "When I went to my cell in the evening at last, it appeared almost doubtful as to whether I should rise again next morning to see the dawn of the day, once more to get myself yoked to my

[114] Nos 11-31. "Statement of Ullaskar Dutt's Case." Political B. December 1912. NAI PB.

[115] Vide Telegram no. 929, 17 October 1912. "From The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Superintendent, Port Blair." NAI ND.

harness as before and go through the self-same drudgery" (30). Even during his illness he was locked up in his cell—chained and fettered—for ten days. Dutt was later shifted to an asylum for treatment. But there was more torture in store. He was given shocks numerous times and he recollects that the effect of battery charge "was indeed very serious on my system; so much so that I felt as though my whole physical frame was being shaken to its very roots, and I was passing through a most fearful critical period of my life…Seemed to cut asunder all nerves and sinews, most mercilessly" (70). Consequent upon these incidents, Ladha Ram, the editor of *Swarajya*, went on hunger strike, and between 1913 and 1914 the jail saw further protests. *India*, a newspaper published from London, on 15 January 1915, reported,

> In our view, no political prisoners should have been sent to the Andamans at all. The penal settlement there is a hideous blunder: and its continued existence is entirely out of keeping with modern ideas of jail administration….It is altogether wrong to assign to the same category men whose offence has been to write a "seditious" article or to dispatch a 'seditious' telegram.[116]

The issue drew attention of the Viceroy that resulted in abolition of bar fetters. By 1919-20 the Indian Jail Committee was appointed and it suggested the closure of the settlement altogether and repatriation of all the prisoners to 'mainland' by 1921.Transportation was stopped with the Jails Committee's recommendation, but it resumed in 1932 after the Government realized the need of transporting the 'militant prisoners' from Bengal where a series of revolutionary activities drew attention of the Empire.

During this period, while Gandhi was leading the freedom movement through a non-violent and peaceful negotiation with the British government, Savarkar in his autobiography questions Gandhi's leadership by calling the "militants" who were under penal detention the actual leaders leading the freedom struggle with endurance of all pains. He writes: "They had not a tear to shed for us, seated as they are in the spacious, airy and well-appointed pandal of the Indian National Congress—for us who were, in contrast, doomed to spend our lives in a dark dungeon, away from our

[116] Record Nos. 141-142, 15 January 1915, Home (Political A), NAI ND.

hearths and homes, and in solitary confinement!" (1927: 218). Savarkar declares his dissatisfaction towards the Congress Working Committee led by Gandhi and its guiding principles. He further defends their act of taking to arms stating: "Our petition, like all other petitions before it, went for nothing; and strike was the weapon we decided to employ" (130). Similarly, Bhai Parmanand comments: "The belief that if we fill the jails, the Government would grow tired of the struggle and accede to our demands was at best but childish" (2003: 165).

The treatment meted out to the political prisoners was different from the treatment of the ordinary prisoners. Some convicts, such as V.D. Savarkar and others were categorized as 'D' – 'D' stood for 'dangerous' – and penal servitude was likewise. Autobiographical sources claim that in the name of 'civilizing' the convicts they extracted work from the prisoners to increase their industrial productivity and decrease the cost of living at the Andamans. Convicts, specifically the ordinary ones, were rewarded in rank with time and service. Not only were they provided with jobs, they were also promoted according to their faithfulness and sincerity towards the Empire. The convict culture witnessed was that of penal inequality, penal favours and perpetual servitude. These systems played a major role in the formation of an alternative site, remote from the mainland, against the moral and social codes of conduct, at large. Moreover, the elite Hindu prisoners were also intimidated with the presence of the Muslim warders, who as convict officers could have their say over the educated prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular Jail. In most cases, Muslim prisoners, as Parmanand states "proverbially cruel and merciless" (2003: 24) were made warders to govern the Hindu prisoners. In case of Indian jails, it was taken note of whether a prisoner was seditionist or ordinary. So that treatment would be meted out to them accordingly. If the prisoner happened to be a 'seditionist,' he would be provided special European warder, failing which Gurkha warders were to be employed. Ujjwal K. Singh notes the changes that occurred after inception of 'militant' nationalism in India, and changes that followed in the jail structures and administrative affairs. For the first time in the history of the modern prison system jail had been converted into political prison. A portion of the Hazirabagh Central Jail was temporarily converted

into a political prison.[117] Also cells were built to accommodate the political prisoners of Lahore Conspiracy Case. Interestingly, the jail administration followed certain guidelines related to furniture and space to suit the requirements of the *bhadralok* prisoners.[118] T.R. Metcalf rightly asserts; "Its material consequences were minor by comparison with its impact on the mind" (quoted in Robb, 2007: 1696). This segregation had become fate for the educated mass of prisoners who took to hunger strike and presented their agony before the mainland which was later stimulated as various political movements for their repatriation.

The autobiographical records in question show the lives of political prisoners and take an exclusive perspective towards the cause of 'freedom struggle.' They provide an idea of penal suffering the political prisoners received and the quality of life they lived. They not only project voices against the colonial hegemony, they also hint at an inner conflict—the conflict between 'militant' nationalists and the neo-liberal leaders. Within colonial modernity, a truly alternative site of nationalism came into origin in the Indian Empire and its boundary is blurred even today. The colonial archive presents the formation of a non-mainstream convict society that resisted legal and cultural norms to the maximum for the patronage of human life in such a subversive cultural space. Alternatively, however, what the autobiographies in question condemn is ill-treatment of convicts in general. While the political prisoners claimed that the Andamans was the toughest jail in the whole of Empire, there is literature in colonial representation that presents the Andamans as a relatively 'freer' penal space. Autobiographies reveal that the settlement provided no opportunity for the political prisoners, unlike the other ordinary ones, as they seemed to have projected. Political prisoners as a class do not have a particular definition other than their crimes related to politics but they suffered more than hardened criminals in the Cellular Jail. Ujjwal K. Singh defines prison as a stage to showcase the power of the colonial state and a place where "the colonized lost and found their freedom," and terms it as "an already

[117] Vide Letter 26 February 1917, from Financial Secretary to the Government of B&O to the GoI, Home Department on the proposed expenses for the structural alterations. File no. 365, Poll (Special), 1918, BSA, p. 25. NAI ND.

[118] File nos. 490-509, H (P), part A, July 1917, NAI ND.

politicized space" (1998: 7).[119] For V.D. Savarkar, Barindra Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt and Bhai Parmanand, the Cellular Jail became a political platform. Their ideology was shaped in 'mainland,' but it culminated as a political theory after transportation. Their life-narration became a weapon after their repatriation that tells about their sacrifice and love for their country. Their petitions and the subject of repatriation were highly debated topics though, the demand of their repatriation proved their strength and role in the Indian nationalist discourse.

Conclusion

This system—of punishment for "correction"—played a major role in the formation of an alternative site, remote from the 'mainland' India, against the moral and social codes of conduct at large. And this suppression had become fate for the educated mass of prisoners who took to hunger strike and presented their agony before the 'mainland' which was later stimulated with various political movements for their repatriation. Labeled militants, at the Andamans, these convict-nationalists took to hunger strike to protest against the Empire and in the 'mainland,' liberal nationalists like Gandhi and Nehru were trying to combat with "terrorism" that emerged among their compatriots. There came a conflict in the way "Nationalism" in Gandhian nationalist discourse was defined. Consequently, with ideological conflict and lack of patronage, Andaman penal texts are, to a great extent, sidelined owing to their non-conformist stand against the popular nationalist discourse. Other associated problems in postcolonial narratology accelerate the neglect as well. Savarkar's remaking of 'Hindu nationalism,' a critical development canonized as 'Hindu fundamentalism,' may be cited as an instance. Due to lack of relative or standard criticism and negation of political/academic patronage, locating the colonial penal texts is a problematic site of critical scholarship, and the scholarship emphatically contributes to colonial historiography.

[119] Singh suggests that jail had become a politicized space after jail-going as a political act became a part of Gandhian mass movement. Gandhi and his supporters moved to jails to bring to notice the Government of their anti-colonial struggle for independence. Even before Gandhi, this strategy was taken up by the 1857 rebels, though the consciousness for such an act is not highly institutionalized.

Though colonial documentation on the governance of the settlement is ample, corresponding materials like case files or court proceedings, memoirs or diary entries that could throw light on the settlement are rarely recorded. As colonial records, autobiographies of the prisoners—chiefly political prisoners who composed them after their release—are key native texts that provide an alternative account of the lives of the prisoners transported to the Andamans. These texts account the events and happenings in the settlement which later triggered as counter events in the settlement and became a significant chapter of colonial historiography in the 'mainland' as well.

The discourse of Indian struggle for Independence often finds its genesis in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Although the veracity and audacity of the movement are questionable, it still grips the intelligentsia to consider it as the starting point. So variedly is 1857 depicted in a number of texts that it seems to justify its significance and Savarkar's claim of it being 'The First War of Independence.' This rebellion had established British crown in the Indian subcontinent and glorification of British victory over native Indians run through the texts. But a fear of the loss of power and monopoly in trade was also at pace. This sense of fear was translated into the inhume punishment imposed upon the political prisoners resulting in a full-scale resistance against colonial penal culture and communication. Though their resistance constituted a struggle for individualism, it entailed a fledgling movement which later on evolved as the universal struggle for Indian independence merging together imperialism, the Andamans penal narratives and Indian nationalist discourse.

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Record No. 13, 29 July 1862 (Home). NAI PB.

Government of Bengal, Judicial Department Proceeding, September 1862. Proceeding no 13/8. NAI PB.

Letter No. 4585, 30 September 1869. From J.W. Chisholm, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur to Colonel J.G. Balmain, Commissioner, Chutteesghur Division. He writes, "The District Superintendent had men secretely placed to watch the Moulvie and on the 26th we were informed that he was making preparations for a start."

Record No. 637. Home Department Proceedings, NAI. December 1873. 637. PB.

Letter to Saraj al-Din Ahmed, 31 January 1832, in Wazir al-Hassan 'Abidi (ed.), Pankaj Ahang. Lahawr 1969, 335.

Letter No. 161, 13 May 1869. "From Special Deputy Inspector of Police, Lower Provinces." Proceedings of the Madras Government, 13 July 1869. NAI PB.

Letter No. 4585, 30 September 1869. From J.W. Chisholm, Deputy Commissioner, Raipur to Colonel J.G. Balmain, Commissioner, Chutteesghur Division. NAI PB.

"Extract from MacDonnell's letter to Colonel T. Cadok R, C. Supdt, Port Blair." 28 June 1886. NAI PB.

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Telegram no. 929, 17 October 1912. “From The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Superintendent, Port Blair.” NAI ND.

Record Nos. 141-142, 15 January 1915, Home (Political A), NAI ND.

File no. 365, Poll (Special), 1918. Letter 26 February 1917. “From Financial Secretary to the Government of B&O to the GoI, Home Department on the proposed expenses for the structural alterations.” NAI ND.

File nos. 490-509, H (P), part A, July 1917, NAI ND.

Chapter 4

Nationalizing Hunger Strikes in the Andamans

Abstract: Between 1910 and 1937, devoid of penal favours and united owing to the denial of repatriation, several 'elite' prisoners in the Andaman penal settlement took to the path of resistance through multiple hunger strikes and denial for work. Through the hunger strikes by convicts imprisoned in the Cellular Jail, an elaborate form of penal voice echoed in the Empire. Significant among them is the 1937 hunger strike that redefined nationalism in the Indian context. These events drew mass adherence and were intended towards political recognition. This chapter focuses on recurrent hunger strikes during the early decades of the twentieth century in the settlement, and subsequent effects of it as witnessed in India that brought forth feminine sensibilities within the revolutionary ideals which in turn brought women revolutionists within the Indian nationalist discourse. Divided into three sections—"Hunger strikes in the Andamans: Politics and Praxis," "Locating Hunger Strikes in Indian Nationalist Movement," "Politics of the Other," it argues that hunger strikes in the Andamans were mediated by personal and political motives and are institutionalized in the Indian nationalist discourse.

Key Words: Hunger Strike; Passive Resistance; Nationalism.

Introduction

From the establishment of the penal settlement in 1858 to the repatriation of political prisoners, the Empire built an elaborate system of convict management in the penal site. The archival and native documents pertaining to Andaman Penal Settlement set forth stories of struggle and counter resistance against the Imperial Government. They bring to light the institutionalization of the Andaman penal settlement after the transportation of political prisoners. The use of hunger strike, a nonviolent action as an effective technique, had become significant to enforce the prisoners' demands in the penal settlement. The means to force individual body as a weapon in resistance is perceived as a self-sacrificial act and appeals to the prisoners' own community and

further the act of resistance is capable of generating public sentiments in Indian struggle for freedom.

The political prisoners transported to the Andamans had tarnished their self-image as 'terrorists' both at home and abroad. To revive their image was not an easy task under the strict supervision of Andaman authorities. Moreover, the political prisoners separated and segregated from other prisoners in the penal settlement had limited choice in comparison to other prisoners of the Islands. To put forth their personal demand and to initiate a change the political prisoners took to hunger strike. It became a weapon to force personal demands and later to force public demand. Further given a political shape the personal demand and public demand collectively conjoined into a national demand. From personal to political, 'hunger strike' was used as a political strategy not only to put forth prisoners' issues but also to enforce an immediate action keeping in view the personal/collective demand that was published. While on the one hand, such a resistance act was within the projected pan-Indian ideology of passive resistance and practice of non-violence, on the other it became an effective means of coercion to enforce a change in law and policies in favour of the oppressed.

Why was 'hunger strike' a chosen means of resistance in the Cellular Jail which was in fact self-destructive in nature? How was a non-violent method of resistance made an effective means of coercion? How would this alternate strategy of minority prisoners counter the political policies and practices of the majority? How could the self-inflicted pain – looked down upon as 'feminine' and 'passive' – become an effective tool against the 'masculine' and 'aggressive' power of the colonial rulers and how could it compel the Gandhian frontiers to negotiate its cause? In Andaman chapter, hunger strike as a political weapon involved the personal body of the convict to project emotional angst and to generate sympathy and 'religious' identification so that it could be extended to the national cause. Once their personal sentiment is fused with that of the public and becomes a national sentiment, it has a cathartic effect in mobilising public opinion for political prisoners 'defamed' at home. In addition, the strategic exile became central to generate sentimental effect through public support. It is the cause behind the act that mattered in projecting the absence of violence in Indian nationalist discourse. Public mobilisation would have been difficult with personal cause. Hence once the individual demand is raised to the demand of the

collective, the cause gaining a larger national perspective comes to the fore. It is the act in itself and the associated objectives within its social implications and wider social dynamics that gave a major boost to individual/private sentiment and helped converting it into a national sentiment.

In the Andaman chapter, hunger strike used by political prisoners for personal demand was later collectively joined to formulate public demand. The campaign, taking shape from personal to public, increased publicity of their cause gaining political recognition by evoking strong emotional pulls from within and outside the prison. The image of the Andaman prisoners in extension gained a symbolic image as prisoners for the natives living in the 'mainland' under colonial subjugation. So in what follows a series of hunger strikes of the political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans is contextualized to understand how their cause along with the Andamans are integrated in national struggle for independence.

Hunger strikes in Andamans: Politics and Praxis

The first organized hunger strike of 1912 was a direct result of the political status by prisoners convicted under the charges of 'terrorism,' 'sedition' and political mobilisation which held that those so convicted should be treated in separation from ordinary criminals. Those interned were of special category status but were not granted special privileges as were practised in 'mainland' prisons. Initially, the political prisoners had responded through individual protests which failed to draw attention of their co-prisoners and of the Government. Hence the method and approach of resistance witnessed a serious transgression and the shift intended had to generate public support. This was a possibility only with a change in attitude and objective of the campaigners. Mobilising support among co-prisoners demanded a collective objective. And in making themselves a symbol and representative of the 'oppressed native' did the political prisoners uplift their image and objective to national level and thereby claimed political status and privileges. In short, from personal to political, 'hunger strike' was used as a political strategy not only to put forth one's issues but also to enforce an immediate action keeping in view the personal/collective demand that was published. While on the one hand, such a resistance act was within the projected pan-Indian ideology and practice of non-

violence and on the other it became an effective means of coercion to enforce a change in laws and policies in favour of the oppressed.

After the partition of Bengal (1905) and the formation of Muslim League (1906), people in India believed that freedom cannot be achieved by passive methods of resistance, and there was a growing need of strong blow to the Government's economy. One of the methods applied for this was boycott of all British goods. This becomes the first ever expression of aggression of the native population against British policies. In public utterances, Gangadhar Tilak and Sri Aurobindo preached bloodless revolution, but silently rather secretly supported nonviolent substance through armed agitations. For instance, the speeches delivered by Aurobindo Ghose were thought to instigate the common people to unite and agitate. One speech reads: "The storm that swept over us, sweeping over the national edifice that we were rearing over the mother…it is the hammar of God that is beating upon us to build this nation into a mighty and a perfect instrument for His purpose."[120]

Movements during the freedom struggle for independence, such as *Swadeshi*, *Satyagraha* and the Non-cooperation Movement, became founding stones of India's freedom movement. The *Swadeshi* movement (1905) was undertaken directly opposing Bengal partition whereas *Satyagraha* movement that was first undertaken for the farmers in Champaran (1917). The Non-cooperation Movement (1920) was undertaken for protesting against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919).[121] The Non-cooperation movement that was withdrawn in fear of violent showcase of agitation by Indians was responsible for significant loss of trust in the Congress. It was a massive success since it united the people of the nation, at least young nationalists, who had supported its cause and who later parted ways from the Congress after its failure of the movement. In 1914, Anne Besant founded her weekly paper *The Commonweal*

[120] Speech delivered by Aurobindo Ghose on 19 June at the District Conference at Jhalakati. Record No. 338C. 21 June 1909. From W.J. Reid, to the Govt. Of Eastern Bengal and Assam. NAI ND.

[121] See Raja Ram's *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: A Premeditated Plan.* (Punjab University Publication Bureau: Punjab, 1969). Also see Ramesh C. Majumdar's *History of the Freedom Movement in India*. (Vol 2. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay: Calcutta, 1971) and Nigel Collet's *The Butcher of Amritsar: General Reginald Dyer* (Continuum: U.K., 2006).

and daily newspaper *New India* that expressed her clear views regarding political role that Congress adopted, and to discuss social reform and nationalist issues. She claims in an article in *New India* (17 Oct 1914) that Congress drew "little enthusiasm among the Indian people" and argues that the reason was that "Congress continues to move on in exactly the same groove, passing year after year similar resolutions and making little substantial progress."[122] She joined the Indian National Congress in 1914, but found it very inert and moved towards the combination of two groups believing that "in a country ruled by foreigners, their domestic variances were taken advantage of to maintain its [India's] subjugation."[123]Like her, other leaders such as Tilak were also apprehensive of Congress-success in achieving *swarajya*. As expected, a year after the first united struggle to resist colonial policies, first by refusing to buy British goods and then by adopting the use Indian handicrafts, Gandhi withdrew the Non-cooperation Movement in 1922. This created oppositional ideas among the members of the Indian National Congress. Consequently, trust on Gokhle, who advocated reforms by working with existing British Empire and Gandhi, who had faith on the British way of administering India, shook to the maximum thereby giving rise to ideological clash among its members. Demand of home rule or self-rule or *Swaraj* was replaced by a demand of *purna-swaraj* or complete self-rule by 1929. The 'extremist' leaders argued that the demand of self-government as carried forward by the Congress was not complete independence. The Congress was thus divided into moderates and extremists based on ideological differences. The moderates sketched out a nonviolent approach whereas those who believed in armed struggle were appropriated as 'extremists' and believed that self-government was the right of people.[124]

It was that crucial time in Indian history when All-India Muslim League (1906) strongly advocated for a separate Muslim-majority nation-state and the then leaders of the Congress party were defining a new consciousness—a neo-national

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[122] Bevir, Mark. "The Formation of the All-India Home Rule League." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 52.3 (1991): 342.

[123] Ibid. 354.

[124] *New India*, 3 March, 1915. As quoted in Bevir, Mark. "The Formation of the All-India Home Rule League." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 52.3 (July-Sept. 1991): 341-356. Also see Sankar Ghose's "The Home Rule Movement" in *The Renaissance to Militant Nationalism in India*. (Allied Publishers: Calcutta, 1969).

consciousness—through various passive movements and organizations, contrasting the militant nationalists' violent methods. On the one hand, Gandhian nationalism strictly followed the concept of non-violence and withdrawal of terrorist ideas from the struggle for India's independence. Any departure from such ideals not only attracted the wrath of the 'liberal' nationalists, they also proved fatal in multiple cases. Bhagat Singh's trial is a case in point (1907-31).[125] On the other hand, there was also a growing popularity and solidarity of the common mass with the political prisoners who, it was concluded, supported arm struggle. The initial steps were taken by revolutionaries such as Aurobindo Ghose, Barindra Kumar Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, B.G. Tilak, V.D. Savarkar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhupendra Dutta and many others, who took to arms and were not part of the liberal nationalist movement. So in what follows we discuss the development of the penal settlement and the way political prisoners—in exceptional circumstances—were transported therein, and took to the path of resistance to redefine political landscape in India.

Significantly, hunger strike was accepted as a means to challenge the government and its asserted role as the sole legitimate form of resistance can be located in Indian nationalist discourse.[126] The counter strategy may be seen as a part of struggle to assert who has legitimate authority and the right to use violence, at will. The sole claim to violence was precisely what political prisoners challenged. And hunger strike was the last resort and political tactic that recalled the power of what was seen as noble tradition.[127] Hunger strike was thus a symbolic act, and its aim was to arouse

[125] Gandhi and other moderate leaders drew their inspiration from English constitutional history, dreamt of achieving self-governance through a peaceful, constitutional and gradual manner (Ghose, 1969, 260).

[126] Gandhi' jail going to support the nationalist leaders' movement and fasting to purify his self are seen as founding stones of resistance in the Indian nationalist discourse.

[127] Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre took place on 13 April 1919 to protest against the arrest of two nationalist leaders Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew who protested against the implementation of Rowlatt Act in March 1919 and sent to Dharamsala. Indians were rallying against this arrest and Under General Dyer's troops fired on the civilians for ten minutes, and hence the famous Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre took place. Under this act the Government could imprison any person suspected of terrorism up to two years without trial and derived authority to deal with revolutionary activities including organized meeting, rallies or any public gathering. The sole objective of the British was to produce sufficient moral effect leading to fear of re-organisation of civilians. Dyer argued that his intention had been to strike terror throughout the Punjab and in doing so, it would reduce the moral stature of the rebels. See Rja Ram's *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: A Premeditated Plan*. (Punjab University, Publication Bureau: Punjab, 1969). See Ramesh C. Majumdar's *History of the Freedom Movement in India*. (Vol 2. Firma K. L.

community sentiment and any suffering ensuing merely would add to the emotional impact pulling people together at emotional level than at rational level. That people could suffer 'self-annihilation' for a noble cause or collective cause of socio-cultural significance implied an intensity of commitment and moral rectitude.

The communal reward depending on the personal recognition within the relevant political community indicates both the importance of the act and its social and personal dimension and implication. The symbiotic relationship between individual and community explains the suffering of an individual and at the same time strongly provokes a communal outpouring and attempts to reconfigure and reconfirm communal existence and ties. Hence in the struggle against self-determination, the political prisoners could demand political recognition and refute the tag of 'criminal' or 'terrorist.' Moreover, the act enables the revolutionists / martyrs to equate themselves with the community or its cause and make them beacon or bearer of communal hope and values, providing them with a mission and meaning that raises their self-esteem and status both in life—personal and political. In self-sacrifice do they project a form of vanity or self-deification which alters the importance and significance of the deified colonial-self.

The decades following 1857 changed the perception of people regarding India as a nation. A national sentiment developed among people gradually. The Black Acts (1849), the Vernacular Press Act (1879) and the Ilbert Bill Controversy (1883) catapulted the existing doubt of the natives upon the British. Ideas and suggestions were put forward for a better governance of the Empire. In the meantime, Swami Vivekananda returned from his first tour of the West in January 1897. His return marks the beginning of the first phase of a socio-cultural revolution in India.[128] With a spiritual outlook Vivekananda preached a nationalist ideal. Sister Nivedita, Lokamanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Lala Lajpat Rai were among the active

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Mukhopadhyay: Calcutta, 1971). And also see Nigel Collet's *The Butcher of Amritsar: General Reginald Dyer* (Continuum: U.K., 2006).

[128] This period is also notorious for two murders. W.C. Rand, the British plague Commissioner of Pune and then Chairman of a special Plague committee and his military escort Lt. Ayerst were murdered by Chapekar brothers, Damodar Hari Chapekar, Balkrishna Hari Chapekar and Vasudeo Hari Chapekar. They were termed the first among 'militant nationalists' in India who resisted the British when Pune was hit by bubonic plague in 1986.

revolutionaries during the end of nineteenth century (Majumdar, 1966).[129] Vivekananda's concern is witnessed from his prophetic speech delivered in Madras on 14 February 1897. He said: "For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our key-note – this our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time from our minds. This the only god that is awake, our own race, everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything."[130] In course of his lecture on "The Work Before Us" Vivekananda said, "Then for good or evil, the English conquest took place. Of course every conquest is bad, for conquest is an evil, foreign Government is an evil no doubt."[131] Vivekananda's speeches implanted a revolutionary thought among the youth. The spiritual, political and social thought of Vivekananda remains a concurrent trend underneath the freedom struggle movement and influenced by such philosophies there grew a satiable desire among youths to reconstruct the nation by gaining independence. There grew a feminine image of the nation as mother India, which was to a greater extent presented as a 'god' and its masculine image was used to counter passive resistance.

Peter Heehs in the introduction to *Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism* (1998) states that India achieved freedom because of four factors: 'legitimate' pressure exerted by public bodies, non-violent passive resistance, violent resistance and global political and economic changes (1). Violent resistance leading to pressure by public on Government becomes the British Empire's possible reason behind formation of several committees and laws that could subvert the violent resistance. Between 1906 and 1910, episodes of violent activities were discovered and the need for independence was understood under circumstances that were different from the earlier ones. From Bengal a call for independence was articulated and patterns of 'revolutionary terrorism' thereby established (ibid. 2). It started with an organised movement against the proposal of division of Bengal in 1904. Mass meetings were organised to address the mobilising issue, but soon Muslim communities dropped out

[129] Majumdar, Bimanbehari. *Militant Nationalism in India and its Socio-Religious Background (1897-1917)*. General Printers & Publishers Pvt Ltd: Calcutta, 1966.

[130] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Centenary Edition) Vol. III. 1907: 300.

[131] Ibid. 271.

of the movement as they were promised predominance over the eastern province.[132] Consequently, a split in the Congress party also was marked. Two sections in one party, different in attitude and method, came up: Extremist and Moderate. Heehs brings out the difference as:

> The Extremists' programme was the attainment of political autonomy, the promotion of swadeshi and the boycott of British goods, and the formation of 'national' institutions in the educational, judicial and other fields. The Moderates hoped for some sort of self-government within the Empire. They promoted Swadeshi but favoured boycott only in the context of the anti-partition movement. Approving of national education in principle, they made it in practice a pale imitation of the British system. In sum, the Extremists aspired for political, economic and cultural independence, the Moderates for an amelioration of India's status as a colonial possession. (Heehs, 1998: 3)

Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Anne Besant initiated a new wing 'extremism' and Aurobindo Ghose became the guiding principle of extremist ideal. Inspired by Vivekananda, Aurobindo wrote in 1907 that the nation "must aim not only at a national government responsible to the people but a free national government unhampered even in the least degree by foreign control."[133] Subash Chandra Bose was also greatly influenced by Vivekananda.[134] The method of articulation of dream to see India free was of course different for Vivekananda and Aurobindo and Subash Bose. Aurobindo and Subhas Bose's thought caused a rift in the Indian National Congress. They strongly adhered to armed struggle which was against the popular discourse of Gandhian nonviolent struggle.

India and the Empire saw numerous assassinations of Englishmen and Indians starting the twentieth century. In 1910 Mrs. and Miss Kennedy were killed by Khudi Ram

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[132] See Peter Heehs' "Religious Nationalism and Communalism." *Nationalism, Terrorism and Communalism* (OUP: New Delhi, 1998. 96-123).

[133] Ghose, Aurobindo. *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Pondicherry, 1966. 18.

[134] For further reference, see Bimanbehari Majumdar's "The Background of Militant Nationalism" in *Militant Nationalism in India and its Socio-Religious Background (1897-1917)*. (General Printers Pvt Ltd.: Calcutta, 1966).

Bose.[135] Followed by this incident, Sub-Inspector Nandlal, who had arrested Khudi Ram Bose, was murdered. Further, Narandra Gosain, the approver in the Alipore Bomb Case, was murdered in the Alipore jail hospital. In 1909 G.D. Savarkar was sentenced to transportation as a political prisoner under Section 124 (A) of the Indian Penal Code on sedition charges for writing inflammatory verses. The verses of G.D. Savarkar called for the country's freedom leading to his transportation. These actions were considered as one of the initial violent activities by the nationalists who were later dubbed as 'militants' or 'terrorists.'[136] There were noted banishments too. In 1907, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh of the Punjab and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were deported to Mandalay to be incarcerated from 1908 till 1914.

Gandhi's views about violent struggle came to the fore in response to Indian activists who had defended terrorist attacks on a British official in the year 1909 in London. The incident occurred when an Indian student in London, Madan Lal Dhingra, attacked Sir William H. Curzon-Wylie, by firing five shots in his face, protesting against British colonial power. He declared afterwards that "he was only fighting for India's freedom, prepared to die, glorying in martyrdom" (qtd. in Hunt 1973:134). At this very point of time, in the year 1909, Savarkar received the reputation of supplying weapons and ammunitions to India to counter the armed British officials.[137]He claimed that the might of the British power could not be diminished by guerrilla warfare that pronounces terrorism and also substantiates violent tactics in the Indian nationalist movement. Gandhi wrote to a friend that, in London "he had met practically no Indian who believed India can ever become free without resorting to violence."[138] He described: "Their plans were first to assassinate a few Englishmen and strike terror, after which a few men who will have been armed will fight openly. Gandhi feared that the methods they used to combat the British would become part of India's national character."[139] (Juergensmeyer, 2007: 32) For Savarkar the goal of

[135] Bose, then an eighteen-year-old young man, was accused of throwing bomb on Mrs and Miss Kennedy at Kingsford. Subsequently, Nandlal, the Sub-Inspector who had arrested Khudiram Bose, was murdered. (For more information, see CWMG 10: 253.)

[136] CWMG 10:253.

[137] Gandhi vs terrorism, 31.

[138] Gandhi's letter to Ampthill, 30 October 1909 (CWMG 9: 509).

[139] Juergensmeyer, Mark. "Gandhi vs. Terrorism." *Daedalus* 36.1. (Winter 2007): 32.

freedom justified the means undertaken—violent or non-violent. But for Gandhi it was a question of final rule. He asks: Even if terrorists were successful in ousting the British from India, he asks, "Who will then rule in their place? Gandhi's subject position varied much from that of Savarkar's and others'. He sincerely believed the ones who, for the country's independence, murder could never ever be in an ethical position to rule India.[140]

Gandhi began his non-violent movement on the edifice built by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. But later, with time, Tilak leaned towards defensive violent methods as he was dissatisfied with Gandhian nonviolent movement that he believed only added cowardice to the movement. Tilak condemned the policy of the Congress as merely a 'petitioning one' promoting mendicancy. In 1904 he wrote: "We will not achieve any success in our labours, if we croak once a year like frog" (*The Kesari*, July 4, 1904). He proposed to take political movement in a new direction since "there is today sufficient reason to change the White man's old idea that the people of Asia will always remain slaves of the foreigners."[141] But Gandhi was of the opinion that any destructive means would negate any positive benefits of a struggle's victory. Only non-violent fight, which is never demoralizing,[142] can assure a vision of truth and positive national character. But Gandhi had also once preached: "Where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence"[143] and heroic violence is less sinful that cowardly nonviolence" (CWMG 14: 505). During this time, when these statements were published, India was already under the grasp of violent methods that would bring freedom. Mark Juergensmeyer assures that Gandhi, to some extent, justified an act of violence to halt an act of terrorism in progress.[144] In *Hind Swaraj* (1909),[145] a book whose narrative structure is a debate between the Editor and the Speaker, where the Editor becomes the mouthpiece of Indian agitating public, and

[140] *Indian Sociologist*, September 1909, quoted in Hunt, Gandhi in London. 134.

[141] *The Kesari*, July 4, 1904.

[142] *Young India*, October 31, 1921.

[143] *Young India*, August 11, 1920.

[144] Juergensmeyer, Mark. "Gandhi vs. Terrorism" (*Daedalus* Winter 2007).

[145] With *Hind Swaraj* Gandhian thought saw a concrete progression. See Parel A. *Hind Swaraj*. (Ed), Cambridge 1997, P XIII. "It has been called a very basic document for the study of Gandhi's thought." See Chatterjee Margaret. *Gandhi's Religious Thought*. London, 1983. 89 for further details.

Gandhi becomes the Speaker defending his position as a nonviolent preacher; with this he had already sent out a message that violence never works as a response to violence but generates further violence.

Gandhi and Savarkar represent two alternatives. While Savarkar defends his position justifying 'militancy,' 'violence' and 'terrorism,' Gandhi's contribution of the idea of self-control and self-realisation to Indian thought remains a positive step for building an ethical nation. While Gandhi tries to contribute for a nation in the making, Savarkar and his allies strongly argue that India was already a nation and it has to be freed from the clutches of the British. Hence, Savarkar's ideology was more anti-imperialist than that of a nationalist's. While the moderates were privileged with a political status, the extremists' path led them to jails as their method terrorised the Empire. They were put behind the bars and most powerful among them—who could inspire further terror—were transported to the Andamans or Mandalay. During this phase, the induction of 'seditionist' and 'political' prisoners starting 1908 introduced exceptional treatment and ways of segregation through labour and religion.

Penal autobiographies suggest they were denied many privileges enjoyed by other prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular Jail. Unlike other prisoners, they had to spend their whole term of imprisonment in solitary confinement. This reformation gave rise to several issues and was perceived as discrimination meted out to the political prisoners. They were neither granted remuneration nor were they employed in extramural labour,[146] and for them a ticket-of-leave was impossible. As communication was strictly monitored and convicts were not allowed to communicate among themselves, transfer of information from one cell to the other was difficult. Hence the atrocities and happenings in the settlement could get little attention of the media and general public till the hunger strikes were carried out. Once it reached mainland, the information was spread widely and highly attended to by the people and resulted in the outrage of public.

[146] It was very difficult for the 'elite' political prisoner to stay in jail premises and do intramural labour. Ghose writes: "There is no arrangement for proper ventilation in these cells, except through a very small skylight. Even a healthy man feels suffocated in such a place and the feeling that one has, when ill and left alone, should better be experienced than described." (1922: 131)

The period between 1932 and 1938 posed threat to the Empire as this was the phase of a strong militant nationalism that circulated in India. After the failure/withdrawal of non-violent Non-cooperation Movement by Gandhi, the Indian National Congress party split into two. Revolutionaries who lost hope in Gandhi and liberal nationalism bifurcated to form Hindustan Republican Association in September 1928 led by Ram Prasad Bismil, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, Batukeswar Dutt and others. Later it was rechristened as Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, and another wing had also come up as Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. These revolutionaries supported and carried out armed movement against the British.[147] So, the Empire had to revisit the idea of deportation in order to stop relatively free communication among 'terrorists' inside and outside the Indian jails, and also to break the information channel between the prisoners and the media. The first information published by Surendranath Banerjee in 1912 gives testimony to the effect of media on public. This shows that media played a vital role, first to spread information and second to instigate rather motivate the public to act. So, despite proposals to close down the settlement and suggestions for change in the policies, it can be assumed that the settlement, in order to prohibit political stir in India, restarted transportation. In 1932 a new batch of twenty-five political prisoners of Chittagong Armoury Raid Case from Bengal was transported. Ironically, the last batch of convicts of this phase transported happens to be convicts again from Chittagong Armoury Raid Case.

Locating Hunger Strikes in Indian Nationalist Discourse

Between 1908 and 1937, devoid of penal favours and denied of repatriation, several 'elite' prisoners in the Andaman penal settlement took to the path of resistance through multiple hunger-strikes and refusal for work. There are instances of resistance

[147] The first ever terrorist form of revolution was witnessed in 1897 when the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balakrishna, murdered W.C. Rand, the British plague Commissioner of Poona. See "Religious Nationalism" in Sankar Ghose's *The Renaissance to Militant Nationalism in India* (1969). It is said that militancy had spread from Maharashtra to Bengal. After some years Bengal became the epicentre of 'militant' activities. Significantly from 1930-1933, twenty-three murders, forty-seven attempts to murder, thirty-six cases of injury, one hundred and sixty-seven robberies, sixteen bomb-throwing and eight explosion incidents were executed. (Murthy, 120).

in the penal settlement where 'political prisoners'[148] took to weapons. Starting 1912, numerous organized hunger strikes were carried out by convicts imprisoned in the Cellular Jail through which penal voices echoed in the Empire.[149]

During the period, taking aid of caste and class, the Empire formulated the system of penal settlement in order to control and monitor the elite convicts. This is evident from the first hunger strike itself. Brahmin convicts were not allowed to wear sacred thread and if they demanded it they were put under hard labour and beaten up by Muslim warders. R.C. Majumdar in *Penal Settlement in Andamans* states: "Even almost illiterate prisoners were appointed to desk work in office, but the highly educated political prisoners were not entitled to such relief from ordinary prisoners' fate of hard labour" (1975: 148). This religious exploitation was more evident during Jail Superintendent David Barry's tenure as Jail Superintendent. Majumdar while quoting Savarkar and other prisoners states: "Mr. Barry tried to create bitterness between Hindus and the Muslim prisoners—not to put it more bluntly" (149). As is repressed, both the Hindu prisoner and the Hindu warden suffered since relation was also a governing principle in the settlement and penal texts present Hindu-Muslim hatred to a significant extent.[150] Hindu Wardens suffer from lack of promotion opportunity following disfavour over the Mussalman wardens whom 'Barrie Baba', as he was called, supported and used to tame the Hindu prisoners. Furthermore, as is stated, the Muslim Wardens either exaggerated incidents or invented stories to punish Hindu prisoners. David Barry is represented as the demi-god of Port Blair, and he declares:

[148] Archival records 11-31 of December 1912 (Political Department) suggest that political prisoners who were convicted and put behind the bar for brewing political ideas were given privileges in Indian jails as they were known to be less dangerous to society and that they were not hard criminals. But this treatment was altered during their transportation to the penal settlement after 1908 when they were denied such favours. This issue had been constantly presented in political prisoners' memoirs, statements and newspapers.

[149] Ram Rakha, a Punjabi Bramhin boy transported from a Burma prison, was the first person recorded who resorted to hunger strike in 1912 when his sacred thread was removed (Ghose 1922: 69).

[150] According to autobiographies of political prisoners, there was a feeling of religious enmity among the Hindus and the Muslim prisoners, and the autobiographies argue that this difference had been brought about by the Andaman jail authority to divide and rule over both the sections of population in the jail.

> "Listen, ye prisoners. In the Universe there is one God, and He lives in the Heavens above. But in-Port Blair there are two: one, the God of Heaven, and another, the God of Earth. Indeed, the God of Earth in Port Blair-that is myself. The God of Heaven will reward you when you go above. But this God of Port Blair will reward you here and now. So, ye prisoners, behave well. You may complain to any superior against me, my word shall prevail; I hold my own. Mind ye well." (Savarkar: 1927:71)

Evidently, the prisoners' narratives show a very different form of subjugation meted out to them during their period of incarceration. Although hunger strikes were initiated to counter dissatisfaction at a personal level, soon it gained wide recognition, and multiple events were planned in the Andamans and in India. There are four historic hunger strikes recorded in the Cellular Jail during this period. The first effective one was carried out in 1912. As a second effective stance, the year 1933 saw two hunger strikes and the last is the 1937 hunger strike that lasted for fifty-six days which paved ways to a pan-resistant movement in the Andamans and in India for repatriation. What the Government could not foresee was the penal servitude of the political prisoners could give rise to a new episode of resistance and the Government would be forced to rethink over its penal policies and had to close the settlement to stabilize the Empire. A series of hunger strikes that was first carried out to meet their personal demands brought popularity to the political prisoners and soon it took shape of a national movement. Political prisoners who took to the path of hunger strikes included, but were not limited to, convicts from Alipore Bomb Case (1908), Nasik Conspiracy Case (1910), Gadar Conspiracy Case (1915) and Moplah Rebellion (1921). Barindra K. Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt and V.D. Savarkar remain famous prisoners in this political narrative and many others who participated in these multiple resistance movements need to be recounted for the greater evaluation of the Indian nationalist discourse.

During this period, Indubhusan, a convict from the of Maniktola Conspiracy Case, committed suicide by hanging himself from the top of the window by a noose made of his torn clothes. Barindra Ghose in his autobiography *The Tale of My Exile* (1922) states: "There was no hope for anyone to keep body and soul together and return to his country. Some would die by hanging, others would die by going mad" (85).

Ullaskar Dutt, convicted of Alipore Bomb Case, was transported in a batch of seven political prisoners in 1909 along with Barindra K. Ghose, Hem Charan Das, Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar and Abhinash Bhattacharya.[151] Dutt suffered mental trauma and his health visibly deteriorated by hard labour and the extreme living condition. Indubhusan's suicide, Ullaskar Dutt's insanity, Nanigopal's being on handcuffs, and previously Ram Raksha's death—all these events resulted in an organized hunger-strike carried out with full vigour, and the press also by then had started writing on the issue regularly. With the information smuggled out from the Andamans, media coverage helped in generating a public sentiment in different provinces. Meanwhile sympathetic strikes followed till each political prisoner participated either by refusing to work or to eat. Behind the bars and in fetters, the political prisoners in defense protested against "this life of suffering and sorrow, of vice and pollution" through hunger strikes and refusal for work (Ghose, 1922: 128).

Hunger strike is seen to be one of the most powerful political weapons throughout India's nationalist period. Hunger strike was witnessed for the first time in 1912 initiated by Ladha Ram, an editor of *Swarajya* and Noni Gopal Mukherji, a 16-year-old prisoner from Chinsura, Bengal, who is known as "the Dalhousie Square bomb-thrower."[152] Noni Gopal started the strike first by refusing to work. As punishment for refusal to work, he was put in chains stark naked, hanged up by handcuff and Bhangis rubbed his body so hard that his skin was almost blood-red with rubbing. This led Noni Gopal and Ladha Ram to give up food in protest. But they were later forced fed and had to call of the strike.[153] In a letter, the Chief Commissioner, Major H.A. Browning, informed W.H. Wheeler, Home Secretary to the Government of India:

> Two of the "seditionist" prisoners, No. 32694, Ladha Ram, and No. 32991, Noni Gopal Mukherji, having persistently declined to take any food are now being forcibly fed twice a day in the Cellular Jail by an esophageal tube passed either through their nose or through the mouth…The hunger strike is a further

[151] Barindra K. Ghose claims that there were seven political prisoners transported in that batch. But this number differs in different texts. According to R.C. Majumdar (1963), there were ten prisoners and Upendra Nath Banerjee, Sudhir Kumar Sarkar and Birendra Ch. Sen figure in the list.

[152] Record No. 68-160, February 1914, Political. NAI PB.

[153] Savarkar, 1927: 133.

development in the plan of passive resistance to authority adopted by a number of self-styled political prisoners with a view to extorting concessions to which they are not entitled.[154]

In 1914, after Noni Gopal resorted to hunger strike, the Government appointed Colonel Douglas as Chief Commissioner to investigate the matter and to present a report on the working of the penal settlement. Colonel Douglas, among other recommendations, suggested the extension of the Indian jail remission system to the seditionist convicts in the Cellular Jail. Although his report was deemed as poor and quite incomplete, he claimed that the penal settlement resembles a play-ground and the convicts would be less dangerous if isolated in different jails throughout India.[155] In the same way, C.W.E. Cotton in 1913 had earlier stated that "They [political prisoners] were deliberately sent to the Andamans, it is true, but they certainly have not suffered in the matter of severity of discipline, in fact the contrary,"[156] and suggested repatriation of political prisoners. In 1920, a Committee led by Sir Alexander Cardew suggested a complete shutdown of the settlement.[157] This time it was not because of lack of deterrent punishment rather ill treatment of the convicts that came to the fore through numerous complaints. The committee raised questions on the nature of incarceration, treatment of convicts and their sudden turn of fortune in the settlement.

In 1920, Colonel Wedgwood, a British politician, wrote an article on convicts' life in the Andaman penal settlement based on his research and a short conversation with Bhai Parmanand while travelling together in a train. In London's *Daily Herald*'s article entitled "Hell in Andamans," published on 29 December 1920, Wedgewood projected the frightful condition of political prisoners in the Andamans.[158] As the

[154] Letter No. 26, 1 October 1912. "From Lieutenant-Colonel H.A. Browning, I.A., Superintendent, Port Blair, to Mr. Wheeler, C.I.E., Secretary to the Government of India". Home Department. NAI PB.

[155] Record No. 68-160.Political A. February 1914.NAI PB.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Report of the Indian Jails Committee, 1919-1920, NAI PB.

[158] *The Daily Herald*, 29 December 1920. NAI, Home Political (Deposit), f. 65, January 1921. "There were between 12,000 and 13,000 prisoners in the Andamans. Some go quite young and none are sent who are not strong and under 40 years of age. The death-rate is twice what it is in

issue drew a lot of sympathy from all quarters, it called for Viceroy's attention in a similar manner, and consequently bar fetters were abolished. On 28 April 1919 the Indian Jails Committee was appointed to review the working of the Indian jail administration, particularly the Andaman penal settlement.[159] The report came out in 1920 that suggested the abolition of the settlement and repatriation of all the prisoners to mainland by 1921. Finally, on the basis of the Jails Committee Report (1919/1920), in March 1921 Sir William Vincent, the Home Member in the Legislative Assembly, announced that the Government of India had decided to abandon the Andamans as a penal settlement. With effect of this suggestion, V.D. Savarkar and around thirty other prisoners who spent their terms at the Andamans during the period were repatriated. In a further move, Sir Vincent also introduced the Abolition of Transportation Bill in 1922.[160] The bill suggested to abolish the punishment of deportation and to abandon the settlement as well. But in 1926, a Committee led by Alexander Muddiman was surprised to see the settlement was still working in the same manner, though transportation was stopped. He studied the case and presented reasons of its ineffectiveness. It was felt as injustice to transfer prisoners who were living semi-independently in the settlement to Indian jails which were over-crowded. It was also thought that it would adversely affect the Islands in terms of its productivity as it held agricultural and forest wealth.[161]

By 1919-20, the Indian Jail Committee was appointed and it suggested abolition of the settlement and asked for repatriating all the prisoners to the mainland by 1921. But transportation resumed in 1932, and again mass protests, unrest in jails and hunger strikes drew attention to the hard life of the prisoners. It is during such a crucial period of growing solidarity that we find an articulation of sympathy in Congress's agenda. The repatriation, a subject much discussed in public sphere, is

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other Indian gaols where all sorts are sent and no Indian Jail is a health resort" (2003: 14). See Introduction of Bhai Parmanand's *The Story of My Life* for further details.

[159] The Chairman of the Committee was Sir Alexander Cardew, other members being Sir James H. Doboulay, Col. James Jackson, Lt. Col. Sir Walter Buchanan, Khan Bahadur Syed Hamid Hussain, Dorai Rajah of Puddukottah, Madras and Norman G. Mitchell-Innes (Murthy, 2011: 117).

[160] Ibid. 118.

[161] "Note prepared by Joint Secretary in 1936 on various matters relating to the Andamans". File no 815/36- Jails. Home Department. 1936. NAI PB.

taken up by Gandhi and Tagore and the communication is conditional as the struggle that the Andaman political prisoners led was a different quarter of popular political ideologue. While Gandhi was leading the Congress Working Committee towards a non-violent and peaceful deal with the British government, Savarkar questioned his leadership. Savarkar clearly shows his dissatisfaction towards the Congress Working Committee and its guiding principles. In spite of the closure of transportation, a next phase of 'terrorist' prisoners was transported during 1932-1938. The terrorist prisoners' influx in Cellular Jail marked a turning point in the history of the Andamans. Hunger strike that followed was critically evaluated as progenitor of heated communications between the moderates and the extremists.

While the 1912 hunger strike came into existence for a personal cause, the 1933 hunger strike had a political motive inherent in it. New prisoners, more precisely, 'terrorist' prisoners, supported by existing prisoners and integrated the 'national' struggle with the Andaman struggle. Although numerous strikes were carried out between 1908 and 1937, hunger strikes in their full vigour were witnessed during 1933-1937. The idea of nationalism took a transgressive turn, after particularly the 1933 hunger strikes. In the year 1933, two hunger strikes were carried out, first in January that lasted for six days, and the second one started on 12 May that lasted for forty-five days. After the conglomoration of a large number of political prisoners throughout the years and after the political prisoners realised that the condition of prison-life is same as it was during 1912-13, they resorted to hunger strike for a second time on 3 January 1933. Seven political prisoners namely, Bimal Kumar Das Gupta, Sushil Kumar Das Gupta, Probodh Chandra Roy, Prabir Goswami, Bimlendu Chakravorty, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, and Subodh Roy went on hunger strike.[162] The demands included, but were not limited to, light in their cell till 10 p.m., weekly and monthly newspapers, right of petitioning under both central and local Governments, an extensive and varied diet including a choice of vegetables and tooth powder, tooth paste and sandals, etc.[163] In addition to personal motives, a significant political phenomenon emerged from these hunger strikes.

[162] Srivastava: 1992, 8.

[163] Letter No. 1417, 7 June 1933. "From Home Department, Government of India to Secretary of State for India." NAI PB.

The hunger strikes before 1933 were carried out for a personal cause. The prisoners only wanted some favours and benefits like they were given in Indian jails. Consequently, due to lack to participation of prisoners and intensity of strikes they could not draw substantial attention from the jail authority. With time this personal need grew as a political motive. The hunger strike of 3 January 1933 that lasted till 9 January was different from the rest of the hunger strikes to a significant extent. A group of 117 'terrorist' nationalists from India was transported on the eve of the third hunger strike. These prisoners started resorting to hunger strike with other existing prisoners to present unity among Andaman and Indian movements, and presented a united struggle. Also, the 12 May hunger strike was pre-planned. Barindra Ghose states: "We decided to commence next strike after arrival of another batch. After the arrival of B.K. Dutta and Bhupal Ghose we gave an ultimatum of one month to redress their grievances" (Quoted in Srivastava, 2003:88).This time, the political prisoners passed a resolution to extend a supporting hand to the freedom struggle movement that continued in India. This integration of hunger strike with the freedom struggle movement created enthusiasm among the prisoners and native population as well which resulted in united demands. The resistance movement got a larger purpose and moved beyond the earlier personal cause. Similar kind of resistance movements and injustices were marked in India. The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), and several other forms of protests against the Empire were to be supported by political prisoners. Also, by 1933, the number of political prisoners had increased. During the first hunger strike in 1912 there were approximately 133 political prisoners, whereas between 1932 and 1938 it increased to 336.[164] Moreover, during the second and third hunger strikes of 1933, communication between India and Andaman had increased because of increase in the transportation and by that time already a few prisoners were repatriated on the ground of health or term-end. Therefore this was the time when political prisoners, confined in solitary cells, could exchange information through smuggling, bribing and gaining sympathy.[165] Notably, from 1933-1937 numerous hunger strikes were carried out by

[164] This figure is according to Andaman Ex-Political Prisoners' Fraternity Circle that had published a list of political prisoners, and was referred to in Majumdar's *Penal Settlement in Andamans* (1975).

[165] The newspapers imported to the Andamans were of great help to the political prisoners. But, they were not allowed to read them. They had to bribe the scavenger in charge to collect them and

convicts imprisoned in the Cellular Jail and the 1937 hunger-strike that continued for fifty-six days changed the definition of nationalism and patriotism forever. In 1933 the hunger-strike cost four lives; in 1937 a 56-day hunger-strike started that was followed by another 36-day strike demanding repatriation which began from 25 June 1937.

Consequently, the demands were revisited upon and with a threat of fast unto death, a third phase of strike started in the Cellular Jail on 12 May 1933 (Srivastava, 2003: 88). The phase 1932-1938 marks the last phase of transportation that included 'terrorist' prisoners chiefly from Bengal. This time B.K. Dutta and Kamal Nath, convicts of Lahore Conspiracy Case (1915), along with the leaders of 3 January 1933 hunger strike, led the movement. B.K. Sinha in *In Andamans: The Indian Bestille* writes: "The trial of 1933 was a trial of strength" (1939: 113). Out of total fifty-six political prisoners, twenty-three resorted to hunger strike and the rest to denial for work. But before their demands were fulfilled they were force-fed and forced to call off the strike after 45 days. The 1933 hunger-strikes cost four lives.[166] The series of hunger strikes which had already pronounced a united resistance against the Empire and Andaman penal settlement was slowly gaining a status of national importance.

Politics of the Other

It is hunger-strike, where lives are laid down as a proof of strength of one's political conviction, which can rally their political motivation. It is the injured dying body of the hunger 'artist' / 'prisoner' which is seen as passive and feminine which becomes a source of people's consent / emotion. The symbolic significance of a feminine body of a male protagonist and its acceptance by the people rejecting the supremacy of the masculine body of the oppressor in a way reconfirms the alien nature of the nationalist community which projects the gender-fluid image as supreme and significant. The nationalist discourse had projected the feminine image of the colonized country and it was shown being consistently in struggle against the colonial oppressor. In the

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put them in the garbage for carts to carry. And after they had been picked out and stowed away, they read them (Savarkar, 1927:102).

[166]Among them were Mahabir Singh, Mohan Kishore Namo Das and Mohit Motira. See R.V.R. Murthy's *Andaman and Nicobar Island*s (2011:162) for further details.

absence of female political prisoners in Andaman revolution and resistance within the penal settlement, the inclusion of feminine sensibility within the male protagonists had been essential to complete the cultural image in symbiosis with political image. The feminine sensibility within the passive resistance such as 'hunger strike' of the male political prisoners risking themselves to be defamed as weak and feminine in fact may be seen as their attempt to relive the mythical life of a gender fluid native god who in adopting the traits of opposite gender is able to alter the power of exclusively malevolent and homophobic colonial ruler. Hence the female body gains an entry within the nationalistic discourse through a personal choice of passive struggle—hunger strike.

The focus on the socio-political functions of hunger strikes comes to be termed as nonviolence. But if studied from a broader perspective to identify its conceptualization and perspective, hunger strike might be seen as a coercive force. The obstinacy, diplomacy and ambiguity within the approach used as a political strategy/trap to counter the hegemonic imperial power do not present them as a noble or modest effort and means. According to Gene Sharp, hunger strike is a "refusal to eat with the aim of forcing the opponent to grant certain demands but without any serious effort to convert him (the opponent) or to achieve a 'change of heart'" (1973, 363). Focusing hunger strike as a political event and contentious politics it may be seen as a socio-political tactic of pragmatic significance. The political prisoners in the Andaman penal settlement voluntarily refused to consume food or nourishment necessary to sustain life as a socio-political tactic to bring about changes for both individual and collective gain. Challenging social structures from the local to the global, hunger strike becomes an important element of non-violent coercion with an intention to undermine the power of the target, i.e., the colonial power. Their purpose is to call attention to and pursue changes in institutionalised power relations. For political prisoners the fast has a symbolic meaning but when on the one hand, it can reflect the politics and spirit of the hunger strike while on the other, it may not be an actual hunger-strike. The use of political scenario or data in hunger strike, hence, does not make clear the intentions and willingness to self-sacrifice. The power and coerciveness of hunger strike thus lie in this ambiguity. It becomes a performance politics when examined in the context of historical events and broader collective action. As a method of self-destruction, hunger strike of Andaman penal settlement

may be taken as “an active process of bringing political, economic, social, emotional, or moral pressure to bear in the wielding of power in contentious interactions between collective actors” (Schock, 2005:6). The tactical use of emotions the revolutionists used to protest surpasses innocence and modesty. It becomes an emotionally charged part of a movement invoking a wide range of response.

As nonviolent action of the fast includes rationality and emotion to challenge structural conditions defining political opportunities, hunger strike may be considered as a well-planned counter political action. Moreover, considering the biological aspect of the fast it breaks reserved body fat to produce energy for survival and in personal / political context, hunger strike leads to self-consumption and ultimately to death. Such a death is in consequence of resisting the oppressor and his oppressive ways and poses violence by drawing attention of people within and outside the country and challenging the concepts of humanity. The purpose is to call attention and to pursue changes in institutionalised power relations. On the one hand it can reflect the politics and spirit of the hunger strike while on the other it may not be an actual hunger strike, i.e., the choice of undertaking fast being enforced due to subjugation and not self-willing, i.e., to spiritually cleanse. Hence violent protest in disguise of nonviolence may be seen as weaker and relatively less risky. But non-cooperation inclusive in the protest is more powerful as it attempts to disrupt normal social, economic, and political relationships by withholding action that is normally expected. The political prisoners in contending with self-destruction expand themselves by creating innovations within their marginal space. Strike until death prolongs the scrutiny of the target and their injustices, and the key challenge lies in overcoming the basic powerlessness that had confined them to a position of institutionalised political impotence. As a consequence of the absence of politically amenable environments, hunger strike of the Andaman penal settlement becomes a rational and calculated act of protest. In the absence of political opportunities, the political prisoners take recourse to such an action of resistance believing initially to gain concessions at least in personal life within the prison house, and a rational and calculated act of protest later on. Their political stand in essence being personal in nature reveals grievances and emotions at the core of the protest. A sense of injustice experienced by them is so great that the participants aspire to risk their lives. And in leveraging personal goal with the collective goal do they ultimately empower themselves and thus project

interplay of opportunity structures and emotions. Consistent with Foucault's assertion that "where there is [coercive] power there is resistance," (1990, 94) the attempt to reject food and work among the political prisoners of Andaman penal settlement shows that power and influence do not flow in only one direction but are distributed in complex ways throughout the social system. Moreover, self-starvation is structurally isolating. And by its nature where the subject does not take anything into the body in a way splits the subject and the world. Cutting the subject out of the reach of the world, it contains the germ of placelessness and timelessness. It becomes historical through collective experiences and political through representative or symbolic ones. Making his body a site where national body-state can identify the shared suffering, the isolated individual bleeds into the national, historical and the communal. It thus serves as a testing model where both the political prisoner and the body state claim hunger as their own and the enduring lure of freedom would annihilate the claims of both. It served as a tactic usually employed by the powerless against the powerful. If the defendant allowed the political prisoner to die of starvation he would not only have to compensate the death but also would invite fear and extreme consequences even to the point of shaking the establishment of the subjugating authority.

The period between 1909 and 1920, particularly the period of hunger-strikes, witnessed in the Andamans, was instrumental in bringing the political prisoners and for brewing new ideologies to the Indian nationalist discourse. Notably, it was *Bengalee* which for the first time presented a report on the condition of the political prisoners in the Andamans and brought their issues to the fore. The article informed about the details of labour-culture in the settlement (Singh 1978, 194). On 4 September 1912, the *Bengalee* published a small article entitled "Political Prisoners in the Andamans" and appraised the reading public that political prisoners were treated worse than 'murderers' in the Cellular Jail. The article presented their case:

> The whole system in the Andamans is out of date and is especially hard in its treatment of political prisoners. Here are a group of islands away from public

> opinion and used as a penal settlement. No one knows what takes place in these solitary islands, the abode of sadness and sorrow.[167]

It stressed that political prisoners were treated worse than murderers in the Andamans and their condition was pitiable. The article presented native perspective against the Administration's. It states:

> The local authorities show these political prisoners at every step that they are suspected, looked down upon and fit only to be tied to hard labour for an indefinite period. Whenever they claim special treatment and privileges as political prisoners they are given to understand that they are ordinary criminals and must not expect anything more than they can get in the usual course of things. Again as ordinary criminals they get nothing what their fellows get.[168]

This text provides a lot of emphasis on public opinion that is an indispensible part of any system of governance. The *Bengalee* stressed that no information from the Andamans was able to reach mainland. It further states: "The order was given to scatter them all over the jail. Deprived of the only congenial company of their fellow sufferers and put on hardest labour that Cellular Jail could produce, their condition was really pitiable."[169] This coverage generated a lot of curiosity among the readers and inspired by the *Bengalee*, newspapers and periodicals such as *Swarajya, India* and *The Tribune of Lahore* had widely published articles relating to the issue and the movement in the Cellular Jail, and thereby the Andaman prisoners received sympathetic opinions of the public. The *Tribune of Lahore* took up the issue of hard manual labour that the political prisoners had to do, and in a similar manner as the *Bengalee*, states on 3 May 1913: "Four men are tied to the mill [i.e., the oil mill] and they have to go round a centre post just as bullocks do. They have to press out 30 pounds of oil during the day."[170]Also *India*, published from London, took the issue to

[167] Extract from the *Bengalee*, 4 September 1912. NAI PB.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Extract from *Bengalee*. 3 May 1912. NAI PB.

an international audience. On 25 September 1913, it took the cause of the political prisoners sympathetically:

> It is not easy to find out what is going on in the Penal Settlement at Port Blair, but enough has come to the public knowledge to make it clear that ample material exists for an open enquiry...For Seventy-two days, it is said, one of the prisoners, a young man, refused food and drink and was only kept alive by forcible feeding through the nose. Nor was this the only punishment inflicted. He was kept in standing handcuffs and deprived of the ordinary jail dress, and as a final penalty for his contumacy, his sentence was increased by one year.[171]

Though hunger strike was not completely a new phenomenon in the Cellular Jail, the 1912 hunger strike initiated by Hoti Lal Verma and joined by Nani Gopal Mukherjee who took up hunger strike for seventy-two days until forcibly fed, received critical reception as an elaborate form of resistance. In its initial period, the first categories of hunger strikes were motivated by a desire to receive personal favours and devoid of penal favours, political prisoners—initially individually and later collectively—took to the path of hunger strikes. The circumstances at Port Blair were exceptionally different from any other jails in India. First, the dreaded Kālā Pāni and the fear of losing one's caste worked as a negative vehicle among the educated prisoners. That the non-educated and convict-turned petty-officers of the settlement could have a say over the educated convicts and the elite Hindu prisoners were guarded by Muslim convicts became serious concerns for the elite Hindu prisoners. That the Brahmin prisoners were forced to remove their sacred thread upon arrival was another reason for growing dissatisfaction that led to hunger strikes. One primary example is that of Ram Rakha, an elite convict transported from a Burma prison, who started a personal resistance against this act. He stopped eating when his sacred thread was forcibly taken out. After passing four days without food and water when he started gaining sympathy from other prisoners, he was forcibly fed milk through a stomach pump. He was suffering from phthisis, gradually his health deteriorated, and eventually he died.[172] A spark of discontentment spread in the Cellular Jail when this event occurred

[171] Extract from *India* 25, September 1913. NAI PB.

[172] It is noted that hunger strikes along with degrading treatment had hampered the prisoners' immune system and led to phthisis, pneumonia, malaria and insanity. In his article "From Hell to

with him and other high class prisoners. While the settlement advocated for equality among prisoners, it simultaneously challenged the notion of sanctity among Hindu prisoners. Further, ordinary convicts could also marry after a certain period of their sentence which many other convicts envied upon. On a later stage, to fulfill demand of newspapers, library, kitchen and remuneration, numerous other hunger strikes were carried out in the Cellular Jail. To stand at par with the facilities extended to political prisoners in Indian jails, the prisoners transported as 'political' prisoners demanded the same position to ascertain those privileges and facilities.

Similar hunger strikes were carried out also in the mainland jails specifically in the Alipore 44 Degree Jail. But the 1937 hunger strike significantly recorded a turning point in the imperial governance and Indian politics as well. With this background, it is not a coincidence that the idea of hunger strike originated in the Cellular Jail only after the transportation of the first batch of political prisoners to Andaman Islands. These politically motivated hunger strikes posed a threat to the existing political scenario of mainland. It is not that the penal settlement never witnessed active/passive resistance prior to political prisoners' arrival in the Andamans, but it was only after the arrival of first batch of political prisoners that information about these resistance movements could reach India. One of the first political prisoners Hoti Lal Verma was instrumental in spreading information about the penal settlement after the first recorded hunger strike in 1912.[173] This spread throughout India and created an environment of dissent. Through hunger strikes the ideas of freedom struggle, political resistance and nationalism were implanted into the penal space. The first recorded hunger strike was started by Ladha Ram, the editor of *Swarajya* and Noni Gopal Mukherji, a 16-year-old prisoner who is known as "the Dalhousie Square

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Paradise? Voluntary Transfer of Convicts to the Andaman Islands, 1921-1940," Taylor C. Sherman writes: "Being on tropical islands with numerous swamps, convicts in the Andamans were highly prone to malaria and to other mosquito-borne diseases, as well as to cholera and tuberculosis" (2009: 371). An extract from *Bengalee* (4 September 1912), states: "Abhinash, Bibhuti, Ullaskar, Sudhir Sarcar, Bidhu, Kali, Nagendra Chandra, Abani and Priyanath had been going again and again to the hospital for malarial fever". Nos. 11-31. Political B. December 1912. NAI ND.

[173] Savarkar states that Hotilal managed to smuggle out the letter with one of them who was being sent for work outside the prison. He had put his signature to it along with the number of the cell and the chawl in which he was locked up. It then travelled in the envelope of a trusted friend on voyage and reached its post at Calcutta and finally went into the hands of the famous publicist and leader Surendranath Bannerji of Calcutta and the editor of *Bengali*. [sic] (1927: 96)

bomb-thrower", transported for bombing the car of a high police dignitary Mr. Cowley.[174] As a mark of agitation against the inhuman treatment meted out to him, Noni Gopal and Ladha Ram gave up food, were later forced fed and thereafter they had to call off the strike.[175]

With growing pressure from different fronts, the Government took necessary steps to combat spread of revolutionary ideas and patriotic sentiments and it formed a reformation committee led by Sir R. Craddock in 1913 to inspect the penal settlement. By this time there were numerous petitions submitted to the Government to transfer the political prisoners to Indian jails. Noteworthy among them were the petition of V.D. Savarkar for mercy and B.K. Ghose's and Ullaskar Dutt's petition on the ground of health.[176] The committee, upon inspection of the Islands and going through the petitions, claimed about Savarkar that "so important a leader is he that the European section of the Indian anarchists would plot for his escape which would before long be organized" (Singh, 1978: 201) and his request to repatriate was turned down. In the same way, Barindra Ghose's petition was not considered for mercy and Ullaskar Dutt's petition proved him an insane instead. After Dr. Lukis' investigation, he was sent to the mental asylum. Craddock sums up stating: "There seems to be no alternative but to keep them (the life convicts of Savarkar's class) in the Cellular Jail, and if their behaviour is good, they may be given the indulgence of simple imprisonment" (1978:200). This inspection only helped the prisoners to avail some of the daily needs as demanded such as occasional holidays and access to selected books, but no relaxation in incarceration was granted. Only the approval to go out of the jail on special occasions curbed their growing anger. This amendment of course excluded Savarkar and his allies. Finally, Nani Gopal was persuaded to take food and the strike was called off.

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[174] Record No. 68-160, February 1914, Political. NAI PB.

[175] Savarkar, 1927: 133.

[176] On 11 June Ullaskar Dutt absolutely refused work, saying that he had come to the conclusion that all forced labour was degrading. Till 15 June he refused to work. On 16 July he was awarded "7 days' standing handcuffs" and that day onwards he developed gradual insanity and was shifted to Haddo Lunatic Ward. Vide Letter No. 1012, 30 November 1912. "From H. Wheeler, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to Surgeon-General Sir Charles Pardey Lukis, Director-General, Indian Medical Service." NAI PB.

In the year 1913, Colonel Douglas visited the settlement and suggested to stop transfer of term convicts to the Andamans. But dissatisfaction among prisoners and transfer of term convicts continued. Consequently, another reformation was required and in 1920 Henry Cecil Beadon as Chief Commissioner inspected the Islands and his report, came out the following year. This report forced the Government to stop transportation of term convicts. An article in *Statesman* entitled "Regarding the Transportation of Terrorists" (1932) reads, "It would in any case have proved impossible, owing to lack of space and of funds, for suitable accommodation to have been found on the mainland for the 11,000 convicts who were in the Andamans in 1921."[177] Although total shut down of the settlement was suggested time and again, it still continued working due to reasons already discussed in the previous section.

When the news of a mass hunger strike reached India for the first time in 1912, it resulted in several other strikes and resistance movements.[178] Prisoners in Alipore 44 Degree Jail and Lahore Jail resorted to hunger strikes in support of political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans. Significantly, after the 1933 hunger strikes, a series of such movements brought women revolutionists to the fore and a strong notion of nationalism circulated in Bengal and other parts of India which will be discussed in the next chapter. And finally the hunger strike of 1937 affected the then Indian political environment to such a significant extent that it paved ways for the repatriation of political prisoners in 1938.

Conclusion

The system of transportation not only institutionalised colonial rule, it also made the Government wealthy through convict labour. What the Government could not foresee

[177] Political Department, Political Branch. 28 July 1932. NAI PB (WB).

[178] Hoti Lal Verma and Ram Hari—the editors of *Swarajya*, a newspaper, transported for sedition in 1909—seemed to have smuggled information about the constant hunger strikes in the Cellular Jail. When the news reached India, prisoners of Lahore Conspiracy Case (1915) at Hazaribagh Jail resorted to hunger strike protesting against the nature of their incarceration. Further, detenus in different jails of Bengal protested for the same reason. Krant Verma recalls the case of Yatindra Nath Das, a member of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), who died on 13 September 1929, in Lahore prison after 63 days of hunger strike. He, along with other members of HSRA, had resorted to hunger strike as their grievances were not redressed by the jail authority (Srivastava, 2003: 82).

was that the penal servitude of the political prisoners could give rise to a new episode of resistance and the Government would be forced to rethink over its penal policies and had to close the settlement. It is evident that the hunger strike as a weapon to resist colonial government originated in the Cellular Jail only after the transportation of the first batch of political prisoners to the Andaman Islands. The hunger strikes, personal-turned political, brought popularity to the political prisoners and afterwards took shape of a national movement. These united resistances in the settlement not only led to the nationalization of the penal colony as part of the nationalist movement, it also saw the extension of the resistance movement beyond the geographical borders and remained instrumental in extending the scope of geographical territory beyond the seas. It is significant to note that, Andaman was the first place that was liberated from the clutches of the British Empire.[179] Liberating the island full of prisoners was probably symbolic of the first step towards freedom. The hoisting of the Indian flag on the Andaman shores implies the significance of the land and of the blood that flooded in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The archival and native documents pertaining to Andaman Penal Settlement set forth stories of struggle and counter resistance against the imperial Government. The use of individual body as a weapon in resistance is seen as a self-sacrificial act appeal to the actor's own community and outside it at an emotional and symbolic level. Hunger strike used by political prisoners for personal demand later was collectively joined to formulate public demand. The image of the Andaman prisoners in extension gained a symbolic image as prisoners for the natives living in the main land under colonial subjugation. The eventualities of transportation, devoid of nationalist patronage of the contemporary times, were taken up by women precisionists, who became instrumental in pressurising Gandhi, Tagore and the Indian National Congress to take up the matter of transportation with the Government. In short, the political prisoners of the Andamans found solidarity among common mass that forced contemporary politic to institutionalize the penal settlement in the Indian independence movement.

[179] Netaji Subhash Bose hoisted the Indian national flag at the Gymkhana ground at Port Blair on 30 December 1943.

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Chapter 5

Voices of Resistance in the Indian Archives

Abstract: This chapter explores juridical petitions and native speeches pertaining to select political prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular Jail. The first category includes, but is not limited to, petitions by Yamuna Bai, the wife of V.D. Savarkar and Nand Gopal Verma; the second includes 'Proposed prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta' (1937) by Indian women for repatriation of political prisoners. Imperial communication regarding the case files of prisoners and the way 'militant' activities are interpreted in such communications form the basis of the chapter. These texts address complex issues of contemporary Indian politics and the way Gandhian 'liberal' nationalism viewed its alternative 'militant' nationalism. First, the native tongues found a splendid political move in juridical literature. Second, the eventuality of native expressions provides a serious transgression of native ideology. In short, this chapter addresses the question of 'militant' resistance with its nuances in Indian archives. The chapter is divided into three sections, viz., "Native Petitions," "Repatriation Speeches," and "The 'Nationalist' question for Andaman Prisoners."

Key Words: Juridical Petitions; Repatriation Speeches; Political Prisoners; Resistance movement

Introduction

Two narratives of reconstruction of the Indian nation on the jurisprudence of self-rule (*Swaraj*) run parallel in Indian nationalist discourse during early twentieth century. V.D. Savarkar's *The War of Independence of 1857* and M.K. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* are published in the same year, in 1909. The epigraph of Savarkar's *The War of Indian Independence of 1857* reads an extract from Shivaji's guru Swami Ramdas' quote: "Die for Dharma; while dying, kill all your enemies and win back Swarajya; while killing, kill well" (Savarkar, 1909: 63). In the treatise, he advocates for the righteous characters that an act of violence carries and defends violent wars for the sake of nation: "Wherever national wars are proclaimed, national wrongs are avenged by national killing alone" (Ibid., 211). While Giuseppe Mazzini's writing had inspired

Savarkar, the 1857 war established in him the political desire of swadharma or one's own religion and *swarajya* or self-rule.[180] And Gandhi integrates Henry David Thoreau's belief of practicing his own ideals of purifying the self through fasting. His *Hind Swaraj* presents a debate that defends his ideology of self-sacrifice and self-amelioration against the heated debate on violence when the nation and its leaders' (INC) vow of passive resistance was on the verge of failure. Savarkar hastens freedom whereas Gandhi realizes that, as he writes, "As time passes, the Nation is being forged. Nations are not formed in a day; the formation requires years." (*CWMG* 10: 42)

Savarkar situated his political theory by violent war against the British whereas Gandhi found purgation of the self as his sole motive in life through which he aimed to get self-rule and aspired to run a righteous Government. Apparently in the Indian territory, the concocted militant nationalism and Gandhian liberal nationalism collaborated with each other on issues of British penal proceedings projecting the embodied emancipation of militant nationalists incarcerated in the Andaman Cellular Jailas a first step towards the larger agenda of freedom in time and space. But the collaboration of militant and Gandhian nationalism presents fissures in the archives of Indian nationalist discourse to a significant extent. This chapter explores key points of oppositional ideas developed during the first half of the twentieth century pertaining to the existence and closure of the penal settlement in the Andamans.

The set of ideology that is now appropriated as militant nationalist ideals was revisited and reinterpreted in exile. The situations at Port Blair were themselves extraordinary which challenged the very idea of human itself. So a transgression of serious nature can be witnessed in the political prisoners, in their fate and servitude, action plan and its execution, so as to counter the life of misery and consequent humiliation. The political exile in the Andamans subverted the nation-over-life theorization into life-over-the nation feasibility. In 'mainland' India, the nationalist convicts of extremist sect who believed in arm revolution, opposing Gandhian non-violence, patronized nation-over-life but ironically though, under panoptic gaze in

[180] Savarkar, V.D. *Savarkar Samagra* (Vol. 5: 27). See also Jyotirmaya Sharma's "History as Revenge and Retaliation: Reading Savarkar's 'The War of Independence of 1857'". (*Economic and Political Weekly* 42.19. May 12-18, 2007. 1717-1719.)

Cellular Jail, they preferred 'life' to 'nation' to continue the struggle within. In the contextual exigency, political prisoners embraced Gandhian technique of passive resistance chiefly carried through petitions and dialogues with a seemingly appropriation of their ideals of arm-resistance. It is earlier discussed that the penal settlement came to prominence was only after 1909 with the influx of political prisoners, and the penal culture of servitude came to public discourse when educated political prisoners raised their voice against colonial system of governance. When transportation of 'political' prisoners began, a culture of 'sacrifice' for the nation emerged in the country among the youth. The offshore punishment became an epitome of 'love' for the country; the patriot-nationalists would sing the glory of individual sacrifice to bring about *purna swaraj* to the land. With this idea, a series of transformations took place, and a large number of prisoners gave testimony of their sacrifice through their bondage and drudgery at the newly built Cellular Jail. This is when the name Kālā Pani came to prominence to be in public memory forever. These prisoners raised a strong voice against the Administration of the settlement some time after their arrival at the Andamans when they understood that the Empire had larger plans of subjugation and segregation. The immediate plan was to restore personal dignity of prison life that was denied to them in the settlement. Hunger strikes and denial for work were taken up as weapons for their revolution in the Cellular Jail. A number of petitions were filed starting 1912 where political prisoners, negotiating personal life and national duties, put forward a feint voice of dissent and resistance during penal detention. In captivity, thus a serious transgression is visible in political prisoners' writings and that they succumbed to adopt Gandhian model of nationalism that allowed the genesis of a passive resistance movement to grow among the militant nationalists. Militant nationalism framed a defensive mechanism by adopting Gandhian philosophy as their weapon for a united struggle.

It is important thus to note that during penal detention, political prisoners collaborated with Gandhian nationalism which circulated overseas and adopted Gandhi as the "idea" of repatriation. Perceiving the popular spectacle of Gandhian miracle, the detainers located Gandhi within narratives of their resistance as their mediator for the negotiation between the British and the Andaman prisoners bordering the issue of their release. Consequently, the political prisoners percolated Gandhian philosophy into their resistance against the penal authority. The documentation of their petitions

concerning their repatriation represents transgression of militant exuberance into non-violence-mediation. And this groundswell of Gandhian principles within militant nationalism converted the cause of repatriation into an organized movement. Gandhi, being forced, took a leading role in their struggle for liberty. Consequently, Gandhi concentrated his terms of negation with the political prisoners on their embrace of non-violence eschewing their spirit of violence. This chapter, hence, seeks to explore the relationship between militant and Gandhian nationalism indexed by the cause of repatriation from colonial penal persecution. It also explores tensions that wrapped in this engagement suggests how militant nationalism collaborated with Gandhian nationalism, and Gandhi and other Congress leaders of the contemporary period were forced to raise the Andaman question.

Native Petitions

The second decade of the twentieth century witnessed multiple important petitions to the Government for the repatriation of political prisoners on various grounds. Mediated by personal and political cause, the correspondence—petitions and judgments—give rise to a discursive field of power struggle which takes the colonial governance to a new frontier of subjugation. In 1912, Hrishikesh Kanjilal and Ganesh Damadar Savarkar adopted petitioning to address colonial discrimination against 'seditionist' and 'ordinary' prisoners. Hrishikesh Kanjilal and Ganesh Damodar Savarkar wrote petitions against treatment of political prisoners in the settlement. Hrishikesh Kanjilal raised three issues. He filed his petition complaining about lack of employment opportunity, medical facility, and inhumane drudgery. Lack of basic needs which in such predicaments, seemed as "comforts and privileges" added to strict disciplinary work which led to death, sometimes followed by insanity, as in the case of Ullaskar Dutt. Hrishikesh Kanjilal pointed out that a few months after the arrival of literate prisoners, they were given jobs in office. But such opportunity was not provided to literate 'seditionist' or 'political' prisoners. While sick prisoners who were labeled 'ordinary' were treated in hospitals, the sick-seditionist prisoners were shut up in the dens of the Cellular Jail and confined separately. Many of these 'seditionist' prisoners were left without medical care. And the work in the Cellular

Jail was so hard that one of them had to commit suicide and the other turned insane.[181] In his petition, Kanjilal vocalizes a permanent state of prisoners' being that was affected by the degrading work culture:

> So harsh was the treatment and so great were the troubles we had to undergo, that one day one of my ceasemen turned mad....Almost every year I see one of my ceasemen pass away. Under these circumstances, my life is not at all safe here. Here I am neither treated as a political prisoner nor am I treated like ordinary prisoners. I have all the troubles of ordinary convicts minus their comforts and privileges."[182]

In most petitions of this period, there is an apprehension about the loss of life followed by a vocalization of personal dignity which became a norm. The treatment of political prisoners in the settlement compromised their safety and hence their right to live. A similar kind of threat echoes in G.D. Savarkar's petition that requests the Government to institutionalize them as "political" prisoners with rights and privileges meant for 'political' prisoners as given in Indian jails. Similarly, G.D. Savarkar demands that prisoners who were transported after 1908 to the Andamans for taking law and order in their own hands may be termed "political" prisoners and the rights and privileges of 'political' prisoner be provided to them. Replying to G.D. Savarkar, the Superintendent, in his demi-official letter no 10, 30 May 1912, stated that "the designation 'political' tends to give these prisoners a spurious importance."[183] In another letter,[184] the Government rejecting the petitions of G.D. Savarkar and Hrishikesh Kanjilal, stated that "the prisoners should be given clearly to understand that they were not to be considered as "political prisoners" exempt from prison labour and treated as first class misdemeanants. Later, the letter clarifies that: "the reason why term convicts of this class were sent to the Andamans, was to get them out of the country" (Ibid.). The Superintendent in his letter to G.D. Savarkar hinted the

[181] These points of complaint were stated in Hrishikesh Kanjilal's petition of 1912. Vide Demi-official letter no. 201, 22 August 1910. NAI ND.

[182] Petition from Hrishikesh Kanjilal (Convict no. 31550) to the Home Member of the Government of India, 14 November 1913. NAI ND.

[183] Record No. 11-31. December 1912. Letter No. 10. 30 May 1912. Political B. NAI PB.

[184] Record nos. 68-168. Letter No. 1510, 23 August 1913. "From the Superintendent, Port Blair" as stated in February 1914. Political. NAI PB.

inevitable outcome of their petitioning and the Government's denial of the designation "political" to these educated prisoners. And the 23 August 1913 letter institutionalized the previously hinted rejection clarifying the reason of their exile from the mainland to the Andamans.[185]

"Mercy to him," V.D. Savarkar states in his petition, he would have a calming effect upon those who still conspire against British rule in India, and he was willing but simultaneously anxious to send an open letter to the native press explaining his change of views. He admitted that he had no legal rights in the matter but pleaded for merciful consideration, and asked for a transfer to a jail in India or Burma where he would at least gain the moral right to be released after fourteen years. Savarkar marks that the pistols were not intended for murder. In addition boldly does he record that his incarceration in the Cellular Jail as "faulty." He allured the Government with his ideological conversion to imperial policies with the grant of his repatriation. V.D. Savarkar's petition is marked with a tone of admiration for the British surfacing hollowness of militant nationalist ideals.

In his petition for mercy, Savarkar claims that he was classed as "D" that denotes "dangerous" for which the treatment meted out to him was highly harsh for his existence. He was told that he belongs to a special class, but even privileges enjoyed by ordinary prisoners were not denied to him by the Andaman authorities. When most of his fellow prisoners were repatriated, he was still put in the Cellular Jail even if his behaviour was good. Unlike Indian jails, there was no scope of remission in the Cellular Jail. Towards the end of his petition, he requests to "put an end to this anomalous situation in which I have been placed, by either sending me to Indian jails or by treating me as a transported just like any other prisoner.[186] Savarkar adds:

> Will your honour be pleased to put an end to this anomalous situation in which I have been placed, by either sending me to Indian jails or by treating me as a transportee just like any other prisoner. I am not asking for any preferential treatment, though I believe as a political prisoner even that could have been expected in any civilised administration in the Independent nations of the

[185] Record nos. 68-168. Letter No. 1510, 23 August 1913. Ibid.

[186] Petition from V.D. Savarkar (Convict No. 32778), to the Home Member of the Government of India, 14 November 1913. Nos. 68-160. NAI ND.

> world; but only for the concessions and favours that are shown even to the most depraved of convicts and habitual criminals! This present plan of shutting me up in this jail permanently makes me quite hopeless of any possibility of sustaining life and hope. (Ibid., NAI ND).

Nationalist creed of "political becomes personal" was appropriated in native speeches as "personal becomes political" to feed on re-orientation of individuals. Foregoing belligerent thesis, the Andaman prisoners upheld individualism and deployed politics accordingly. The 'political' prisoners' petitions laid bare their personal and individual motives as well. With begging for mercy they did not lag behind in demonstrating their innocence even at the altar of other 'political' prisoners' lives. Reading of these petitions raises questions on their claim of love and sacrifice for freedom of the country from the British though as scholars we should understand the trajectory of penal universe. Savarkar's petition indirectly states that he had been put behind the bar for the fault of others. He subtly writes:

> I should be held responsible only for my own faults and not of others. It is a pity that I have to ask for this—it is such a fundamental right of every human being! For as there are on the one hand, some 20 political prisoners—young, active and restless, and on the other the regulations of a convict colony, by the very nature of them reducing the liberties of thought and expression to the lowest minimum possible; it is but inevitable that every now and then some one of them will be found to have contravened a regulation or two and if all be held responsible for that, as now it is actually done—very little chance of being left outside remains for me. (Ibid., NAI ND)

Readers encounter a dual perspective contrary to each other in Savarkar's other writings and his petitions to the colonial Government for mercy. While his autobiography and nationalist writings put forward the voice of a strong resistance movement for Hindu cultural ideology derived by patriotism and a continuous struggle for Independence, the petitions move ways forward from that cause and succumb to attaining a degree of liberty in exile. Bound by a desire to attain repatriation, the petitions to the Government and letters sent home allude to personal liberty at the cost of nationalist ideology and present the trajectory reducing Savarkar

to a normal prisoner in the initial period. The autobiographical narratives, written years after repatriation, thus put forward the different images of Savarkar that are appropriated as anti-Muslim and pro-militant in their existence. Contrarily in his petition of 1913, Savarkar voices the inner-splits within militant nationalism and hence, defeats its legitimate claim on nationalist struggle. He concludes:

> The latest development of the Indian politics and the conciliating policy of the Government have thrown open the constitutional line once more. Now no man having the good of India and humanity at heart will blindly step on the thorny paths which in the excited and hopeless situation of India in 1906-07 beguile us from the path of peace and progress. Therefore if the Government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I, for one cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English Government which is the foremost condition of that progress.

Furthermore, Savarkar suggests that their repatriation will bring real happiness in their homes. And when they are released, the people will be joyful and they will show gratitude to the Government that knows how to forgive and correct, more than how to chastise and avenge. He also suggests that after his conversion to the constitutional line would bring back those misled youths who looked up to him as their leader. Finally he states: "The mighty alone can afford to be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government?"[187] On the one hand, Savarkar proposes inability of non-violent way of struggle to get independence and denounces Gandhian and Nehruvian policies for their incapability, except only to write petitions; a clash of ideologies is marked in these penal narratives. One the other hand, Savarkar follows their footstep while begging for mercy; a confusion of regimes and a dwindling hope of freedom from armed revolution can be assumed from these petitions.

When political prisoners were treated in a different yet demeaning manner for their position in jail as 'dangerous' or 'terrorist,' there are case files that emphasize the reformation of their nature, but still the treatment meted out to them were the same.

[187] Ibid., NAI ND.

Barindra Ghose's conduct, as stated by the jail authority, is summarized as "believed to have completely reformed and might be released."[188] Colonial records suggest that the Cellular Jail is a correction machinery where prisoners—ordinary or political—were put behind the bars to form a 'character' that is suitable for the Empire. Like V.D. Savarkar, the case of Barindra Ghose is equally contradicting when it comes to filing petitions during his imprisonment period and when he composed his autobiography after repatriation. While his petitions suggest a change in his revolutionary ideas—from the perspective of a 'militant' to the upholding of liberal ideals, his autobiography tells stories of the demeaning work culture for 'political' prisoners in the settlement and faulty administrative affairs. His petitions in a very mild and submissive manner ignore the state of affairs and earlier ideologies. Barindra Ghose, in his 1914 petition raised two contradictory issues in a tone of repentance for his act of rebellion. But he pleaded for his innocence in the 'local plot' which led to his imprisonment. Ghose repented for his involvement in the Maniktala Bomb Case but denied any knowledge of the local plot which led to the incarceration of all the "anarchists." He was informed that the only way to prove his sincerity towards the authority was to give us all information that he had, without reserve. He at once put it open to the Administration. Colonel Douglas asked if he would wish to live in Europe. But he said without hesitation that he would be safe nowhere; whether it was London, Paris, Geneva, America, or Japan, there were Indian 'conspirators' all over the world, and in none of those places would he be safe. Prison narratives such as Ghose's and Savarkar's for repatriation show all contradictions of the spirit of 'nationalism' and 'individualism' and the petitions show the desire to be released and repatriated at the cost of others' lives and cause of the freedom of the nation.

Barindra Ghose's petition interestingly draws attention for his doubtful statements filed only four years of penal servitude. The petition begins with a note of Ghose's own poor health and draws attention towards the Russian Government implying the clash between Russia that wanted to overthrow British rule and the British Government that has a righteous government with righteous law to rule the land:

[188] Record no. 68-160. February 1914. Political B. NAI PB.

> I beg to state that this sentence of 20 years' transportation for me amounts to a death sentence.…The autocratic Government of Russia again and again extended political amnesty to all her political prisoners, and we are confident our Government being the leading light of civilisation and culture will not fail to overlook the past indiscretions of some misguided young men. I for one shall bind myself down to remain just where His Excellency wishes me to remain, abstain from all movements and obeying his slightest wishes. More than this I cannot say in a petition like this.[189]

Ghose's repentance was told to be considered genuine if he provided the Government with the information of Indian conspiracy against the British. His confession would be conditional, Ghose mentioned, upon his safety. But Colonel Douglas discarded his demand of protection. Ghose's petition expressed his self-contradiction. He defined himself as a 'life-long invalid' as his poor health took a toll upon him. This argument clashed with his political aggression that he showed. Ghose craved for 'mercy' citing the 'justness' of British civility. Ghose in his petition tactfully takes up the issue of Indian nationalism to a global platform. He talks about Russian Amnesty not just as an example but also to focus on the world war that was on the way and to remind the British about the force of India army….

Nand Gopal petitioned the Government in 1913 with a threatening determination of keeping alive their spirit of terrorism against all odds. Nand Gopal, in his petition, gives elaborate information on the penal culture of the Andamans regarding treatment and condition of the jail. He wrote a long petition citing issues the political prisoners face in the Andamans. The petitions of other political prisoners such as Nand Gopal and Sudhir Chandra Sarcar seek to remind the colonial Government the spirit of Indian rebellion which remains a direct threat to the Government. Nand Gopal, convicted in the year 1909 of sedition, was transported to the Andamans. He concludes his petition stating:

[189] Petition from Barindra K. Ghose (Convict no. 31549), to the Home Member of the Government of India. Nos. 68-160. Political A February 1914. NAI ND.

> I request the officials of the most powerful Government of the world and to the Indian Government specially not to render our condition wretched and miserable in order to kill the Germs of sedition within us. If the religious martyrdom practised by the enemies of the Christianity against Christianity has not destroyed Christianity from the face of Globes, surely, political martyrdom shall not extirpate the Indian nationalism from the Holy soil of Bharatavarsha.[190]

Sudhir Kumar Sarcar was convicted in Alipur Bomb case and was transported for 7 years and for having connection with the 'seditious' newspaper *Yugantar*, a weekly vernacular magazine published from Calcutta. A sense of regret, like Savarkar and Ghose, is part of Sarcar's narrative that states being overwhelmed with the passion of young age, which lured heroism, Sarcar joined in political extremism. Considering this rebellion of the past as juvenal adventures, he pleads that the Government should grant him pardon. Sarcar repented his decision of joining the extremist party and presented it detrimental to the growth and development of Mother India in his assessment. Sarcar starts his petition informing about years he spent in the Andamans and about the labour he did for the settlement. He finds excuse stating: "The time and at the age in which I joined was 19 years only, was overflowed by the agitation and so a youthful emotional mind became a victim of the superfluous and obnoxious agitation and suffered much for the penalty and paid the cost with greater compensation."[191] His petition reads in an innocent note that confirms his act of militancy, at the same time, argues to be pardoned.

Sarcar argues that his character has transformed after imprisonment, and his petition justifies the punishment regime implemented in the Cellular Jail as well. He poses a docile prisoner while petitioning and states:

> Morally, politically and socially it degrades the mind rather than elevating and helping the natural good faculties of different organised branches of the whole Indian constitution.… I pray to Your Honour to release or at least to include the under-trial period with my sentence for which my heart will ever remain

[190] Petition from Nand Gopal (Prisoner no. 32240) to the Home Member of the Government of India, 15 November 1913. Nos. 68-160. Political A February 1914. NAI ND.

[191] Ibid.

> grateful towards our august Government and thereby will be able to serve my family and country getting a little more education for which there is very short time and age is left to join agricultural college and be a citizen to help our far extensive home members and poor fellow countrymen.[192]

These petitions contradict the voice of (auto)biographical narratives that present the cause of nation and take glory in transportation. There the valour or strength is shown which is written after repatriation whereas the petitions, the written 'for' repatriation, show a weak mental condition crying for freedom. Here love for family or 'mainland' is presented, whereas in (auto)biographical narratives, love for the nation is expressed. This is where a doubt of nationalistic love is created. The petition of Ullaskar Dutt creates an argument considering his health and love for his family, and in what cases the petition files mourn the loss of freedom and look forward for mercy.

Savarkar's wife Yamunabai, in 1920, begged before the Government for the release of the Savarkar brothers, V.D. Savarkar and G.D. Savarkar with four reasons—a decade-long sentence, ill-health, their conceptual change, the Royal Proclamation of December 1919 and the public petition for the political prisoners' repatriation. She claims their repatriation to be considered at the earliest as their lives were in danger owing to ill-health. The petition suggests that their opinions have also radically changed and that they will lead a life for the betterment of the Government.[193]She clarifies that their attitude and mindset had changed stating:

> This being their attitude and frame of mind at present I submit that their cases fall clearly within the terms of the gracious proclamation of His Majesty the King Emperor issued in December 1919 just after the passing of the Reforms Act (The Government of India Act. 1919). The proclamation says among other things:- "Let those through their eagerness for political progress have broken the law in the past respect it in the future."[194]

[192]Petition from Sudhir Kumar Sarcar (Prisoner No. 31597), to His Excellency the Viceroy of India, through the Home Member of the Government of India, Nos 68-160.NAI ND.

[193] See Political A, August 1920, Nos. 368-373.NAI ND.

[194] Record No. 368-373. Political A. August 1920. NAI ND.

She argues that many people who had committed political offences were released as a result of His Majesty's Proclamation. She cites some examples; in particular a number of Bengali youths who were connected with the Manecktolla Garden Bomb Factory – which was responsible among other things for the murder of two innocent ladies – had been pardoned and released. She confirms that she stated the case not by way of complaint or in a grudging mood but because she knows that the wholesome effects of the clemency shown to all of them will be still further increased by the release of her husband and his brother, the Savarkar brothers, and "the political atmosphere in the country will be largely cleared of suspicion and mistrust which are unfortunately so much in evidence at present."[195] The issues addressed in Savarkar's wife's mercy petition include, but are not limited to, the imprisonment period that had 'reformed' the Savarkar brothers and in the light of the same that they may be released. That Savarkar's release-petition was signed by fifty thousand people showed his popularity on the one hand and that the clemency would bring in a positive environment to his people, on the other. From the letters sent to his brother, Savarkar presents his desire to go back to 'mainland' and spend rest of his life with his family.

The petitioners promised to lead a non-violent life and be pro-government in many ways. All of the terrorist petitioners except Nand Gopal undermined principles of terrorism presenting the seamy-side of 'militant' nationalism to the colonizers as having already mentioned that it also showcases the inner conflict among ideologues. While hunger strike laid bare ideological clash between Gandhian non-violent resistance methods and Savarkar's violent struggle for total independence, these petitions go beyond that dichotomy. They bring to the fore a clash within the 'militant' nationalists. Only after 1932, when 'terrorist' prisoners from Bengal were transported, the political prisoners were united and at least three recorded hunger strikes after 1932 bear an ample testimony to their united strength that could not but force 'mainland' leaders to work for their repatriation.

The petitions are individualistic in nature. They depict the petitioners' appeal for personal freedom which puts aside their earlier struggle for national freedom. Consequently, a sense of nationalism is emphatically compromised. That the families

[195] Ibid.

of prisoners too pleaded for mercy—for they were asked to do so by the prisoners themselves—is another compromise. That women—wives and older people too—petitioned—destabilized the idea of nation and nationhood too is another chapter in this historical endeavour.

Repatriation Speeches

It is earlier stated that when the news of continuous hunger strikes in the Andamans reached India, a few important newspapers such as *Bengalee* and *Hitabadi* carried articles in support of the political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans. A few significant phenomena developed during this period that directly forced Gandhi and the Indian National Congress to extend support to the political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans. First, detenus at Alipur and Hazirabag jails, started hunger strikes in India in to show solidarity for the prisoners in the Andamans. Several organized campaigns were held at Calcutta pressurizing the Government to repatriate political prisoners. Women and children came out to streets in Calcutta in open support, condemning the Government of silencing the processionists and not fulfilling their demands. During this period, repatriation speeches remained central in pressurizing both the leaders of Indian National Congress and Government to respond to the issue of political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans. With regard to the release of the political prisoners from the settlement, public speeches evoked a tremendous mass movement. People from different sections of society across the country voiced their protest against the treatment meted out to the 'political' prisoners incarcerated in the Cellular Jail. The absence of patronage in mainstream political space, the initial period of mass agitation narrowly put forward a voice of dissent. The relation between political prisoners and the leaders of Indian National Congress was so adverse that hardly any mainstream popular leader provided patronage in its initial period, though at local levels, people hoisted the Congress flag to institutionalize the campaign under its banner. The ideology with regard to the country's self-rule came to prominence. When non-cooperation movement was withdrawn by Gandhi, a doubt on Gandhi's freedom movement was spread throughout the country. Then the INC saw the development of another ideology branching from the INC's. It was extremist ideology and the group adhering to this ideology demanded complete independence, unlike Gandhi, that Gandhi believed in working with the Imperial Government.

The movement started with passive resistance activities through petitions, meetings and press campaigns. The press played a vital role during the period. Newspapers such as *Bengalee* and *India* consistently dealt with Indian political issues. Andaman penal settlement and mainland political scene were covered systematically. It cannot be denied that the first ever news-leak from the settlement in 1912 paved the way for further publications and distribution of information pertaining to the Andaman penal settlement and the miserable condition of the prisoners there in. Newspaper and magazine coverage on Andaman penal settlement published in 'mainland' and in London drew mass attention to the treatment of political prisoners in the settlement. A London based newspaper *India*, referring to the general strike and subsequent punishments with 'handcuffs and chains, cross-bar fetters and "gunny" clothing, penal diet and separate confinement' called for an 'open enquiry' into the grievances of the prisoners.[196] The case of Nandgopal, the editor of *Swarajya* who refused to work more than the stipulated hours to produce the quota of oil and punished for his refusal, was taken up for investigation. In another case, *India* sympathetically presented Nanigopal's case, another prisoner who had: "refused food and drink and was kept alive by forcible feeding through the nose for seventy-two days." Nor was this the only punishment inflicted upon him. In addition, Nanigopal was kept standing in handcuffs and deprived of the ordinary jail dress. As a final penalty for his contumacy, his sentence was increased by one year.[197] Such sympathetic portrayal of Andaman prisoners continued to draw media attention, the effect of which can be visible in mass agitation of the period.

Newspapers on the one hand wrote extensively on the political prisoners, and on the other, the repatriated prisoners as well as former prisoners who were transported back to 'mainland' India substantiated the information published. This called for immediate steps to be taken against the prisoners' treatment in the Cellular Jail and these incidents also, to a significant extent, motivated different women groups to fight for the Andaman prisoners' repatriation. For the first time women in Calcutta rallied with a demand for repatriation of political prisoners from the Andamans in 1937. Ujjwal K.

[196] No. 12, H(P), Deposit, January 1914, NAI. Clipping, 25 September 1913, from *India*, published from London.

[197] Ibid.

Singh notes: “Perhaps the greatest outrage to bhadralok sensitivities of the nationalist prisoners in Andamans was their ‘scanty clothing and practical nudity at the time of taking bath’” (56). The dehumanised condition is apparently expressed by Ghose as “there was no such thing as gentleman, nor such thing as man, here there were just convicts” (Ghose, 1922: 71). The tales of such atrocities inflicted upon the prisoners revisited to start an organized campaign in India.

The active political participation of women during Indian struggle for independence is a landmark event, and their role in repatriation movement is a significant case in point. The educated Bengali women who read newspapers led the agitation and slowly it spread throughout the county making it a mass outrage by women on several fronts. Apparently, a group of women of the Congress party conducted a protest-meeting on 14 August 1937 to show solidarity with the Andaman prisoners. This event witnessed the participation of thirty-nine women active protesters and fifty-one women participants in the audiences. Heaprova Majumdar, Sarala Devi, Nalini Prova Ghosh, Mithi Ben, and Sudha Roy cried quit-slogan with two ramifications; in the protest meeting, they demanded the repatriation of political prisoners in particular and undercurrent they also raised slogan for the British to quit India in general. The meeting and the subsequent protests for the political prisoners’ repatriation blurred the ideological borderline between militant and liberal nationalism, and the Calcutta police recorded their speech for future action-plan on the processionists.

Following the first repatriation drive initiated by women processionists, a number of other meetings and agitations were held in and around Calcutta, which show the beginning of a growing solidarity of the common mass for the political prisoners. Most significant among them was the meeting conducted by a group of women in Calcutta on 18 August 1937.[198] The meeting was held at the Ladies Park, Rash Behari Avenue by the side of the Sikh Gurudwara from 3:35- 4:35 PM to protest against lathi charge by the police on the processionists on 14 August 1937, a preceding meeting. A small congress flag was hoisted. Several significant slogans including “Bande Mataram” and “Rajbandier Mukti chai” were heard and the processionists condemned

[198] Home (Political) Department. 18 August 1937. “Proposed Prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta on 18 and 19August 1937 in connection with Lathi charge on precisionists on 14 Aug 1937.” NAI PB (WB)

police action against the peaceful protesters. There were 150 women in the audience, and among them were 39 women including Heaprova Majumdar, Sarala Debi, Nalini Prova Ghosh, Mithi Ben, Sudha Roy, Shyamal Roy, who took the cause of the political prisoners to a newer level.

Police records of the meetings and processions suggest the participants' views on different aspects of the inflicted atrocities committed against the Andaman prisoners. Sudha Roy, a participant, stated that so long as British Imperialism existed they would elect such ministers whose action might be worse than the present ministers who were hostile to the cause of the nation's freedom. So it was necessary to destroy British imperialism and the New Constitution that was soon to be implemented. Roy also termed Gandhi, Patel and Nehru who were leading key roles in putting the new constitution to work as misleading leaders as they had always believed in British supremacy. The clarion call was thus for the people of the country to unite and start a country-wide agitation. Sarala Debi, another Bengali woman participant, stated that the demands of the Andaman prisoners were reasonable; they wanted repatriation to their own 'country' ('mainland'). The ministers could not find their way to bring them back. Moreover, the lathi charge on the peaceful precisionists who demanded their repatriation could not have been done without the connivance of the ministers. She appealed to the 'mothers' and 'sisters' to unite and start agitation in every village and every district and act accordingly to the directions of the Working Committee of the Congress. It is important to note here that, within the system of the Congress' organized plans for home rule and people's ideas of complete independence there existed a prevailing voice of freedom among people that came forward in such meetings.

Nalini Prava, another participant of the movement spoke in Bengali:

> The people of Calcutta took out a procession on the 14th instant to express their sympathy towards those prisoners, but they were assaulted by the Police with lathis. They would have to take vengeance for this insult. They must unite—only the male and female students would not do, the police officers and reporters should also join and start agitation to put a stop to this oppression. There were many peasants and workers starving and if they joined this movement the few Government officers would not be able to check them.

> They must start agitation to achieve independence without which oppressions would not be stopped.[199]

Significant here to note is that the cause of the Andaman prisoners slowly addresses the question of the nation and its subjects, and the Andaman question is a significant case in point that motivated women processionists to integrate both the subjects. Uma Nath Sen, another participant, speaking in Bengali said that about 250 political prisoners in the Andamans had resorted to hunger strike for over 25 days. And after the news of hunger strike came to the knowledge of 'mainland' prisoners, 22 prisoners had gone on hunger strike at the Alipore jail. This period is mediated by the cause of people who suffered at the hands of colonial authorities and addresses larger questions of nation and nationhood giving an impetus to the resistance movement.

In a meeting held at Girish Park the same day, i.e., 18 August 1937, at 7:05 PM, the issue of lathi charge on Strand Road on 14 August 1937, was taken up. Political activists Bhupen Dutt, Sitaram Sakshiri, Phani Ghose, Soumen Tagore and the repatriated Andamans prisoners Barindra Ghose and Jagat Bose drew attention of the public to the miserable fate of the exiled prisoners. They reported that 200 of them went on hunger strike for their repatriation and release. All participants of the meeting supported principles of violence that the political prisoners had embraced earlier to make India a free nation and thereby supported the cause of Indian rebellion. Consequently, the public meeting at Girish Park gave a clarion call for a strong resistance movement of common people against the British Government in India. The police reported that in the meeting, Dayaram Beri raised slogans: "Daman niti barbad," "Andaman bandi choordeo" and "Rajbandi mukti chai," and thereby gave rise to a sense of insecurity that was evident.

In this meeting, the president was Jagat Bose, a former Andaman prisoner who was released two months prior to this event. Phani Ghose, a participant, stated: "The Government had kept 250 youths of their country imprisoned in a far off place and thereby deprived them of the opportunity of seeing their near and dear ones...They did not even feel the least scruple in placing those youths who showed them the path to

[199] Home (Political) Department. 18 August 1937. NAI PB (WB). "Proposed Prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta on 18th and 19th August 1937 in connection with Lathi charge on precisionists on 14 Aug 1937." NAI PB (WB).

freedom, in the category of thieves and dacoits...The dacoits could be pardoned, but there was no pardon for them..”[200] He claimed in the meeting that the popular ministers refused to entertain their demands as they were now labouring under a sense of false prestige. The speaker, Phani Ghose, appealed people to create such a situation in the country as would throw open the gates of the Andaman jail. Bhuendra Dutt, another participant, stated that the Government paid no heed to the just grievances of the Andaman prisoners and so they went on hunger strike as a form of protest:

> The news reached them today that 250 detenus of the Berhampore Detention camp also went on hunger strike out of sympathy for the Andaman prisoners. The agitation was being carried out all over India, but the Government remained inexorable. They got self-government but got nothing tangible from it. (ibid)

Soumen Tagore, a nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, a prominent labour leader, claimed that if the Government cared for public opinion of this country the demands of millions of people all over the country would not be neglected in this manner. He suggested the boycott of British goods which would create unemployment in England. The merchants would then pressurize the respective governments and as a result of these two pressures, the enemy would break down.

Jagat Bose, a former Andaman prisoner who was released two months prior to this event, claimed that in spite of the place being unfit for human habitation, the youths of Bengal were sent there in 1932. Citing the scarcity of fresh drinking water, the monotony of poor as well as same diet and the torturous stay in tiny ‘ill ventilated’ and ‘damp’ cells in penal settlement as the rationale for embracing the idea of hunger-strike which was first actualized in 1933 in the Andamans. Mahabir, Mohan Kishore and Mohit were the first to face death. The prisoners who survived the ordeal of the protest in the form of self-suffering were unable to unveil the mystery of the dead as they did not know the actual incident surrounding their fellow hunger-strikers’ death.

[200] Home (Political) Department. 18 August 1937. “Proposed Prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta on 18th and 19th August 1937 in connection with Lathi charge on precisionists on 14 Aug 1937.” NAI PB (WB).

It is reported that their corpses were flung overboard indicating colonial manipulation to silence flurries of protests.

Bose stated that while being repatriated, the political prisoners still there in Andamans had asked him to remind the countrymen that they were not traitors to their country though it might be that they had taken a wrong course. So the cause of the Andaman prisoners was the cause of the country and its people. He concluded that only boycotting British goods would compel the Government to accept their demands. In addition, Bose asked his compatriots to "be prepared for a wide-spread strike" (ibid). In short Bose's speech sought to unite people for the cause of political prisoners and aspire to integrate their cause with the freedom of India.

Repatriation speeches at Calcutta and other places sought to remind the general public that an alternative section of people—mediated by resting to "violence" in their initial period and taking to mass agitation of hunger strikes and denial for work in the Andamans—suffered a great deal for the cause of the nation. Anti-Gandhian in their approach, they sought to revisit their alternatives and found a spirit in non-violence movement and civil disobedience movement. This is realm where 'militant nationalism' collaborates with 'Gandhian liberal nationalism' to invert colonial oppression of the country.

The 'Nationalist' Question for Andaman Prisoners

The advent of a political and nationalist spirit can be traced back to the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 by Allen Octavian Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Edulji Wacha. Its formation intended towards congregation of a group of educated individuals on a common platform motivating nation-building through policy-making. It did not demand independence from the British then. But a desire of 'Home Rule' is gradually preached, and the word 'National' in the party name alludes to the same.[201] Independence as an immediate need came up with partition of Bengal in 1905 when the nation saw the first division of states on the basis

[201] Gandhi, Mahatma. *Collected Volumes of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 10, 1956, p 247.

of religion and region. The partition of Bengal, however, gave rise to the fear of a fragmented nation that circulated in India.

The imperialist demand was to boycott British products and the revival of domestic products and production process. Prior to 1905 Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, proposed partition of Bengal devised on a religious and political agenda. This indirectly led to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906. With All-India Muslim League, an elaborate religious consciousness emanated in India. Consciousness of the nation based on a singular religion dawns on the consciousness of one's religion and hence, a sense of belongingness both to the nation and diversified-yet-unified religion. With this, ethnicity as a governing factor for culturing one's identity came into force. This plan of Curzon was earlier apprehended by Indian political leaders that gave rise to anti-partition movements. To counter the apprehended partition based on religion, a sense of 'national' identity was to be cultivated. Gandhi wrote: "At the individual level *Swarayja* is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing self-reliance".[202] *Swadeshi* movement based on economic self-sufficiency from 1905 to 1911,[203] described as the soul of *Swarajya* (self-rule) could be equated with *moksha* or salvation.[204] It was followed by Non-cooperation Movement (1921) that promised self-respect to Indians, and was led by Tilak and Gandhi to implant a sense of oneness and nationhood among the Indians. An appeal was made to all men over the age of 18 to join the movement as volunteers. Consequently, thousands of students left their schools and colleges to join the movement, and *khadi* and *charkha* became symbols of this nationalist movement. Similarly in southern India, with the abolition of the Islamic Caliphate and capture and fall of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims protested against the Empire which resulted as the Khilafat Movement (1919-24). This was also supported by Gandhi in order to absorb Muslims into the mainstream society. Later, this movement took a religious turn and resulted in the Moplah movement. Savarkar canonized these incidences as a process of national consciousness. Undoubtedly, these movements served as a kind of consciousness among the mass which were utilized for a pan-

[202] Gandhi, M.K. *Young India*. 28 June, 1928.

[203] See Kant M.L. Verma's *Swadhin Sangram Ke Krantikari Sahitya KaItihas* (in Hindi). [Vol-1, (1st ed). New Delhi: Praveen Prakashan, 2006].

[204] Gandhi, M.K. *Young India*, 8 December, 1920, p. 886.

Indian struggle. But this type of passive resistance did not endure for long and took shape of the formation of a network of secret revolutionary organizations determined to meet the government on equal terms by arms and militancy. Militant nationalism developed during the Bengal partition and it was not confined to Bengal only but spread to other parts of India. During Savarkar's times it was framed with poignancy and with a religious segregation.

In Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, a book that is in the form of conversation between the Editor (Gandhi) and the Reader (common Indian people), the Editor, the mouthpiece of Gandhi narrates the effect of partition as:

> After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of the Partition. That spirit was seen in the outspoken writings in the Press. That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and to be written publicly. The Swadeshi movement was inaugurated. People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face; it now no longer awes them. They do not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the best sons of India are at present in banishment. This is something different from mere petitioning. Thus are the people moved. The spirit generated in Bengal has spread in the north to the Punjab, and in the south to Cape Comorin. (CWMG, 10: 252)

He also, though not referring to the beginning of militancy in the nation, confirms that after partition, a new kind of national sentiment was brewed that divided the party. He also gives information about the division of INC:

> Our leaders are divided into two parties: the Moderates and the Extremists. These may be considered as the slow party and the impatient party. Some call the Moderates timid party and the Extremists the bold party. All interpret the two words according to their preconceptions. This much is certain—that there has arisen an enmity between the two. The one distrusts the other and imputes motives. (CWMG, 10:252)

Hence, the ideal of independence was first publicly put forward by the advanced nationalists of Bengal in 1906 just after the partition of Bengal.[205] Ujjwal Singh notes: "The Gandhian call for 'sacrifice' and 'suffering' for the 'motherland', took the form of voluntary imprisonment which was markedly different from the martyrdom and individual heroism of revolutionary terrorists." V.D. Savarkar, transported for Nasik Conspiracy Case, in his autobiography *The Story of My Transportation for Life* (1927) suggests his fellow prisoners: "You must be ready to fight. India must be fully armed to fight and win her freedom, whatever be the cost of that struggle, whatever the ordeal she has to pass through to reach the goal." (37). Accordingly, demand of a free India was pronounced through violent methods. A bifurcated group of agitators, called the extremists, came to the fore, who initially worked with the moderates.[206] This national consciousness has been marked by militancy, disobeying orders, going on hunger strikes and denying to labouring for the imperial government during penal detention.

The discourse of nationalist movement and the criticality of a pan-Indian movement are problematic sites of cultural/anti-imperial encounters. Strikingly, there was also a growing popularity and solidarity of the common mass with the political prisoners who, it was concluded, supported arm-struggle. In the absence of arms and freedom of movement and expression to a great extent, a strong resistance movement marked by hunger strike and non-cooperation to work remained a way of struggle in the Cellular Jail. While the colonial archives suggest that it is the labour of mainland leaders that brought freedom to the nation, the native documents suggest that the happening at the Andamans, and communication that was possible because of release of term convicts or importation of information through newspaper scrapings,[207] was instrumental in India's achievement of freedom. The native texts, specifically autobiographical

[205] As noted by Peter Heehs in the Preface to *Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism* (1998).

[206] The members of the INC favoured orderly progress and constitutional agitation until 1907, the time of its bifurcation into 'moderates' and 'extremists'. The 1904 proposal of Bengal partition by Lord Curzon instilled anger in some of the members of the group leading to a new sect called 'extremist' who no long believed in systematic method of progress followed by meetings and applications, rather they laid their faith on the aggressive methods. This led to an ideological clash and a new group of aggressive members grew inside the party. Two more parties came into prominence. One, the Extremist group that worked inside the INC demanded violent methods to be undertaken, and the other one All India Muslim League that demanded and later promised a whole new state.

[207] Savarkar, 1927: 102.

narratives, of political prisoners recollect events, they claim, played significant role in getting freedom. These autobiographies imply an anti-colonial ideology and also imply an ideological clash among the mainland and Andaman nationalist leaders.

On 24 July 1937, about 225 political prisoners in the Andamans Central Prison had gone on hunger-strike. One of their demands was general release of all political prisoners and repeal of all repressive laws. But the Government of India had decided not to consider any of their demands unless they gave up the strike. On 3 August 1937, Tagore asserts, "It is more than a week since about 200 political prisoners have gone on a hunger strike in the Andamans. The news of which was withheld from the us for a long time. This callous indifference to public sentiment is a sad reminder of our national helplessness" (821). A deputation of political sufferers from Bengal and the Punjab waited on Gandhi in the evening. The deputation is understood to have urged Gandhiji to make the question of release of political prisoners a major issue before the country and further urged that the Congress Ministries should go to the length of resigning if necessary over the issue in order to bring pressure on Government. This marked the intersection between militant and Gandhian nationalism to a significant extent.

The detained militant nationalists, who led armed resistance against British colonialism, went on hunger-strike during their detention in the Andamans Penal Settlement. It was not only for creating a pressure on the Government to free them but also against the penal exploitation of physical, and mental juvenescence and on the eve of its extinction. They derived political force from Gandhian nationalism as Gandhi contextualized his non-violent resistance against imperialism through his epic fasts. But as regard to political prisoner's hunger-strike, Gandhi sternly opposed it and he writes in a telegram to Viceroy on 27 August 1937. The hunger-strike of the political prisoners was focal-point where militant nationalism versed with Gandhian nationalism. Gandhian philosophy, in turn, contextualized militant nationalism within its non-violent ideology with a proposed ideological appropriation of political extremism.

For Gandhi fasting was a powerful weapon of *Satyagraha*, truth or soul force. It was based on truth. Gandhi and the liberal nationalists preached the path of passive

resistance or Satyagraha. Passive resistance, as Gandhi explains, is "a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms." He explains:

> When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force…The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters. When we do not like certain laws, we do not break the heads of law-givers but we suffer and do not submit to the laws…Soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms.[208]

It was equated with self-suffering and selfless love. It was a three-fold purification process– purification of self, of the opponents and of humankind. Gandhi believed that it is a way to release pain. It was meant to inflict pain on the self for nation's welfare. Its moral force was believed to be the transformation in colonizers' mindset to bestow freedom on the people of India. From this perspective, Gandhi differentiated the Andamans prisoners' hunger-strike from his *Satyagraha*-fasting. Both denied food, one to pressurize the Empire and by this to inflict pain on others, the other to inflict pain on the self for purgation. Hunger-strike of the Andamans prisoners seemed to imply to Gandhi an outrageous expression of hatred, impatience and lack of moral force for self-suffering. The hunger-strike reflected their passive resistance. The five reasons which Gandhi laid for the difference between *Satyagraha* and Passive resistance can be brought in here to explore why Gandhi told the Andamans political prisoners to suspend their hunger-strike. Gandhi mentioned that passive resistance was a weapon of the weak. For him passive resistance did not cater to love but to hatred. There was possibility of physical force in passive resistance; physical force leads to violence. He observed that passive resistance could not be offered unless they had ceased to be "dear to us." Lastly, in Gandhian notion, passive resistance had a potent power of violence which is suppressed. The two nationalist groups communicated in various occasions for dropping of armed movement and for

[208] *Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol 10 (292-295).

call off of hunger strike. When the political prisoners' hunger-strike set the colonized nation in commotion, Gandhi sent a proposal of negotiation to the agitated political convicts. Gandhi, for instance, sent a telegram to Viceroy, pleading the political prisoners to give up hunger strike.[209]

Gandhi asserted that he would negotiate with the imperial government for political prisoners' repatriation which Gandhi believed to get if terrorist detenus mitigated their ideological differences by embracing non-violence in furthering the cause of Independence. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on 18 November 1937 Gandhi mentioned it:

> The Ministers have agreed to release what they call 'village and home domiciled' detenus… for the rest they will accept my recommendation, if they are not earlier released. My recommendation will depend upon my ascertaining the present belief of the detenus. If I am able to say to the Government that they do not believe in methods of violence for the attainment of independence. (*CWMG* vol. 72: 391)

A voluminous correspondence bears witness to this historical confrontation between liberal and militant nationalists over the issue. The Congress Working Committee had a resolution to repatriate the political prisoners to mainland India. They also demanded the penal settlement be closed down.[210] A telegram to Rabindranath Tagore states: "Pray depend upon my doing utmost end Andaman crisis[211] (*CWMG* 72: 138) This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of 16August 1937, which read: "Have wired Andaman prisoners give up hunger strike. Their lives must be saved. Hope you

[209] "You will help me personally if I could get assurance that those who believed in terrorist methods no longer believe in non-violence as the best method. I ask this because some leaders say detenus have abjured terrorism but opinion to contrary has been also expressed". Vide "Telegram to Rabindranath Tagore", 16-8-1937.

[210] Vide "Congress Working Committee Resolution on Andamans Prisoners".

[211] About 225 political prisoners in the Andamans Central Prison had gone on hunger-strike on July 24, 1937. They undauntedly demanded release of all political prisoners and repeal of all repressive laws. But the Government of India had decided not to consider any of their demands unless they gave up the strike. Vide also "Telegram to Viceroy", 27-8-1937, and "Telegram to Andamans Prisoners", 30-8-1937.

and Jawaharlal will also exert your influence."[212] Another telegram to Viceroy on August 27, 1937 stated:

> If hunger-strike and Andamans still on could you please wire following to strikers. Quote. I venture add my advice to Gurudev Tagore[213] and working committee[214] to abandon strike replying upon us all trying best secure relief for you. It would be graceful on your part yield nationwide request. You will help me personally if I could get assurance that those who believed in terrorist methods no longer believe in them and that they have come to believe in non-violence as the best method. I ask this because some leaders say detenus have abjured terrorism but opinion to contrary also has been expressed. Gandhi. Unquote. I shall esteem your kindly asking for reply to be wired.[215] (CWMG, 72:160-161)

The Government, on the other hand, sought the same from the prisoners for their pardon. Consequently, the Government made an association with Gandhi and the Congress: "Government earnestly desire the active association with themselves of all who genuinely wish for the ordered and non-violent political development of the country. Your own support I claim with the confidence of one who knows how much you have the same object at heart" (CWMG, 73:459). Gandhi's contingent assurance for pardon had some phenomenal influence among the hunger-strikers except seven. The prisoners who accepted Gandhian proposal wrote to Gandhi on 30 August 1937:

> Touched by nationwide appeal and your message. We supend [sic] hunger-strike on assurance that the whole country has taken up our demands and

[212] Ibid.

[213] Vide "Telegram to Rabindranath Tagore", 16-8-1937.

[214] Vide "Congress Working Committee Resolution on Andamans Prisoners." NAI PB.

[215] To this, the Viceroy's reply reads: "Many thanks for your message which I am having repeated to the hunger-strikers that they should telegraph reply to you." The telegram dated August 28 from Andamans reads: "Your message was personally delivered by me this morning, August 28, to the hunger-strikers who asked for time to discuss the question of calling off the strike and are still deliberating at 7 p.m. Hope to send further report tomorrow." On August 29, Gandhiji received the following telegram: "Hunger-strike suspended unconditionally late last night by an overwhelming majority who broke their fast. Only seven remaining on hunger-strike." For Gandhiji's reply, vide "Telegram to Andamans Prisoners", 30-8-1937.

> because we are confidently hoping that within a reasonable period of time you will succeed in getting all our demands fulfilled. We are glad you have given us the opportunity to express our firm opinion on terrorism do not hold to it anymore and are convinced of its futility as a political weapon or creed, we declare that it definitely retards rather than advances the cause of our county [sic]. (Ibid)

The seven terrorists who did not yield to Gandhian call upheld 'militant' nationalism. Gandhi repeatedly sent his requests to persuade them to stop the strike as he said that hunger-strike for the release from imprisonment was not honorable. A telegram to Andaman prisoners was sent from Gandhi on 30 August 1937 that contained where he thanked them to succumb to his own demands:

> Thanks Telegram. Glad all but seven broken fast. Do seven give reasons for continuing fast? I plead with them not persist allowing country chance seek relief. Will detenus not answer my question about non-violence?[216] (72: 176)

A letter dated 02 September 1937 confirms that hunger-strike was still continuing in the Andamans. The seven prisoners who were continuing hunger-strike sent the following message.

> Begins: Thanks for your telegram regarding terrorism. We declared it will harm rather than help the cause of country. We take this opportunity to convey through you our appeal to all sufferers in jails and detention camps and to all organizations if there be any who still believe to attain independence of India through terrorism, to give it up, once for all. We further request you to clarify what you mean by 'relief'. We think after Government inaugurating provincial autonomy, relief can only mean release of all political prisoners, detenus, State

[216] At 7 p.m. on the same day, Gandhi received a telegram from political prisoners stating: "Touched by nationwide appeal and your message. We supend hunger-strike on assurance that the whole country has taken up our demands and because we are confidently hoping that within a reasonable period of time you will succeed in getting all our demands fulfilled. We are glad you have given us the opportunity to express our firm opinion on terrorism. We feel honoured to inform you and through you the nation that those of us who ever believed terrorism do not hold to it any more and are convinced of its futility as a political weapon or creed. We declare that it definitely retards rather than advances the cause of our county." (ibid.)

> prisoners, internees, removal of ban on exiles and repeal of all repressive laws. If we get assurance from you on these questions, we can suspend hunger-strike. Ends.

Gandhi's offer of freedom to them at the cost of terrorism depicted the inner conundrums of militant nationalism. It also points out philosophical chasm between self and social consciousness. Most of the political prisoners' approach to Gandhian non-violence presents how the extremists dealt with the evitable crisis. It also shows how Gandhi strived to establish "militant non-violence." Gandhi's dream of inclusion of the extremists in his non-violence politics became a major concern for Gandhi in its realization during 1937-1938. He along with the Congress Working Committee went through untiring phases of negotiations with the Government for the prisoners. In August 1937, the Congress Working Committee demanded the immediate release of the political prisoners and the closure of the penal settlement which the committee deemed as "barbaric." Gandhi sought justification of his decision of non-violent mediation with militant nationalists from his compatriots and well-wishers, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose, Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru to name a few. His intercession with the political prisoners reached an important phase when he encountered the detenus at Alipore Jail in Calcutta in the October of 1937. The agreement between Gandhi and Viceroy Lord Linlithgow confirmed their repatriation on the condition that the prisoners were ready to give an undertaking not to engage in violent activities in future. Finally they were sent back to 'mainland' in phases and the last phase of 109 'terrorist' prisoners were transported back on 18 January 1938.[217] The prisoners brought back from the Andamans made their demands clear if they were not further released, or if Gandhi told them of his failure to keep his words, they would resume hunger-strikes. At this Gandhi swore upon his life to secure relief for them. And he also requested the prisoners to put down the idea of hunger-strike. Through *The Hindu* the agitators were confirmed that Gandhi was then still communicating with the strikers. A telegram to Surendranath Moitra dated 14

[217] IOR: Telegram from Home Department Government of India to the Secretary of State, No. F. 5/14/37-Jails 7 January 1938. NAI PB.

September 1937, states "I am in constant telegraphic communication with the authorities and the prisoners."[218]

The Congress constantly tried to persuade the militant nationalists to drop the idea of violence. A chain of communication between Gandhi and Gopichand Bhargava, specially on 12 October, is an example. Gandhi consoles him that he has not forgotten the Andaman prisoners. He wanted to examine the case from close and know the political prisoners' position. He states:

> So far as I know these class distinctions are gone. These friends should help the Congress Ministers for they have their difficulties. You may give them the assurance that I shall strain every nerve not merely to see that they are well treated but that they are discharged. But I must be able myself to give the assurance in every individual case. Their noble response to me has paved the way, but it ought not to be held as sufficient for full fruition of the common hope. The main reason for my going to Calcutta for the A. I. C. C. is to examine the whole position, and to see what I can do in the matter.[219]

After this Calcutta meeting he reported to the press on 17 October 1937 that Andaman prisoners cannot be forgotten. He remembered the promises made to them and that "I would strain every nerve to secure their release." Assuring them of their release he states: "I hope that they will not resort to hunger-strike so long as they know that the public is not supine about their welfare...And I urge the public and the Press to keep a vigilant eye on this urgent matter...I expect that in this there is no difference between the Congress and other organizations"[220] (72: 348).

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[218] In reply to the addressee's telegram that requests Gandhi to intervene again to end the hunger-strike of the remaining seven Andamans prisoners.

[219] For Gandhi's "Statement to the Press" regarding the Andaman prisoners, vide "Statement to the Press", 17-10-1937.

[220] When Gandhiji visited the political prisoners in Alipore Jail, he said to them: "There should be no hunger-strike on any account. Though there are circumstances conceivable in which a hunger-strike may be justified, hunger-strike in order to secure release or redress of grievances is wrong. And if you resort to it whilst I am carrying on negotiations, you will clip my wings… I want to see you discharged before I die. That is the word I am giving to you, and I want you to give me your word that so long as I live to work for you, you will not go on hunger-strike." Vide *Harijan* 23-4-1938 (*CWMG*, 72: 376).

There are multiple phases in which Gandhi and Savarkar led negotiations. Finally, the Bengal Government gave its decision of the release of the 'terrorist' convicts with ambivalence. On 11May 1938 in a letter Khwaja Nazimuddin informed Gandhi of the Government-scheme which declared the release of the all detainers and of those who had less than 18 months of sentence.[221] Regarding the rest of the convicts an Advisory Committee was formed to examine them on the basis of individual merits and recommendations in spite of Gandhi's assurance to the Government of the detenus' acceptance of non-violence. This was a point of contention in the issue of the deliverance of the political prisoners. One of the major anxious concerns of the scheme was the total elimination of terrorism the responsibility of which the Government assigned to Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee. However, the intersection of militancy and non-violence is the most important episode in the Indian nationalist discourse, the dichotomy of what still exists.

Conclusion

Juridical literature on the Andaman political prisoners combines imperialism and Gandhian nationalism forming a microcosm of the 'mainland' nationalist discourse. Their style of petitioning with a strategic manoeuvre of ideological switchover can be interpreted as an attempt of decriminalization of the political prisoners. In the Andaman penal settlement, a relatively oppositional society was perceived in terms of a criminal culture. The culture puts forward opportunities for the ordinary convicts whereas the political yet educated convicts' life was passed in solitary confinement. While colonial documents claim that "there can be no sort of doubt that transportation to Port Blair has come to be looked upon as scarcely any punishment at all,"[222] the political prisoners' writings propose the settlement as an 'inhuman incarceration'. The autobiographies narrate a different story from what the colonial documents present. And while the autobiographies, written years after their repatriation, claim Andamans to be a 'dehumanising' space as Ghose states, the petitions filed by the same political prisoners explore a plethora of discrepancies. Their adoption of petition method begging repatriation from the Andamans rendered their belief of being true freedom

[221] Vide "Letter to Khwaja Nazimuddin", 15-5-1938.

[222] Nos 90-91. Foreign department notes. Internal-b, September 1906, NAI PB.

fighters who can sacrifice for the motherland a self-contradiction. The petitions of Hrishikesh Kanjilal, G.D. Savarkar, V.D. Savarkar, Nand Gopal, Barindra Ghose, Sudhir Kumar Sarcar and Savarkar's wife Yamunabai are suggestive of discrepancies within militant nationalists as their unity was put at stake each time a 'political' prisoner or any of their family members filed a petition.

In almost all the petitions, a sense of belongingness for the country is witnessed for which they were ready to compromise with the Empire and also interestingly repentance for past 'militant' activities can be ascertained from these petitions. What is surprising is that each prisoner proves himself worthy of release by showing to the Administration their change in behaviour. And each has shown that the 'militant' activities were undertaken under someone else's spell, and that they should not be held responsible for that. Strikingly, hunger strike and filing petitions occurred during the same stretch of time. The rhetoric of their petitions contradicted to a significant extent with the poetics of the nationalist sentiment—'militant' and/between 'liberal'—running throughout the country in 'mainland' and the Andamans as well. Moreover, voices of resistance, tensions, 'tyranny of love' and tactical welcome of non-violence can be figured underneath their petitions. These petitions are hardly deconstructed and attracted very meagre attention for critical scholarship.

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

The thesis presents an intricate relationship between ‘mainland’ and the Andaman Islands that encapsulates 204 islands and a glorious yet sidelined history of Indian freedom struggle. The archipelago stands as an epitome of scenic beauty and the historical landscape treasures unpleasant tales of British colonial administration and Japanese operation of power on the islands. The Cellular Jail, now commemorated as a national memorial, has witnessed the sacrifice made by political prisoners who are now institutionalized as freedom fighters. But hardly are the other ‘ordinary’ prisoners remembered for their service to the islands. The colonial archives and autobiographical sketches suggest that this section of prisoners was given the facilities for growth and prosperity on the islands. But after independence few are remembered and there is hardly any document acknowledging their sacrifice and hardship that made the Andamans an elaborate convict society.

With multiple visions in mind, the Empire had established a penal colony on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Perhaps transportation of prisoners was one of the rewarding and lucrative strategies devised by the Empire but it affected the native Andamanese tribes to a significant extent. Secondly, the place of transportation, that is, the Andamans, gave multiple opportunities to the empire for its development as a colony, and subsequently helped to expand its power and extend its territory. Thirdly, the Cellular Jail worked as an apparatus to control and monitor the agitating population in ‘mainland’ who were subsequently transported to the Andamans. This thesis sought to explain different movements that ‘Indian nationalists’ led against the Empire that strategically controlled Indian political situation by confining and restricting the communication of the agitators. The repercussions of these movements confirm natives’ speculation that the Empire strategically put a limit on the uprising to revert, leading to the extension of its geographical boundary and power. On the one hand, stronger actions were to be taken to restrict the general public from communicating with agitators convicted, and on the other hand, the islands were to be

strategically captured. To stay politically safe by transporting the agitating convicts to the far-off remote islands, and to derive profit from the transportation process are two strategies developed. But hardly did the empire know that the convicts who were housed in remote islands could pose a threat that would command attention of the media, public, 'mainland' political leaders and lastly of the Government.

The autobiographies in question—Savarkar's *The Story of my Transportation for Life* (1927), Bhai Parmanand's *The Story of My Life* (2003), Ullaskar Dutt's *Twelve Years of Prison Life* (1925) and Barindra Kumar Ghose's *The Tale of My Exile* (1922) provide a different dimension to the understanding of colonial governance and put archival data pertaining to penal culture of the Andaman Cellular Jail under scrutiny. The thesis examines these autobiographies with a sceptical analysis of 'nationalism question' and at the same time it reads colonial archives to map the discrepancies existing in the archives. The authenticity of events is closely examined contrariwise reading the narratives—colonial and native—of nationalist period. While autobiographies of political prisoners condemn the legitimacy of working of the penal settlement and treatment meted out to them, the colonial archives question the prisoner-writers' patriotic sentiments that are expressed in autobiographies. And, lastly, the thesis also deals with prisoners who were transported just after the Mutiny. The (auto)biographical sketches of this section of prisoners present an alternative narrative. The section of the thesis on Maulana Jafar Thanesari, Moulvie Ahmed Oolah, Moulvie Ala-ud-din, Moulvie Fazl-e-Haqq Khairabadi and Dudhnath Tewarry suggest that their treatment was comparatively lenient. And, Thanesari, Moulvie Ala-ud-in and Dudhnath Tewarry are cases of exception as they returned 'mainland' with wealth and prosperity.

The thesis moves back and forth between the events occurring in 'mainland' and in the Andamans showing the geographical, cultural and political connection and inter-relation between the two far-off geographically disjointed places. It moves from the rebellion of 1857 to the resistance movement of the first half of the twentieth century presenting ultimately a broad view of nationalism that was not restricted to 'mainland' India. There are many landmark events that India as a national entity witnessed. To

begin with, the battle of Plassey in 1757 introduced the idea of revolt to the submissive subjects of the colonial Empire, Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 resulted in the transfer of power to the British crown and establishment of a convict society in the Andamans. Subsequently, these affairs cultivated the ideal of independence in Indian population. The partition of Bengal into West and East in 1905 is another milestone in the history of India giving rise to a staunch nationalistic fervour that found attention of the middle class intelligentsia who reacted to it vehemently. The spirit of unity and the realisation of the need of unity among regions were cultivated only after partition. Debates on nation and nationalism led to violent consequences and also division of Indian National Congress. The bifurcation of INC into moderate and extremist groups led to multiple other events. Secret societies became active and middle-class youth supported militancy that was later perceived by the empire as 'terrorist nationalism' and transportation of these convicts changed the idea of the penal settlement forever.

There are multifarious forms of nationalism that found an emblematic expression during the Indian freedom struggle movement. While spiritual leaders such as Swami Vivekananda and the Irish Elizabeth Noble or Sister Nivedita showed the way of spiritual nationalism, Aurobindo Ghose's *Jugantar* and *Bande Mataram* and Gangadhar Tilak's *Kesari* became serious texts articulating the potency of aggressive resistance. Expression of nationalistic rhetoric through media and public speeches resulted in the growth of nationalistic ideas. Starkly opposing to these nationalistic ideals was the INC, led by eminent leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and M.K. Gandhi. In short, there was a division among the nationalists' ideologies. While the group supporting arm movement was called the extremists and they adhered to and aspired for political economic and cultural independence that demanded complete self-rule, the other group, moderate nationalists, worked with the Imperial Government for an amelioration of India's status as a colonial possession. The thesis looks into such instances that showcase nationalistic temper and corroborates them with colonial archival and native writings. Undoubtedly, there are discrepancies between colonial and native accounts, but, more often than not, facts come up with close reading and critical handling of the issues.

The thesis presents political ideologies propagated by the moderates and the extremists, and also their differences in opinions. It establishes that hunger strikes and the voice raised by women precisionists were instrumental in forcing the 'mainland' leaders and the Government to repatriate the political prisoners. On the one hand, nationalistic feelings and love for the nation were growing momentously in the cells among the prisoners and the act of hunger strike was symbolic of their patriotism towards the country. On the other hand, the support of public from 'mainland' after news of hunger strike was circulated established their voice of resistance and gave testimony to their motive of sacrifice. Voices from the Andamans and 'mainland' united to prove the ideology of the INC incompetent to bring freedom to the country. But inversely, the archives hold mercy petitions of political prisoners begging pardon from the Government which put their ideology and patriotic sentiment in doubtful veracity.

In immortalizing the political prisoners incarcerated in the Andamans while the postcolonial nation has commemorated the Cellular Jail as a National Memorial, it has recognized the political prisoners' "sacrifices" for the "love of their beloved nation". Two significant phenomena occur during this period. First, it is established that between 1857 (Mutiny / First War of Independence) and 1942 (Japanese Occupation), the Empire negotiated with Indian convicts to establish an elaborate convict society in the Andamans. The second part of the factual "tale" is lost in oblivion. Though the postcolonial Indian nation highly romanticizes the sacrifice of freedom fighters incarcerated in the Cellular Jail, the contribution of hard convicts and women criminals—convicted chiefly for the purpose of developing the Andamans as a full-scale human habitat—remains significant yet undocumented owing to the absence of their personal narratives. The Andaman history thus is a problematic site which needs further research and critical investigation.

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Appendix

Political Prisoners in the Andamans I[223]

Elsewhere we publish a note which gives a description of the treatment accorded to political prisoners in the Andamans. The account, we are sure, will be read with a sense of painful interest; and the feeling will be one of general regret that a Government, like the Government of India, presided over by a statesman whose watchword is conciliation and who has done much to heal old wounds, should treat political prisoners I the way described in the account. It is in conflict with those canons of humanity and of prison-discipline which have been accepted by the civilized world. Let us not forget that it was an Englishman, Howard the philanthropist, who was the pioneer in the great movement for prison reform, and that if today the burden of prison life has been lightened, it is largely due to his self-sacrificing efforts. In India, the prison system with all its defects, and that there are defects none will dispute, is progressive and fairly responsive to public opinion. The whole system in the Andamans is out of date and is especially hard in its treatment of political prisoners. It must be so. Here are a group of islands in the Bay of Bengal, away from the influence of public opinion and used as a penal settlement. No one knows what takes place in these solitary islands, the abode of sadness and sorrow. There are no unofficial visitors. We fear there can be none. Is there even an occasional inspection and report by any independent authority? The officials are left to themselves, with enormous power over the prisoners. If they were gods, they would be demoralized; and the story of any abuse of power would not be wafted across a thousand miles of the Ocean. We as—is there any necessity for keeping up this penal settlement in the Bay of Bengal, where the officials are necessarily left to themselves and the Government of India can exercise but an ineffectual control? Transportation is an obsolete form of punishment in civilized countries. There was a time when it was very much in vogue in England; and prisoners used to be transported to Australia and other damans. These islands might be utilized in other ways and the prisoners dealt with at home as they are in other countries. The system of prison discipline in its application to the worst class of offenders is now beyond the influence of public

[223] Extract from Newspaper. *Bengalee*, Calcutta, 04 September 1912.

opinion. With the abolition of the penal settlement in the Andamans, it would be open to the inspection and scrutiny of public opinion. If the object of punishment be not merely the infliction of pain, but that it should serve as a deterrent, if the whole aim of the modern system of prison-discipline is to reclaim and to reform, we have no hesitation in saying that all that is defeated by the system in vogue in the Andamans, and it cannot work satisfactorily unless subject to the control of public opinion. As regards political prisoners in the Andamans the outstanding fact that strikes us is that they are treated worse than murderers. "Murder case men", says the account which we have published elsewhere, "are given plain tickets and are eligible for all sorts of easy jobs. They get clerical work, as writers, munshis and compounders." Here is an account of the physical condition of some of the political prisoners:—

"Abinash, Bibhuti, Ullaskar, Sudhir Sarcar, Bidhu, Kali, Nagendra Chandra, Abani and Priyanath had been going again and again to the hospital for malarial fever. Abinash and Ullas were very seriously ill only lately. Almost all of them have gone considerably down in weight. Bibhuti Bhushan is placed in North Bay and has to work on the salt depot. He has to spit four and a half cart loads of fuel for the salt ovens. The labour is evidently too much for a boy of his young age; repeated attacks of fever reduced him greatly and his colour turned pale and sickly. At last the Superintendent gave him light labour in the hope that the boy would be relieved of that excessively heavy work and thus get rest for making up his lost health."

It should be borne in mind that the Manipur prisoners who were sent to the Andamans in Lord Lansdowne's time were very differently treated. Why should not the political prisoners, now in the Andamans, be dealt with in the same way? We know that in the official statement they have been described as "so-called political prisoners," for the reason, we believe, that some of them were implicated in acts of murder. But so were the Manipur political prisoners. It is not only consistent with humanity, but it is in the highest degree wise and statesmanlike to treat these young men with kindness and thus bring them back from their erring ways and inspire them with the clemency and humanity of a Government of whose irresistible power they have already a foretaste.

Petition from Barindra K. Ghose[224]

Hoping that you will be graciously pleased to lay this humble petition before His Excellency Lord Hardinge's Government for kind consideration, with due respect and humble submission I beg to state that this sentence of 20 years' transportation for me amounts to a death sentence. My physique is extremely poor owing to malaria fever and I had been a lifelong invalid due to this reason, my weight at present being only 92 lbs. Port Blair is a hot-bed of malaria and the natural hardships of a long in incarceration added to that will in the long run undermine my health to such an extent as to bring on an untimely death. Nearly four months back I was laid down with an attack of typhoid fever, at that time my weight went down to 80 lbs. and it almost cost me my life. The extreme care taken by my kind-hearted senior Medical Officer Captain Murray and Dr. Mandal saved me from the very jaws of death. I have besides suffered most acutely from the rigours of this jail life both here as well as in Alipur jail, a thing from which no jail official, however kind-hearted and sympathetic, can save me unless His Excellency is graciously pleased to relent. During His Most Gracious Majesty's Coronation our fondest hopes of receiving pardon was not fulfilled. The presence of an honoured visitor like you has revived that dead hope again in our heart. The autocratic Government of Russia again and again extended political amnesty to all her political prisoners, and we are confident our Government being the leading light of civilisation and culture will not fail to overlook the past indiscretions of some misguided young men. I for one shall bind myself down to remain just where His Excellency wishes me to remain, abstain from all movements and obeying his slightest wishes. More than this I can say in a petition like this. Failing this I hope His Excellency will be graciously pleased to transfer me to a healthy part of India where I can have better food and nourishment than the jail-code of this place can allow. Hoping for kind consideration.

[224] Convict no. 31549. Petition to the Home Member of the Government of India. November 1913. Record No. 68-160. February 1914. Notes, Political.NAI ND.

Petition from V.D. Savarkar[225]

I beg to submit the following points for your kind consideration—

(1) When I came here in 1911 June, I was along with the rest of the convicts of my party taken to the office of the Chief Commissioner. There I was classed as "D" meaning dangerous prisoner; the rest of the convicts were not classed as 'D'. Then I had to pass full 6 months in solitary confinement. The other convicts had not. During that time I was put on the oil mill—the hardest labour in the jail. Although my conduct during all this time was exceptionally good still at the end of these six months I was not sent out of the jail; though the other convicts who came with me were. From that time to this day I have been in the jail; although I have tried to keep my behaviour as good as possible.

(2) When I petitioned for promotion I was told I was a special class prisoner and so could not be promoted. When any of us asked for better food or any special treatment we were told "You are only ordinary convicts and must eat what the rest do." Thus, Sir, Your Honour would see that only for special disadvantages we are classed as special prisoners.

(3) When the majority of my casemen were sent outside I requested for my own release. But, although I had been cased hardly twice or thrice and some of those who were released, for a dozen and more times, still I was not released with them because I was their casemen. But when after all, the order for my release was given and when just then some of the political prisoners outside were brought into the troubles I was locked in with them because I was their casemen.

(4) If I was in Indian jails I would have by this time earned much remission, could have sent more letters home, got visits. If I was a transportee pure and simple I would have by this time been released from this jail and would have been looking forward

[225] Convict no. 32778. Petition to the Home Member of the Government of India, 14 November 1913. Record No. 68-160. February 1914. Notes, Political.NAI ND.

for ticket-leave, etc. But as it is, I have neither the advantages of the Indian jail nor of this convict colony regulation; though had to undergo the disadvantages of both.

(5) Therefore will your honour be pleased to put an end to this anomalous situation in which I have been placed, by either sending me to Indian jails or by treating me as a transportee just like any other prisoner. I am not asking for any preferential treatment, though I believe as a political prisoner even that could have been expected in any civilized administration in the Independent nations of the world; but only for the concessions as favours that are shown even to the most depraved of convicts and habitual criminals! This present plan of shutting me up in *this jail* permanently makes me quite hopeless of any possibility of sustaining life and hope. For those who are term convicts the thing is different but, Sir, I have 50 years staring me in the face! How can I pull up moral energy enough to pass them in close confinement when even those concessions which the vilest of convicts can claim to smoothen their life are denied to me? Either please to send me to Indian jail for there I would earn (a) remission; (b) would have a visit from my people come every four months for those who had unfortunately been in jail know what a blessing it is to have a sight of one's nearest and dearest very now and then!!! (c) *and above all a moral—though not a legal—right of being entitled to release in 14 years*; (d) also more letters and other little advantages. Or if I cannot be sent to India I should be released and sent outside with a hope, like any other convict, to visits after 5 years, getting my ticket leave and calling over my family here. If this is granted then only one grievance remains and that is that I *should be held responsible only for my own faults and not of others*. It is a pity that I have to ask for this—it is such a fundamental right of every human being! For as there are on the one hand, some 20 political prisoners—young, active and restless, and on the other the regulations of a convict colony, by the very nature of them reducing the liberties of thought and expression to the lowest minimum possible; it is but inevitable that every now and then some one of them will be found to have contravened a regular or two and if all be held responsible for that, as now it is actually done—very little chance of being left outside remains for me.

In the end may I remind your honour to be so good as to go through the petition for clemency, that I had sent in 1900, and to sanction it for being forwarded to the Indian Government? The latest development of the Indian politics and the conciliating policy

of the Government have thrown open the constitutional line once more. Now no man having the good of India and Humanity at heart will blindly step on the thorny paths which in the excited and hopeless situation of India in 1906-07 beguiles us from the path of peace and progress. Therefore if the Government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me I for once cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English Government which is the foremost condition of that progress. As long as we are in jails there cannot be real happiness and joy in hundreds and thousands of homes of His Majesty's loyal subjects in India, for blood is thicker than water; but if we be released the people will instinctively raise a shout of joy and gratitude to the Government, who knows how to forgive and correct, more than how to chastise and avenge. Moreover my conversion to the constitutional line would bring back all those misled young men in India and abroad who were once looking up to me as their guide. I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like, for as my conversion is conscientious so I hope my future conduct would be. By keeping me in jail nothing can be got in comparison to what would be otherwise. The Mighty alone can afford to be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government?

Hoping your Honour will kindly take into notion these points.

Political Prisoners in the Andamans II[226]

Complaints continue to reach us with regard to the treatment of the political prisoners who are interned in the penal settlement on the Andaman Islands. The matter is one with which we would gladly not deal at the present moment: but the complaints are so insistent, and are so grave in their character, that we feel bound to call attention to them. It is true that, as the result of agitation in the Press, visits were paid to Port Blair by Sir Reginald Craddock,* the Home Member of the Viceroy's Council, and Sir Pardey Lukis,** the Director of Indian Medical Service: but although an opportunity was given to certain of the prisoners to state their grievances, it does not appear, from the information at our disposal, that any substantial attempt was made to meet them.

* Please see Hon'ble Member's note of the 23rd November 1913, in Political A., February 1915, nos. 68-160.
** Political B., February 1912, nos. 11-31.

In our view, no political prisoners should have been sent to the Andamans at all. The penal settlement there is a hideous blunder: and its continued existence is entirely out of keeping with modern ideas of jail administration. In any case, the convicts who are there are undergoing punishment for crimes which are not only of the most serious character, but involve moral turpitude. It is altogether wrong to assign to the same category men whose only offence has been to write a "seditious" article or to dispatch a "seditious" telegram.

But if the political prisoners must be sent to the Andamans, it is surely not too much to ask that both there and in the central jails in India, they shall not receive severer treatment than which is experienced by ordinary prisoners. We do not want to make too much of this, but we do not like the stories which reach us of political prisoners travelling in heavy bar fetters. In case our readers do not know what is meant by bar fetters, we will explain. An iron bar is added to the leg fetters which keeps the legs at a distance of one and a half feet apart and reduces free movement to a minimum. It is a form of punishment which is ordinarily only applied to the most refractory prisoners and should, in our judgment, be altogether abolished. We hear also of educated men,

[226] From *India*, 15 January 1915 (published from London). Notes, Political A, Proceedings, June 1915, nos. 141-142. Home Department, Govt. of India.

imprisoned for political offences, being put to the hard manual labour involved in such tasks as the oil-mill and coir-ponding.

Our confidence remains unshaken in the sense of humanity and justice which marks the administration of Lord Hardinge. The idea of revenge, we are sure, never crosses his mind in connexion with these misguided men: and we do not for a moment believe that he has any knowledge of the complaints to which we refer. We have only one object in calling attention to them, and that is to enlist the Viceroy's sympathy in a practical manner. If an amnesty be deemed impracticable, let the political prisoners be interned in India itself: and which all reasonable precautions are taken, let them be treated as political prisoners would be treated in this country, until their sentences have expired.

Petition from Yamunabai (Vinayak) Savarkar[227]

May it please Your Excellency,

I, Yamunabai, wife of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar of Bombay, Hindu inhabitant, most humbly and respectfully beg to approach Your Excellency in Council with a prayer that my husband Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and his elder brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar who were convicted of certain political offences between the years 1909 and 1911 and who were until recently serving their terms of imprisonment at Port Blair in the Andamans may be released and set at liberty for reasons which are submitted herein below.

2. Ganesh Savarkar the elder brother of my husband, was tried in June 1909 before the Sessions Judge at Nasik and convicted on two charges, viz., (1) for attempting "to excite disaffection in the minds of the people towards His Majesty the King-Emperor and the Government established by law in British India" under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code and (2) under section 121 of the Indian Penal Code for abetment of "the waging of war against His Majesty the King by publishing" certain poems. On the first charge he was sentenced to undergo two years' rigorous imprisonment, on the second he was sentenced to undergo transportation for life and to forfeit all property to the Crown; both the sentences were to run concurrently. The conviction and sentences were confirmed by the High Court of Bombay in appeal in November 1909.

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.
Political A., November 1909, nos. 57-58.

3. My husband, Vinayak Savarkar, was tried on two different occasions before a special Bench of the High Court of Bombay first under sections 121 and 121-A of the Indian Penal Code for waging war and for conspiracy to wage war against the King and on the second occasion, on two separate charge under sections 109 and 302 of the

Political A., April 1911, nos. 21-67.

Ibid.

[227] No. 201, Home Department Proceedings, June 1921.

Indian Penal Code for abetment of murder. He was convicted on both these occasions and sentenced to undergo transportation for life with forfeiture of property in each case, the sentences to run consecutively.

4. My submission is (a) that in the case of Ganesh Savarkar the convictions were more or less based on technical grounds and inferential reasoning, (b) that in the case of my husband Vinayak Savarkar both the trials were throughout ex parte and the conviction in one case at least was based to a great extent on the evidence of an approver which was not materially corroborated in important particulars by independent evidence, (c) that the sentences passed on them were more or less excessive as this was due, as was said by the learned Sessions Judge of Nasik in the case of Ganesh to the fact that the Court had no alternative of passing a lighter sentence, (d) that the convictions were for political offences and the accused though mistaken were actuated by the laudable motives of patriotism, (e) that even if the trial were fair and conviction just, they have now been in jail for nearly twelve years and should be released fir because their lives are in danger owing to ill-health, secondly because their opinions have radically changed since 1917, and lastly but chiefly because their cases are covered by the Royal Proclamation of December 1919. On all these grounds I beg to make a brief submission seriatim.

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.

5. The charge against Ganesh Savarkar under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code was based on the publication by him of our out of a series of eighteen poems. The offence was mainly technical in that Ganesh was only the formal publisher of these poems as his knowledge of the alleged mischievous character of the poems was not established; regarding the second charge, i.e., under section 121 of the Indian Penal Code, there was not in the poems which were the basis of the charge the slightest reference to the British Government and both the Sessions Judge of Nasik and Their Lordships the Judges of the Appellate Bench of the Bombay High Court had to rely not on the actual texts of the poems but on the supposed “crimendoes” and “implications,” “covert allusions,” etc., and Their Lordships went so far as to consider the four poems which were the subject matter of the charge not on their merits but in the light of fourteen other points which happened through mere accident to be part of an exhibit.

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.
Political A., October 1909, nos. 214-222.

6. The trial of my husband Vinayak Savarkar was throughout ex parte. He had protested against his arrest on the French Soil after his escape from custody from the Port Hole at Marseilles and the Hague Tribunal was yet considering the question whether his arrest under the circumstances of the case was justifiable or adjourn his trial until the decision of the Hague Tribunal became known was not granted and therefore as a protest against the undue hurry with which the proceedings in the second trial were being conducted he refused to defend himself. Apart from this the evidence on which he was convicted among others was that of an approver, and it was not corroborated in material particulars by independent evidence. A great deal of emphasis was laid by the official side during the debate on the recent motion for the release of the two brothers brought by the Hon'ble Mr. Iyengar in the Council of State at Delhi on the allegation that the piston which killed Mr. Jackson was sent by Vinayak Savarkar with a view to avenge the arrest and committal of Ganesh Savarkar by Mr. Jackson, but I venture to submit that there is neither point nor substance in that emphasis. Ganesh Savarkar was arrested after the pistols had already been despatched and were on their way to India so that it is futile to try to establish any connection between the despatch of the pistols and the arrest and committal of Ganesh, and Mr. Parkar the witness from Scotland Yard in his evidence before the special Bench in Bombay did not say that the purchaser of the pistols was Vinayak Savarkar; on the contrary he expressly stated that the purchase was made in Paris and not in London and it was not proved that Vinayak was in Paris when the said purchase took place. These being the facts I submit that the trial of my husband Vinayak was altogether an unfair one and taking into account the evidence before the Special Bench I submit with all respect that it is doubtful whether Vinayak was rightly convicted.

Political A., April 1911, non. 21-67.

7. In considering the sentence to be awarded to Ganesh the Sessions Judge at Nasik said "for all that appears the real effects of this publication (i.e., the poems) had been nil." "Many worse articles than those were at once time published by certain Marathi papers without any notice whatsoever being taken of them," "no notice seems to have been taken of the papers (the poems) till eight months had elapsed" after they were deposited with the Collector of Sholapur. "No notice would probably have been taken

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.

of this publication had it not been for the presumably unforeseen occurrence in the remote part of India of events for which there is no apparent responsibility on the part of the accused" "the law, however, gives me little option as to the sentence I must pass. Whether that sentence should be fully carried out is for the executive…." The aforesaid extracts from the judgment of the Sessions Judge clearly show that if he could have helped it he would have passed a lighter sentence. Similarly in view of the ex parte nature of Vinayak's trial, of the character of a part at least of the evidence on which he was convicted and the statement of Mr. Parker of Scotland Yard referred to above, I submit that if Their Lordships of the Bombay High Court could have helped it they would have perhaps been inclined to pass a lighter sentence on Vinayak.

8. It is not, however, the object of this representation to labour the aforesaid points. I will leave them entirely out of consideration and will proceed on the basis that their trials were fair, the convictions just, and the sentences appropriate in the full hope that the following further considerations will receive Your Excellency's sympathetic attention and that Your Excellency in Council will be pleased to order the release of my husband and his elder brother.

9. I submit that the incidents with which my husband Vinayak and his brother Ganesh were associated happened when both of them were young and inexperienced. I beg leave to assure Your Excellency's Government that although their attitude was mistaken their motive were pure and lofty: they were simply led astray by the exuberance of their patriotism; I submit that for the aforesaid reasons they should not be treated on the level of ordinary criminals but should be placed in a class quite apart, viz., that of political offenders; that they have seen the error of their ways will be clear from the fact that during the Great War they had both offered their lives in the service of the Empire. Moreover since 1917 they have definitely changed their opinions on the relationship between India and Great Britain and have made unmistakable declarations to that effect as will be seen from some of the extracts from their letters which they have addressed to their brother Dr. N.D. Savarkar. They are:—

Political A., August 1920, nos. 368-373.

> "It is mockery to talk of constitutional agitation where there is no constitution at all—but it is a greater mockery—I may say a crime—to talk of revolution

> where there is a constitution that allowed the fullest development of a nation. Now that the Government have changed their attitude and angle of vision by giving us a constitution by these Reforms I see that there is clearly no necessity to talk of revolution any more. As far the Reforms themselves, well I am ready to accept them with the same grace in which they are given as the first instalment and try my humble best to work out the fullest development of my country through them."

Again "I believe that as soon as the Reforms are effected and if they be soon effected and at least the Viceregal Councils are made to represent the voice of the people, then there would be no hesitation on my part—infinitely humble though it be—to make the beginning of such a constitutional development a success to stand by the law and order which is a foundation and basis of society in general and Hindu polity in particular." This being their attitude and frame of mind at present I submit that their cases fall clearly within the terms of the gracious proclamation of His Majesty the King Emperor issued in December 1919 just after the passing of the Reforms Act (The Government of India Act, 1919). That proclamation says among other things:— "Let those that through their eagerness for political progress have broken the law in the past respect it in the future."

10. Many people who had committed political offences were released as a result of His Majesty's Proclamation. In particular a number of Bengali youths connected with the Manecktolla Garden Bomb Factory which was responsible among other things for the murder of two innocent ladies have been pardoned and released; I am stating this not by way of complaint or in a grudging mood but because I know that the wholesome effects of the clemency shown to them all will be still further increased by the release of my husband and his brother and the political atmosphere in the country will be largely cleared of suspicion and mistrust which are unfortunately so much in evidence at present. The insistent public demand for their release both in the press and on the platform during the last five years as evidenced by the resolutions passed by the various public bodies like the Taluka, District and other Conferences and by the fact that a huge petition for their release signed by fifty thousand people was submitted to His Majesty the King-Emperor in 1919 will satisfy Your Lordship's Government that the grant of my request will reconcile a large volume of public

opinion throughout the country and particularly in Maharashtra. I submit therefore that on a proper view of the case Your Lordship in Council will be pleased to order the release of the two brothers.

11. Your Lordship has filled the highest judicial office within the British Empire with great distinction and honour. Your Lordship's public utterances both before and after your arrival in India as the representative of the Crown have been marked by a conspicuous and deep and burning anxiety to award justice to all without distinction of caste, colour, and creed. I submit that justice is most just when it is tempered with mercy and the cases of my husband and his brother are eminently fit cases for the exercise of that prerogative of Your Lordship's exalted office. When I beg leave to bring to Your Lordship's notice as a result of nearly twelve years of incarceration in the far-off Andamans their health has greatly deteriorated, leading to considerable, loss of weight. Your Lordship's Government will be pleased to grant the prayer of the wife who prays on behalf of her husband and his brother.

Both Vinayak and Ganesh have definitely declared their intention to live as loyal and law-abiding citizens. In addition their brother Dr. N.D. Savarkar is prepared to give any undertaking on their behalf that Your Lordship's Government might consider reasonable; when to this is added the undertaking which was offered by the Hon'ble Mr. Iyyengar, the mover of the Resolution in the Council of State for their good behaviour, all reasonable apprehensions about their behaviour after release should be removed.

I therefore pray—

That Your Excellency's Government will be pleased to direct the release of my husband Vinayak Savarkar and of his brother Ganesh Savarkar, and for this act of kindness I shall ever pray, etc.

(Sd.) Yamunabai Vinayak Savarkar

Dated 18th April 1921

Drawn on instructions by
Jamnadas M. Mehta, Esq.,
M.A., LLB
Barrister-at-law.

Proposed Prosecution in respect of speeches delivered in Calcutta on 18th and 19th August 1937 in connection with Andaman agitation of Lathi charge on the Processionist on 14th August 1937 (1937)[228]

A Ladies meeting was held at the Ladies Park, Rash Behari Avenue by the side of the Sikh Gurdwara from 3.35 P.M. to 4.35 P.M. on 18.8.37 to protest against the lathi charge by the police on the processionists on the 14th August 1937.

A small Congress flag was hoisted.

The audience numbered about 150 among whom there were about 39 ladies including girls and the rest youths and boys of the locality.

The following were noticed:—

1. Mrs. Heaprova Majumdar,
2. Sarala Debi,
3. Nalini Prova Ghosh,
4. Mithi Ben,
5. Miss Sudha Roy,
6. Shyamal Roy.

The following slogans were shouted:— (a) Bande Mataram (b) Rajbandider muktichai.

Sarala Debi proposed Mrs. Hemaprova Mazumdar to the chair. Mithi Ben speaking in Hindi narrated the incident of the 14th Agust being, an eye witness. One of their sisters got a lathi blow. The Police put the women in the prison van by catching their clothes. She criticised the false news appearing in the "Statesman" that the processionists

[228] Home (Political) Department, 18th August 1837. NAI PB (WB) "Report of the Ladies Meeting held at the Ladies Park, Rash Behari Avenue on 18.8.37. *When the news of hunger-strike in the Andamans by political prisoners reached India, demonstrations were shown at several places. The members of Congress Working Committees too participated and there were multiple representations to the Government. Gandhi and Tagore intervened and slowly repatriation began. The present document shows how documents were prepared regarding proposed prosecution on demonstrations for repatriation of political prisoners.*

hurled shoes & soda water bottles at the police. The shoes of some of the arrested women were left behind. They were locked up in a van for one hour and a half and were not given water for drink. She said that if the people of this country wanted to remove all these oppressions and wanted to have the political prisoners released they must unite and agitate.

Uma Nath Sen speaking in Bengali said that about 250 prisoners (political) in the Andamans had resorted to hunger strike for over 25 days. 22 political prisoners had gone on hunger strike at the Alipore Jail and a good number in other jails. The total number would be 500. No news had been received from the Andamans as the authorities in the India Government had refused to supply any information about them. Some of them perhaps had died by this time. A huge procession was proceeding towards the Town Hall on the 14th to demand the release of political prisoners, but it was held up near Strand Road and the processionists were ordered to proceed in batches of 10, and by lowering their national flag, which they refused to do. They sat on the road. After 5 minutes they were charged with lathis as a result of which they sustained injuries. No useful purpose could be served by holding meetings only. They should be united and then start such an agitation as would compel the British Imperialism to release them (political prisoners).

Miss Sudha Roy moved a resolution in Bengali, condemning the lathi charge by the police on the peaceful processionists on the 14th August 1937 on the throughfare in Calcutta. She said in Bengali that it was no use shouting “Fazlul Haq Dhangsa Howk,” “Naliniranjan Sarkar Dhangsa Howk”. So long as British Imperialism existed they would elect such ministers whose action might be worse than these ministers. So it was necessary to destroy British Imperialism and the New Constitution. For this they should unite and start a country-wide agitation.

Sarala Debi moved a resolution in Bengali, welcoming and appreciating those women processionists who showed courage by refusing to proceed to the Town Hall by lowering the national flag on the 14th instant.

She said that lathi charges were not new in this country; there had been such lathi charges before. The demands of the Andaman prisoners were reasonable; they wanted

repatriation in their country. The Ministers could not find their way to bring them back. Moreover, the lathi charges on the peaceful processionists who demanded their repatriation, could not have been done without the connivance of the Ministers. She appealed to the mothers and sisters to unite and start agitation in every village and every district and act according to the directions of the Working Committee of the Congress.

Nalini Prava Ghosh moved a resolution in Bengali.

This meeting strongly condemns the Press officer's communiqué as wholly unfounded.

She said in Bengali that in the Government communiqué it had been stated that the processionists used sold water bottles and brick bats on the police. She wanted to know if the Government would be able to show any such shop close by. Did the Govt. want to say that they carried them beforehand? This sort of false report would not hold water. Referring to the detention of the detenus without trial for unlimited period, she said that there was no such practice in any civilized country in the world. As a protest the political prisoners resorted to hunger strike. The people of Calcutta took out a procession on the 14th instant to express their sympathy towards those prisoners, but they were assaulted by the Police with lathis. They would have to take vengeance for this insult. They must unite – only the male and female students would not do, the police officers and reporters should also join and start an agitation to put a stop to this oppression. There were many peasants and workers starving and if they joined this movement the few Government officers would not be able to check them. They must start agitation to achieve independence without which oppressions would not be stopped.

The president speaking in Bengali, said that the Andaman political prisoners sent in their representations to the Government thinking that the eleven ministers who formed the government of this country were their own people. But the so-called "Popular Ministers" gave the same bureaucratic reply. Had the Minister in charge of Finance ever tried to think of the faces of those hunger stricken prisoners of the Andamans, she enquired. What had he to say regarding the lathi charges. Had he lost his

consciousness? Could he not find money for the treatment of women while in detention?

Continuing she said that as the climate of the Andamans was not at all good. The political prisoners of this country wanted repatriation from there. Many persons had been made detenus on the report of the Police reporters. By continued exploitation the country had reached such a position that the Police reporters had to take down notes against their mothers & sisters.

She appealed to the students to follow the Congress policy and unite. She also appealed to the women to unite in every house as the women did in Ireland, and start a strong agitation for the independence of the country which would bring about the release of their sons and brothers – the political prisoners.

The resolutions were carried.

She announced that a similar meeting would be held at the Triangulur Park at 5.30 P.M. tomorrow (19.8.37). The meeting dispersed at 4.35 p.m.

Reporters N.C. Dutt and Bhattacharjee attended.

Sd/ - S.C. Kar, Inspr. S.B. 18.8.37
Sd/ - P.C. Manda. 18.8.37

Gandhi's Telegram to Viceroy (1937)[229]

If hunger-strike Andamans still on could you please wire following to strikers. Quote. I venture add my advice to Gurudev Tagore's[230] and Working Committee's[231] to abandon strike relying upon us all trying best secure relief for you. It would be graceful on your part yield to nationwide request. You will help me personally if I could get assurance that those who believed in terrorist methods no longer believe in them and that they have come to believe in non-violence as the best method. I ask this because some leaders say detenus have abjured terrorism but opinion to contrary also has been expressed. Gandhi. Unquote. I shall esteem your kindly asking for reply to be wired.

[229] August 27, 1937. Extract from The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Vol 72.*Hunger-strike by political prisoners was one issue which was seriously debated in political circles. Among other conversations or correspondence with the Congress Working Committee, Tagore and others and afterwards, visiting the Alipore Jail pleading not to regard hunger-strike a weapon while negotiations were being done for complete release of political prisoners, Gandhi deliberated much on the question of Andaman political prisoners. See* The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi *(Vol. 72) for further record.*

[230] *Vide* "Telegram to Rabindranath Tagore", 16-8-1937. (Original footnote)

[231] *Vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution on Andamans Prisoners". (Original footnote)

Congress Working Committee Resolution on Andamans Prisoners (1937)[232]

The Working Committee has learnt with the deepest concern of the hunger-strike of hundreds of political prisoners in the Andaman Islands. The Committee has long been of opinion that the use of the Islands as a penal settlement, more especially for political prisoners, is barbarous. Official enquiries and reports have already condemned such use and non-official opinion has unanimously demanded that no prisoners be sent there. Repeated hunger-strikes by the political prisoners have demonstrated their desperation at the continuance of conditions which they cannot bear, and the present hunger-strike has brought matters to a head and grave consequences are feared. Public opinion all over India is agitated and strongly in favour of the release of the political prisoners there as they have already undergone many years of imprisonment under conditions which are far worse than those prevailing in Indian prisons. The Committee's attention has been drawn to the public statement issued by some ex-prisoners, who were till recently imprisoned in the Andaman Islands and have been now released, in which they have stated on their own behalf and on behalf of the other political prisoners there, their dissociation from and disapproval of the policy of terrorism. They have frankly stated that they have come to realize that such a policy is wrong and injurious to the national cause and they propose to have nothing to do with it. This statement has been confirmed from other sources also.

In view of all these circumstances the Committee is emphatically of opinion that the political prisoners in the Andamans should be discharged. The Committee is further of opinion that the non-political prisoners in the Andamans should be repatriated and the penal settlement in the islands closed. Any delay in taking adequate action is likely to lead to alarming consequences. The Committee appeals to the prisoners in the Andamans to give up their hunger-strike.

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[232] (*Vide* "Telegram to Viceroy", 27-8-1937; original footnote; original citation: *Congress Bulletin,* No. 6. File No. 4/15/37. Home, Political; National Archive of India.). Extract from *The Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 72. 488. *With country-wise agitation owing to the detention of political prisoners in the Andamans, the following resolution was passed in 1937 by the Congress Working Committee, which demanded, of political prisoners, to submit to non-violence and Gandhi had numerous conversations with political activists such as Subhash Chandra Bose and Tagore and the Government of India for the remission and repatriation of political prisoners.*

Vita

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- Ph.D. [Cont.] (Thesis: Between Rebellion and Resistance: A Study of Select Andaman Penal Narrative), Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, NIT Rourkela.
- M.Phil. in English (Dissertation: "Treatment of the Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*), Dept. of English, North Orissa University, 2013.
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SCHOLARSHIP:

- 2016-17: JNMF Doctoral Scholarship, New Delhi.

CONFERENCE PAPERS:

- Presented a paper entitled "Negotiating Postmodern Sites: Reading Penal Texts in Contemporary India" in an International Conference"Postmodernism and Indian English Literature"heldat Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune. 21-22 February 2014.
- Presented a paper entitled"The Rise of Neo-Nationalism: Theory as an Alternative Site of Knowledge Production" in an International Conference "Re-Imagining Theory: Towards the New Horizons in the Humanities and the Social Sciences"at International Centre, Goa. 22-25 December 2014.

- Presented a paper entitled “Autobiographical Narratives and Indian Literary Canon: Practice and Praxis” in an International Conference “Words, Words, Words: The Future of Literary Writing”, at English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. 25-27 November 2015.
- Presented a paper entitled “The 1857 Haunt for Run-Away Convicts: Rebellion, Transportation and Aftermath” in a National Seminar“Tatya Tope and the First War of Independence” held at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. 16 February 2016.

PUBLICATIONS:

- Parida, Ananya. “Hijra.” *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions: Hinduism and Tribal Religions***.** Ed. Arvind Sharma. Springer. 2018.
- Parida, Ananya. “Poetry without Borders: Review of Hoshang Merchant’s *My Sunset Marriage.*” *The Dhauli Review* (Issue X: January 2017).
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DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that all the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Ananya Parida)
Place: Rourkela
Date: 21 December 2018