

GADAR

Centennial Commemoration

2013

*A Tribute to Patriots and Heroes
of the Gadar Movement*



Organized by
Global Organization of People of Indian Origin
GOPIO International

In Collaboration with NRI/PIO Organizations,
Government & International Agencies
Individuals & Institutions

www.gopio.net
www.gopio.net/gadarcommemoration

GADAR

Centennial Commemoration

2013

Contents

- Open Invitation
- Gadar Centennial Commemoration Team
- Plans: Gadar Centennial Commemoration 2012/2013
 - Forum: Gadar Centennial Commemoration per city:
 - USA, Canada, UK/Europe, Australia/ New Zealand, India
 - Finale: Gadar Centennial Commemoration – San Francisco
- References & Support
- Excerpts from Speeches
- Articles by: Inder Singh, Ted Sibia, Rajen Anand, Sulakhan Dhillon
- Photos: Gadar Movement
- List of Gadar Heroes
- GOPIO International & Contacts: Gadar Centennial Commemoration
- GOPIO's Major Accomplishments

GADAR Centennial Commemoration

Organized by

GOPIO International

An Open Invitation

90th Anniversary of Gadar Movement

“GADAR” literally means revolt or mutiny. In 2003, the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) and the Global Punjabi Diaspora jointly organized the 90th anniversary of Gadar movement to pay tribute to the pioneers, patriots and heroes of the Gadar movement.

The celebration included a whole day conference during which eminent speakers recalled the contributions of unsung pioneers, patriots and Gadar heroes. The presentations, discussions and deliberations focused on the impact which the Gadar movement had on India’s struggle for freedom and emphasized that the Gadarites were truly the trail blazers of that struggle even while far away from the shores of India. Former president of India, K.R. Narayanan came to the USA to deliver the keynote address.

The history of the Gadar movement is a testimony of the deep love that the Indian immigrants had for their motherland, India. The Gadarites wanted India freed from the British and did not hesitate to make any sacrifices for the cause of freedom, dignity and prosperity of their motherland. They fought valiantly for their cause; several Gadarites were imprisoned, many for life, and some were hanged to death. They are our heroes, deserving highest of admiration and deepest respect. The determination, courage and sacrifices of the Gadarites inspired many freedom fighters to continue their mission for India’s independence. The Gadar Movement is an integral part of the rich heritage in the United States for the Indian Americans and of Indian history. The Gadarites left an extra-ordinary legacy for the future generations and a global centennial commemoration is a fitting and well deserved tribute.

Initiative for a Gadar Centennial Commemoration

As was done for the Kolkata Memorial unveiled on January 11, 2011 in recognition and remembrance of Indian indentured laborers who left India from 1834-1920, this is a GOPIO initiative in our continuing effort to preserve and promote Indian history and culture.

GOPIO is taking this initiative for a Gadar Centennial Commemoration and seeking support of people of Indian origin, NRI/PIO organizations, agencies and institutions for a joint celebration of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Gadar movement in 2013. GOPIO has developed tentative plans and would finalize these plans soon after the meetings of Centennial Commemoration Committee. All persons, agencies, organizations and institutions interested in contributing time and resources to the upcoming centennial event(s) in 2013 are urged to be part of the planning team.

This booklet is to bring awareness about the Gadar Movement and the significance of GOPIO’s plans for the global Gadar Centennial Commemoration. Some articles in this booklet were part of the 90th anniversary brochure.

This is an appeal to the leadership of all NRI/PIO organizations, institutions, agencies and individuals to get involved and participate in the celebration of this historic event.

For more information, please send an email or call:

Inder Singh, *Chairman*, E-mail: gopio-intl@sbcglobal.net, Tel: +1-818-708-3885

Ashook Ramsaran, *President*, E-mail: ramsaran@aol.com, Tel: +1-718-939-8194

Piyush Agrawal, Senior Vice President, E-mail: sudhapca@aol.com, Tel: +1- 954-648-6494

Thomas Abraham, Exec Trustee, GOPIO Foundation, E-mail: gopio@optonline.net, Tel: +1- 203-329-8010

or

Contact any GOPIO International team member listed at GOPIO website: www.gopio.net

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration Planning Team (In Formation)

International Team: *USA*

- GCC 2013 (New York/San Francisco)

Regional & National Teams

USA

- San Francisco
- New York
- Los Angeles
- Washington, DC
- Boston
- Chicago
- Seattle
- Houston
- Miami
- Atlanta

UK/Europe

- London
- Paris

Australia/New Zealand

- Sydney
- Auckland

South Africa

- Durban

Canada

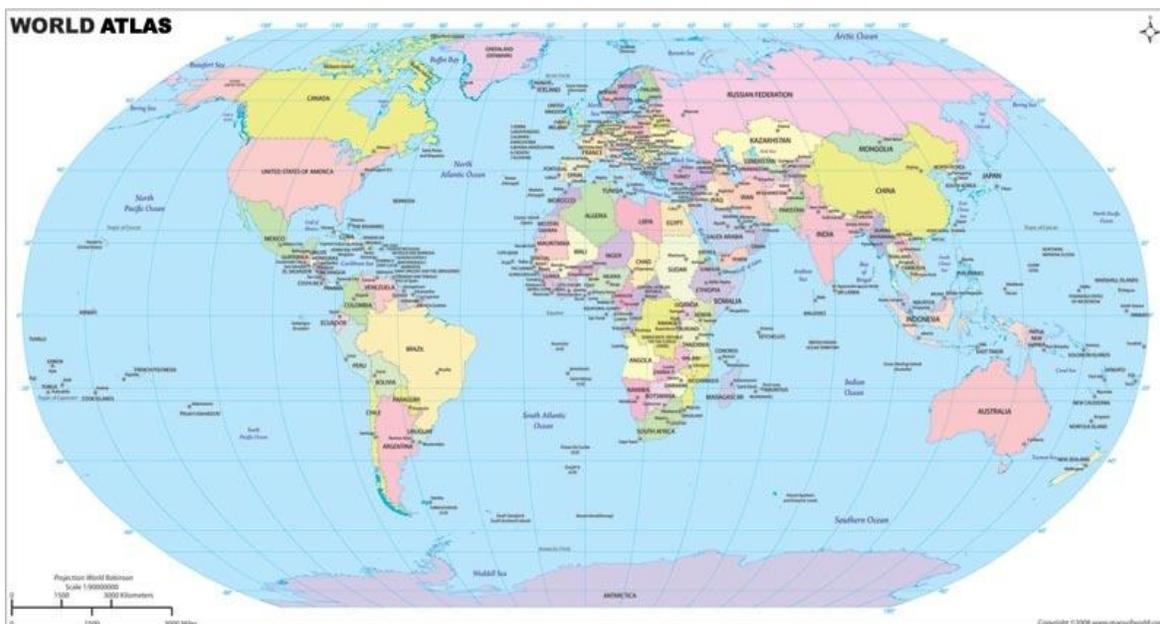
- Vancouver
- Toronto

India

- Delhi
- Punjab

Other Members:

- Affiliate Organizations
- Affiliate Institutions
- Affiliate Agencies
- Affiliate Government Ministries
- Patrons
- Benefactors
- Contributors & Supporters
- Media



The Gadar Centennial Commemoration Plans 2012 - 2013

Panning has begun with formation of the planning team and preliminary scope of events to be held during the centennial year 2013, beginning with a kick-off meeting in San Francisco in 2012.

- Kick-off Meeting in San Francisco 2012

- Gadar Centennial Commemoration Forum & Lecture Series -
Consecutive events in 2013
 - New York
 - Los Angeles
 - Washington, DC
 - Vancouver
 - Atlanta
 - London
 - Miami
 - Sydney
 - Delhi
 - Chicago
 - Auckland
 - Houston
 - Punjab
 - Paris
 - Seattle
 - Toronto
 - Boston

Note: Sequence and scheduling of forum and lecture series could be changed as needed.

- Gadar Centennial Commemoration Finale
& Memorial Dedication
 - San Francisco – November 1, 2013

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration

References & Support

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration is of enormous historical significance for the global Indian Diaspora, for Indian history and for the Indian-American community in the USA.

The planning team has begun solicitation and seeking support of people of Indian origin, NRI/PIO organizations, government and non-governmental agencies, and institutions for a joint celebration of the upcoming Gadar Centennial Commemoration.

These include (but not limited to):

- Gov't. of India - Prime Minister of India (PMO)
- Gov't. of India - Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA)
- Gov't. of India - Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
- Gov't. of India – Ministry of Culture
- State of Punjab, India
- State of California, USA
- City of San Francisco, California, USA
- UNESCO International;
- NRI/PIO organizations
- Civic Associations & Individuals
- Universities in USA, Canada, UK, Europe, India, Australia, New Zealand
- Academics, Researchers & Historians
- Historical Societies
- Libraries
- Businesses
- Publication Houses
- Media

GOPIO and GCC Team Support in planned events cities:

- New York
- Los Angeles
- Washington, DC
- Vancouver
- Atlanta
- London
- Miami
- Sydney
- Delhi
- Chicago
- Auckland
- Houston
- Punjab
- Paris
- Seattle
- Toronto
- Boston

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration

Excerpts from Speeches

Excerpts from the speech of former President of India, K. R. Narayanan, Chief Guest for the 90th anniversary of Gadar Movement. (Hon. Narayanan could not deliver his speech in person due to illness in Washington, D.C on his way from India to Fremont, California).

In the evolution of India's struggle for independence, the Gadar Movement constitutes an important landmark. Countless daring and intrepid people participated in that movement, set the goal of liberating our country through armed struggle, faced untold misery and hardships in pursuit of their objective and even made the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives.

One of the distinguishing and heartening features of the Gadar Movement was its inclusive and broad based identity. Its leaders had the vision and outlook which transcended the boundaries of any particular religion or caste. They considered themselves first and foremost as Indians and treated patriotism as their religion.

Even though the Gadar Movement failed in realizing its ultimate objective, it inspired our leaders during subsequent phases of our freedom struggle and constituted a glorious phase of our history for freedom, liberty and independence.

Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara
The Gadar Syndrome: Ethnic Anger and Nationalist Pride

In the first decades of this (twentieth) century, California provided the scene for one of the most bizarre and memorable incidents undertaken by any ethnic community in the United States: the attempt by a group of India's expatriate nationals to create a revolutionary army, invade India by sea, and liberate her from the clutches of British rule.

Khushwant Singh -- Illustrated Weekly, February 26, 1961

In the early months of World War I, an ambitious attempt to free their country was made by Indians living overseas, particularly in the United States and Canada. Although the overwhelming majority of the Gadrites were Sikhs and the centers of revolutionary activity were the Sikh temples in Canada, the United States, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, many of the leaders were of other parties and from different parts of India, Hardyal, Ras Bihari Bose, Barkutullah, Seth Husain Rahim, Tarak Nath Das and Vishnu Ganesh Pingley. The Gadar was the first organized violent bid for freedom after the uprising of 1857. Many hundreds paid the ultimate price with their lives.

F.C Isemonger & J. Slattery Of Indian Police, Punjab -- An Account of the Gadar Conspiracy 1913-1915. Dr. Ved Prakash Vatuk wrote in the Foreword:

Even in the eyes of the enemy, these (Gadar) heroes shone like rays of hope in the darkest night. They were India's dream, its future and the path they showed was later followed proudly by other martyrs like Bhagat Singh. It is time that we remember and honor them.

Gadar – Overseas Indians Attempt to Free India from British Slavery

By Inder Singh

The Gadarⁱ Movement was the saga of remarkable courage, valor and determination of overseas Indians to free India from the shackles of British slavery. Indians had come to Canada and the United States either for higher education or for economic opportunities. Instead, they imbibed the fire and zeal of revolutionaries and became the trail blazers of freedom struggle for their motherland, India. They may have lived ordinary lives but they left an extra-ordinary legacy.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, both India and Canada were British dominions. As such, Indians had easier access to emigrate to Canada. The new immigrants were hard working and accepted lower wages. Some Canadian companies wanted more cheap labor from India and thus publicized the economic and job opportunities available in Canada. During the first few years, about 2000 immigrants, mostly Punjabi farmers and laborers, were permitted to come every year. As the number of immigrants increased, the locals felt threatened by labor competition from the hardy and adventurous Punjabis. Fear of labor competition led to racial antagonism and demands for exclusionary laws from cheap foreign “Asian workers”. The local press carried many scare stories against the “Hindu Invasion.” In 1908, under pressure from labor unions, the Canadian government required Indian immigrants to have \$200 in their possession upon landing. Also, the Indian immigrants were denied entry if they had not come by "continuous journey" from India. Since there was no direct shipping between Indian and the Canadian ports, legal immigration of Indians to Canada virtually ended. The restrictive legislation led to growing discontent and anti-colonial sentiments within the Indian community.

When Indian immigrants saw the doors closing on them in Canada, they started coming to the United States which needed more people to do hard labor work to build new communities. Indians came as sojourners and without spouses, were paid low wages and could afford to live only in the poor squalid part of the town or in shanty structures. They lived frugally, subsisted on low income that was prohibitive for whites to survive on. The Indian workers maintained low standard of living and many shared crowded lodging to save money to pay off their debt or meet family obligations back in India. They were willing to do any kind of manual job. Within a span of few years, the number of immigrant workers had grown, so they also started facing widespread hostility. The pent-up frustrations of the white workers manifested in violence against Hindu workers, vandalism of Hindu belongings and hatred of their religion, lifestyle and living. Like Canada, the United States, which had initially welcomed the Indian workers, enacted Asian exclusionary laws to bar Asians emigrating to the United States.

The Japanese and Chinese governments sympathized with their overseas nationals for discriminatory treatment and damages in race riots and negotiated with the American government for compensation for life and property losses. But the British Indian Government would not make any representation to the U.S. Government for similar compensation for Indian nationals. Indians soon realized the difference between the citizens of a “slave” country and those governed by their own people.

Higher education in American universities was a powerful magnet for young people even during the beginning of the twentieth century. America provided them opportunity to “earn and learn” and so Indian students were attracted to seek admission in the US universities. However, several students upon graduation were not able to get jobs commensurate with their qualifications. The unfair and discriminatory hiring practices were against the very ideals of liberty and freedom they had experienced in their university environment. The Indian students attributed the racial prejudice and discrimination to their being nationals of a subjugated country and were motivated to get rid of the foreign rule in India. They were determined to fight for freedom for their motherland and started fostering feelings of patriotism and nationalism among their fellow Indian immigrants.

Many Indians in the USA, as also in Canada, England, Germany and France, articulated nationalist feelings and started advocating freedom for India, their motherland, from the British serfdom. They formed organizations to collectively assert their birthright to independence for India and explored ways

and means to attain self-rule. Ramnath Puri who came to California at the end of 1906 and worked as interpreter to the Sikhs arriving in California, started a paper in Urdu *Circular-i-Azadi* in 1907 with declared objective of political education of the Indians. Taraknath Das, a student, started publishing a magazine *Free Hindustan* in 1908 in Seattle, advocating armed rebellion against the British rule as a means for achieving independence. He also established the East India Association in 1911. P.S. Khankhoje of Maharashtra came to USA in 1907, wanted to get military training and procure weapons for fight against the British rule in India. He established "Indian Independence League." In New York, a Maratha Christian Samuel Lucas Joshi (S.L. Joshi) and Maulvi Mohammad Berkatullah of Bhopal formed "Society for the Advancement of India" in 1907. In Vancouver, Canada, G. D. Kumar started a Punjabi paper *Swadesh Sewak*.ⁱⁱ

In 1905 in London, Shymji Krishna Varma founded Indian Home Rule Society and India House, ostensibly a residence for Indian students but used for revolutionary activities. He also published *Indian Sociologist*. Bhikhaiji Rustom Cama (born in Bombay into a Parsi Patel family) was involved with Krishna Varma's Indian Home Rule Society in London. She moved to Paris where she formed Paris Indian Society and started publishing *Bande Mataram* magazine. She unfurled the "Flag of Indian Independence" at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart, Germany on 22 August 1907. Har Dyal renounced his scholarship and studies at Oxford University and joined the freedom movement. In Paris, Har Dyal edited *Bande Mataram* in 1909.

Har Dyal who had come from England, had been a faculty member at Stanford University for some time. He was identified with nationalist activities in the United States. He inspired many students studying at the University of California at Berkeley and channelized the pro-Indian, anti-British sentiment of the students for independence of India. Two of his many student followers, Katar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle later on played very prominent roles in the Gadar movement. Dyal's fervor for India's freedom spread beyond the university campuses to Punjabi farmers and laborers who had already been victim of racial attacks, discrimination and repression from the host community.

On April 23, 1913, some patriotic and enlightened Indians held a meeting in Astoria, Oregon, where Har Dyal, Bhai Parmanand and others passionately spoke for throwing the British out of India and securing liberation by all means at their disposal. It was at this meeting that Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was formed with a major objective to liberate India from British colonialism with the force of arms, just as Americans had done more than a century ago, and help establish a free and independent India with equal rights for all. Sohan Singh Bhakna, a lumber mill worker in Oregon, was elected President the association, Har Dayal, as General Secretary and Kanshi Ram as treasurer. Har Dayal provided leadership for the newly formed association and was the central figure and the force behind the new organization.

Punjabis had come to the United States with the highest of expectations but they were disillusioned when they faced hostility, humiliation and racial prejudice from the American people. When the

Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was formed, they whole-heartedly supported its objectives of ridding India of the colonial rule, enthusiastically became its members and willingly and liberally helped financially.

The headquarters of Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was established in San Francisco, which served as a base for coordination of all the activities of the association. Later, a building was purchased with funds raised from the community, primarily Punjabi farmers and farm and lumber mill workers and it was named Yugantar Ashram. The same building is now known as Gadar Memorial Hall. The association launched a magazine appropriately titled *Gadar* for free distribution to promote the aims, objectives and activities of the organization.

The editorial in the first issue of the Gadar paper declared:

"Today there begins in foreign lands, but in our own country's language, a war against the British Raj.

What is our name? Gadar.

What is our work? Gadar.

Where will Gadar break out? In India.

The time will soon come when the rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink."

Gadar literally means revolt or mutiny and was published in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, among other languages. It carried articles on the conditions of the people of India under British rule and also on problems of racial prejudice and discrimination against Indians in the United States. The magazine contents expressed community's pent-up anger and suppressed feelings and exhorted like-minded people to join the association. Through the magazine, the Indian people were called upon to unite and rise up against the British rule and throw them out of India. The activities of the association were intense and incessant. The *Gadar* magazine became very popular among Indians and over a period of time, the Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast itself became known as the *Gadar* Party.

"The first issue of the journal *Gadar* was in Urdu and was published on November 1, 1913. An edition of the journal was brought out next month in Gurmukhi and in May 1914 a Gujrati edition of the journal was also published."ⁱⁱⁱ Within a short period of time, the magazine became sought-after periodical for revolutionary and patriotic ideas. Besides *Gadar*, the group brought out various publications to raise the consciousness of the Indian people for revolt against the British.

Gadar literature was sent to Indian revolutionaries in India, Europe, Canada, The Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Egypt, Turkey, and Afghanistan. In a short period of time, publications from the *Yugantar Asram* became very popular. The British government got alarmed and used every means to stop the circulation of *Gadar* and other such publications, particularly in India. The magazine, being the principal patriotic literature, reached many people; even if one copy reached India or to a fellow revolutionary elsewhere, multiple copies were made for circulation.

The visible effects of the *Gadar* publications started to manifest in India and abroad. Many committed volunteers opened branches of the *Gadar* party in other countries and worked tirelessly to promote the objectives of the party. They had imbibed the fire and zeal of revolutionaries and were motivated to fight for freedom for their motherland. The movement became the symbol of political consciousness of the overseas Indians. The influence of the *Gadar* movement was so powerful that when called upon, many overseas Indians returned to India to fight for India's freedom.

The British government became alarmed at the popularity of the *Gadar* movement and free accessibility and availability of the 'seditious' literature. They used every means to stop its circulation, particularly in India. They also tried to suppress the *Gadar* movement and had hired agents to penetrate the *Gadar* party and watch their activities. The British were convinced that removal of Har Dyal would bring an end to the revolutionary movement. Under pressure from the British Indian Government, Har Dyal was arrested by the U.S. Government, but later released on bail on March 24, 1914. Har Dyal jumped the bail and left for Switzerland and from there, he went to Germany.

The sudden departure of Har Dyal did create some vacuum in the organizational structure of the association but it did not cause the demise of the organization. The seed of revolt that Har Dyal sowed, had developed into a formidable organization. Many committed and dynamic volunteers continued to work tirelessly and pursued the planned activities of the association. Ram Chandra Bharadwaj became president of the *Gadar* party and also the editor of the *Gadar* magazine.

Indians in Canada were very unhappy with the new laws which effectively prevented Indian immigration from India. An enterprising and resourceful Indian in Singapore, Gurdit Singh, chartered a Japanese vessel *Komagata Maru* to comply with the Canadian exclusion laws and brought 376 passengers in May 1914. The Canadian government refused disembarking of the ship at Vancouver. The Indian community in Canada was outraged, rallied in support of the passengers and sought legal recourse. After a two-month legal wrangling, only 24 passengers were allowed to immigrate and the ship was forced to return to India on July 7. The action of the Canadian government created bitterness, frustration and vengefulness not only among the passengers but also among the Indian people in Canada and the US. On reaching Calcutta on September 29, 1914, the British Indian government wanted to transport the incoming

passengers to Punjab while most of the passengers wanted to stay and find employment there. When the arriving passengers refused to board the special train for Punjab, the police opened fire on them resulting in several fatalities. The police also arrested over two hundred passengers and put them in Jail. The brutal treatment of the returning passengers generated a wave of resentment against the British government and encouraged more Indians in North America to join the Gadar party.

The Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was still new when in August, 1914, World War I broke out, in which Germany fought against England. The Germans offered the Indian Nationalists (Gadarites) financial aid to buy arms and ammunitions to expel the British from India while the British Indian troops would be busy fighting war at the front. The Gadarites started an energetic campaign to mobilize the overseas Indians in Singapore, Burma, Egypt, Turkey and Afghanistan and particularly Punjabis in Canada and the United States. They drew plans to infiltrate the Indian army and excite the soldiers to fight – not for the British but against the British Empire – and free India from the shackles of British imperialism. The Gadarites inspired thousands of Indians to go to India to launch a revolution.

The German government had great sympathy with the Gadar movement because the German government and the Gadarites had the British as their common enemy. In September 1914, Indians formed Berlin Indian Committee (also known as the Indian Revolutionary Society) members of which were Har Dyal, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay (younger brother of politician-poetess Sarojani Naidu), Maulvi Barkatullah (after his death, he was buried near Sacramento), Bhupendra Nath Datta (brother of Swami Vivekananda), Champak Raman Pillai (a young Tamilian) and Tarak Nath Das (a foundation is named after him in Columbia University, New York). The objectives of the society were to arrange financial assistance from German government for revolutionary activities and propaganda work in different countries of the world, training of volunteer force of Indian fighters and transportation of arms and ammunitions to reach the Gadarites for a revolt against the British Government in India.

The Indian Revolutionary Society in Berlin successfully arranged substantial financial aid for the Gadarites from Germany. The German Embassy in the United States engaged a German national to liaison with the Gadar leadership in San Francisco. Several ships were commissioned or chartered to carry arms and ammunitions and batches of Indian revolutionaries to India.

The Gadarites also sought help from anti-British governments in other countries. In December 1915, they established a Free Hindustan government-in-exile in Kabul, Afghanistan, with Raja Mohinder Pratap as President, Maulavi Barkatullah as Prime Minister and Champakaran Pillai as Foreign Minister. The government-in-exile tried to establish diplomatic relationships with countries, such as Turkey, Germany, Japan, and others, opposed to the British in World War I. The Gadarites established contact with the Indian troops at Hong Kong, Singapore, and in some other countries and hoped for their participation in the uprising against the British.

The British Government tried to suppress the Gadar Movement and had hired agents to penetrate the Gadar party almost from the beginning. Har Dyal used the columns of *Gadar* to caution his compatriots against British spies. The traitors of the Gadar movement leaked out the secret plans to British spies who diverted ships carrying arms and ammunitions to elsewhere. Germany was originally planning to send more ships carrying arms and ammunition to India, but lost interest in the venture after seeing the fate of the original vessels.

Before leaving for India, the Gadarites had hoped that the embers of freedom had caught fire in India too and Indians were ready for a revolution. So when the World War I provided a golden opportunity for them to attain their goal, they hurried homeward for rebellion and overthrow of the British Government. The irony of that valiant effort was that while the Gadarites had gone to India to fight readily for the freedom of their motherland, the Indian political leadership openly and willingly co-operated with the British, thereby prolonging India's serfdom. While the overseas Indians prayed in Gurudwaras and temples for the success of the Gadarites' mission, the people in India flocked to Gurudwaras and temples to pray for the victory of the British!

Many Gadarites who reached India before the end of 1914, found no arms to start rebellion. A number of Gadarites including Sohan Singh Bhakna, president, and Kesar Singh and Jawala Singh, vice presidents were taken captives on reaching India while Kartar Singh Sarabha, V.G. Pingle and several others were able to evade arrest. An estimated 8000 Overseas Indians left for India from 1914-18, about 3000 were intercepted; more than 300 were put in jails while many more were restricted to their villages.^{iv}

Kartar Singh Sarabha and other Gadarite leaders had come to India to overthrow the British rule and wanted to unite and work with all those forces that were working to liberate India. They made alliance with well-known revolutionaries in India such as Ras Behari Bose. They organized meetings to plan for the revolution, procure arms and arrange funds to carry out propaganda and other activities for the achievement of their goal. Since many Gadarites were retired military soldiers, they planned to infiltrate into various units of the armed forces, established contacts with their colleagues still working in the armed forces and incited them to revolt and become part of the rebellious force to liberate India. The Gadarites' plan included recruiting new people to join them, looting military arsenals, making bombs and robbing government treasuries. Most of the plans of the Gadarites either failed or were foiled by the British agents and by the end of February 1915, most of the Gadar activists were taken captives.

The Gadarites were prosecuted in batches by the Special Tribunal in what are known as Lahore conspiracy trials. As many as 46 including Kartar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle were given death sentences, 69 were imprisoned for life and 125 were given varying terms of imprisonment^v. In the United States too, several Gadarites and their German supporters, were prosecuted in the San Francisco Hindu German Conspiracy Trial (1917-18). Twenty-nine "Hindus" and Germans were convicted for varying terms of imprisonment for violating the American Neutrality Laws^{vi}.

The Gadarites had a flame of liberty lit in their hearts, and did not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the cause of freedom, dignity and prosperity of their motherland. They fought valiantly for their cause. Although the movement did not achieve its stated objective, but it had awakened the sleeping India and left a major impact on India's struggle for freedom. The heroism, courage and sacrifices of the Gadarites inspired many freedom fighters to continue their mission.

A prominent Indian writer, Khushwant Singh, wrote in Illustrated Weekly, on February 26, 1961, "*In the early months of World war I, an ambitious attempt to free their country was made by Indians living overseas, particularly in the United States and Canada. Although the overwhelming majority of the Gadarites were Sikhs and the centers of revolutionary activity were the Sikh temples in Canada, the United States, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, many of the leaders were of other parties and from different parts of India, Hardyal, Ras Bihari Bose, Barkutullah, Seth Husain Rahim, Tarak Nath Das and Vishnu Ganesh Pingley. The Gadar was the first organized violent bid for freedom after the uprising of 1857. Many hundreds paid the ultimate price with their lives.*"

Inder Singh is Chairman of GOPIO, Global Organization of People of Indian Origin. He was GOPIO President from 2004-09. He is chairman of Indian American Heritage Foundation. He was NFIA president from 1988-92 and chairman from 1992-96. He was founding president of FIA, Southern California. Inder Singh can be contacted by telephone at 818-708-3885 or by email at indersingh-usa@hotmail.com.

ⁱ Gadar spelled same way as in Gadar Syndrome by Mark Juergensmeyer, Indian Immigrants in USA by P Vatma

ⁱⁱ Ghadar Movement, Harish K Puri, ch 4

ⁱⁱⁱ Ghadar Revolution in America, Anil Ganguly

^{iv} The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement by G.S. Deol, pp 106-107

^v Ghadar Movement, Harish K Puri, pp 131

^{vi} www.sikhpioneers.org

Gadar Memorial Hall, San Francisco

The Hindustan Gadar Party, when founded in 1913 to join in the struggle for India's independence, started its operation from 436 Hill Street, San Francisco. Its original home was known as "Yugantar Ashram" and it was from here that the freedom fighters of the Hindustan Gadar Party, also known as "Gadri Babas" were active from 1913 to 1917. It was from this place that they would organize and launch a revolution and publish a powerful weekly paper called "Gadar" to propagate the cause of Indian independence. The Party's Headquarters subsequently moved to "5 Wood Street", the present location. The activities of the Gadar Party were so intense, its popularity instantaneous, the edifice soon came to be called "Gadar Ashram".

The three-storeyed building that preceded the present structure served several functions. Imbued with the spirit of revolution, it provided an environment for thinkers, activists and volunteers who came to live, work, organize and help run a printing press that sent their messages around the world. It remained their venue for all-important public and secret meetings. So powerful was its influence that in August 1914, when the Party called on overseas Indians to return to India to fight for its freedom, most living in North America heeded the call and no fewer than 8,000 of them were said to have returned to India to take part in the revolution. Because of the strong British vigilance, most of them were captured *en route* or upon return, many of them sent to jail, some killed or hanged. But their determination, courage and sacrifice inspired thousands others to join in and continued to carry out their mission.

The Gadar Building is now the living symbol of the glorious sacrifices of martyrs of the freedom and those who struggled for India's freedom.

After India won its freedom, the Ashram along with its belongings including some historical records etc. was handed over in 1949 to the Government of India through the Indian Consulate. However, *de jure* transfer was effected in June 1952. The building, at that stage, was about 30 years old and it was very much in a dilapidated condition. Efforts were made from 1952 onwards to set up a suitable memorial, by the local Indian community and the Government of India, the latter sanctioning US\$ 83,000 for the restoration work. The ground breaking ceremony for the restoration of the Building was performed by Sardar Swaran Singh, the then Minister of External Affairs in September 1974. The Gadar Memorial was finally inaugurated by Shri T.N.Kaul, at that time India's Ambassador to US in March 1975.

(From University of California, Berkley website)

Most of the funds to construct the Ghadar Memorial Library came from Punjabis living in California. (Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara "The Gadar Syndrome: Ethnic Anger and Nationalist Pride").



Gadar Hall, 5 Wood Street, San Francisco

We Owe Them a Debt of Gratitude

By Rajen Anand

There are over two million Americans of Indian origin in the United States enjoying their personal freedom and reaching new heights of prosperity. They have become a part of the American society and most of them have realized the American dream. It was a smooth journey for them from India to America, free of any hurdles or difficulties. Today, the Indo-Americans are among the most educated and highest paid foreign-born professionals. According to census estimates, these immigrants have a per capita income higher than the national average. In business, professions and even in politics, the Indo-Americans have made great strides and are considered the most successful minority in the US.

But it was not always like that. Before India gained independence from Britain, very few Indians were allowed to leave India. The 1900 census counted 2, 050 East Indians in this country. By the fall of 1907, several hundred Indians came to Bellingham area of Washington State to work in lumber mills. Although most of the early immigrants from India were Sikhs, they were all lumped together as Hindus. An editor of a local newspaper wrote, “the *Hindu* is not a good citizen. It would require centuries to assimilate him, and our country need not take the trouble.”

Thrown out of their homes, deprived of their belongings, kicked and beaten, these pioneers did not succumb to racism or blatant discrimination. Despite constant humiliation, the early immigrants from India went on fighting for their civic rights and rights to citizenship. As they became organized, they pooled their efforts to ensure their survival. Soon many associations were formed. Association of America under the leadership of Dalip Singh Saund, Indian League of America led by J. J. Singh and India Welfare League headed by Mubarak Ali Khan made concerted efforts to amend immigration laws to make Indians eligible for U.S. Citizenship. Their hardship, determination, and collective resolve made them successful in gaining acceptance in the United States and open doors for all of us to come here.

A group of them organized the Gadar (revolutionary) Party in March 1913 in Astoria in the state of Washington to raise the consciousness of the Indian people to revolt against the British Empire. They made a clarion call for the Gadar army and pleaded with people to go back to India and fight for freedom. “Come brothers, you have earned plenty of dollars. Take the ship back to our motherland and

raise the banner of revolt,” stated a flyer announcing a meeting to be held in Stockton in February 1914. At this meeting, an Indian freedom flag was unfurled. Oaths for freedom and equality were administered. Leaving their comfortable lifestyle in the United States, many of these people left for India. Among them was Kartar Singh Sarabha who with some of his friends left United States in 1914. He worked with other revolutionaries such as Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, Shachidra Nath Sanyal and Ras Behari to incite people India to fight for their freedom. The British government hanged over 400 gadar freedom fighters, including Kartar Singh Sarabha. Sarabha was one of the great heroes of the Gadar movement. At his trial in the court, he accepted his role in the movement and proudly proclaimed he did everything with a sense of responsibility. He considered his duty to rouse people against the British slavery. His calling the army to rebel, preparing national flags and performing other revolutionary acts were his way of fulfilling his inalienable birth right to see India become independent and free.

The sacrifices made by these early immigrants from India have paved the way for many of us to come to the United States. We could not have dreamed of coming to this country if India were not free and these people had not fought for gaining citizenship of the United States. As we enjoy the American dream sitting in our palatial homes and leading a prosperous life, we must remember that we owe a debt of gratitude to these pioneers. We must also think of what legacy we are going to leave for the next generation.

Rajen Anand is head of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion in Washington DC. He served in this capacity in the Clinton Administration also from 1995-2000. He served as President of the NFIA.

Gadar Movement: Significance and Importance *By Ted Sibia*

The significance and importance of the Gadar Party reaches deep into the roots of North America in the early twentieth century, 1913-1915 more specifically. The political and social turmoil in India was felt worldwide but it was felt most by a unique group of individuals in Northern California that proceeded to create this revolutionist idea. This idea was known as the Gadar Movement. The Gadarites, leaders of the Gadar movement, were enlightened individuals who had the wisdom of their times and the courage to speak it. People from all over the world come to the United States of America in search of freedom, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. These gadarites had made it to the United States and were doing well here, but they did not forget about the dilemma of their fellow countrymen. This was an unprecedented event in the history of United States of America, that the immigrants living here went back to their home country and laid their lives to free their home country from the foreign empire.

The word Gadar means mutiny or revolt, and it was the radical Punjabi men who used this name as a means to renew the spirit of rebellion. They founded a paper called Gadar that was first published on 1 Nov. 1913. The inaugural issue explained the purpose of the party: "Today in a foreign country, but in the language of our own country, we start a war against the British Raj. What is our name? Gadar. What is our work? Gadar. Where will Gadar break out? In India. The time will come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink."

These Gadarites were immigrants in America, contributing to its economy. The world has seen shiploads of people coming to America, but not ship loads going away from America with their own free will. They were influenced by the revolutionary war that America had fought against the British. Due to the economic depression in the United States during those times, the European Americans started blaming Asian (Indian, Chinese, Japanese) immigrants influx for the hard times. So the Asian immigrants were ill treated. There were riots and the Asian immigrants suffered life and property losses. Whereas the Japanese and Chinese governments worked with the American government to compensate for the losses, the British Indian Government did not care less. This further strengthened the Indian Immigrants' urge to free their home country from the foreign blood. These Gadarites were among the first Indians who came to America, so they are the founding fathers of the Indian American community.

Unfortunately, everyone back in India did not share the thoughts and ideas expressed by the Gadarites. People did not realize that they had a slight advantage over the British as long as they stayed unified. Prominent leaders and spokesmen such as Congress members Moti Lal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi were aiding the British in recruiting soldiers. The native kings and princes, in whom gadarites put so much faith, turned out to be stooges of the British. Religious leaders issued fatwas against them, excommunicated and expelled them from their faith, branded them traitors. Gurdwaras and temples, churches and mosques were all filled with those who prayed for the victory of the British. In spite of all odds, some brave people escaped the British net and reached their destination. They tried to organize the workers, made contracts with soldiers in various barracks. They also made alliances with revolutionaries in other states. After establishing contacts with many soldiers a date was fixed to launch a revolt. But some spies among them betrayed them. And they along with many soldiers were arrested. Even so, there were several regiments outside India who did revolt.

The Gadar party continued to support Indian independence until 1947, when it was disbanded and it turned all its assets over to the new Indian government. The Gadar movement failed, but the fire of desire for freedom lived on. Without the struggles of those few men, independence and liberty would not have reached India as soon as it did.

To learn more about the Gadar movement and the Gadar party, there is an extensive Gadar collection at UC Berkeley's Bancroft library. A trip or tour to this library can be easily arranged. Information can be found on UC Berkeley's web site. Also, a large amount of information about the Gadar movement can be accessed via T. Sibia's web site <http://www.sikhpioneers.org>.

Ted (Tejinder Singh) Sibia died on March 6, 2008

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration

List of Gadarites Sentenced in Hindu Conspiracy Trial, San Francisco to varying terms of imprisonment

1. Gobind Behari Lal
Later won Pulitzer Prize as science editor of San Francisco Examiner
2. Bhagwan Singh
Second President of Gadar Movement
3. Taraknath Das
Later became professor in Columbia University, New York
4. Bishan Singh Hindi
5. Chandra Kanta Chakravarty
6. Dharendra Kumar Sarkar
7. Godha Ram
8. Gopal Singh
9. Iman Din
10. Mahadeo Abaji Nandedkar
11. Munshi Ram
12. Naranjan Das
13. Nidham Singh
14. Santokh Singh

List of Gadarites sentenced to death, but later commuted to life imprisonment in the Andamans:

1. Balwant Singh
2. Harnam Singh
3. Hirday Ram
4. Jagat Ram
5. Kala Singh
6. Kesar Singh
7. Khushal Singh
8. Nand Singh
9. Nidhan Singh
10. Bhai Parmanand
11. Shri Parmanand
12. Pirthvi Singh
13. Ram Suran Das
14. Rulia Singh
15. Sawan Singh
16. Sohan Singh Bhakna, First president of Gadar Movement
17. Basawa Singh

List of Gadarites Sentenced to Death and Hanged

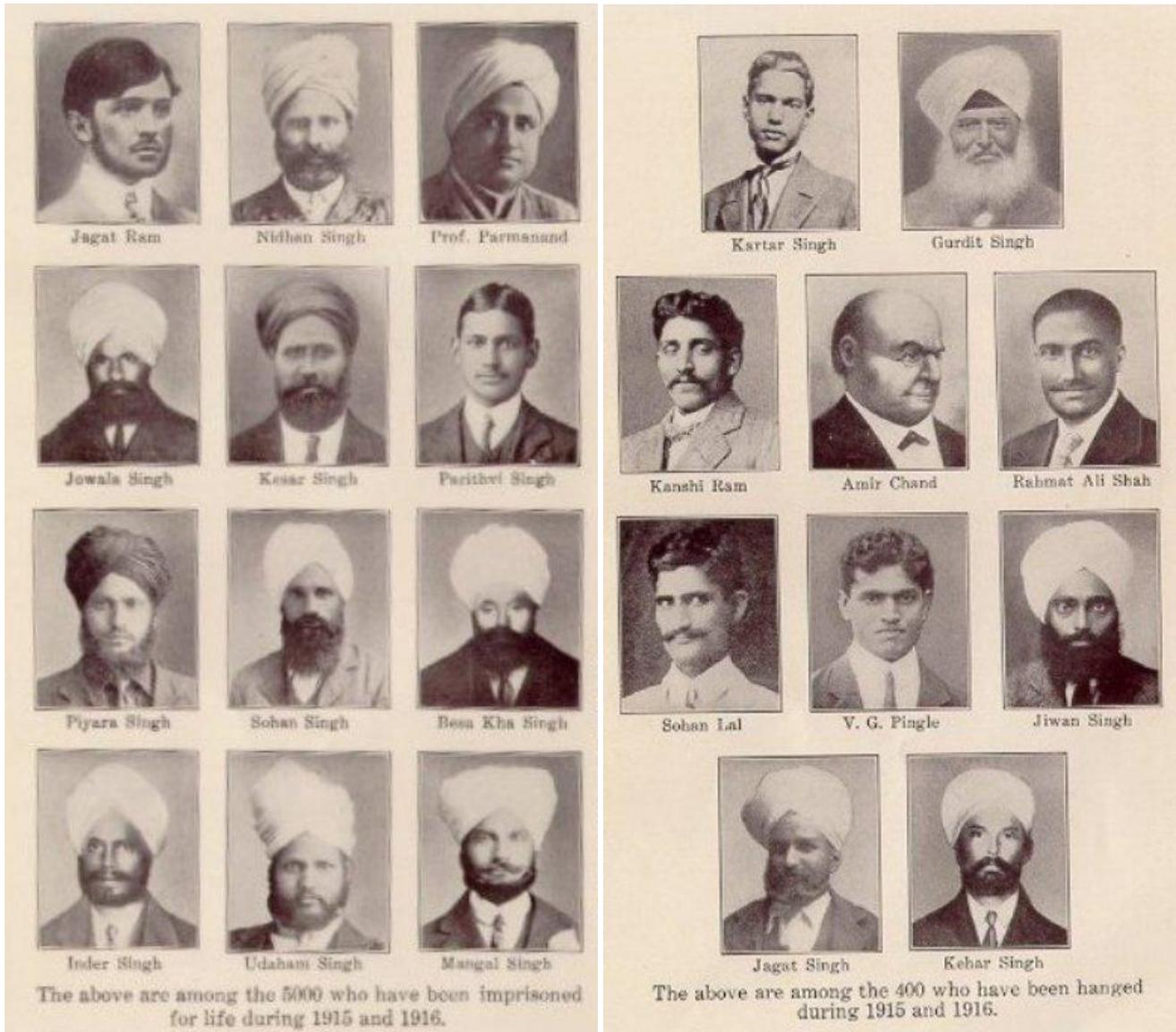
1. Kanshi Ram (Pandit) of Marali, Police Station Morinda (Ropar)
2. Rahmat Ali Faqir of Wazidke (Patiala)
3. Bakhshish Singh son of Dewa Singh of Khanpur (Ludhiana)
4. Jewan Singh son of Wazir Singh of Dhulesinghwala (Patiala)
5. Lal Singh son of Daya Singh of Sahababana, Sahnewal (Ludhiana)
6. Dhian Singh son of Karam Singh of Umarpura, Ajnala (Amritsar)
7. Jagat Singh of Wanjhal, Raikot (Ludhiana)
8. Bhagat Singh alias Ganda Singh son of Jawala Singh of Kachar Bhan, Zira (Ferozepur)
9. Surjan Singh son of Butra of Fatehgarh (Hoshiarpur)
10. Babu Ram son of Gandhi of Fatehgarh (Hoshiarpur)
11. Nama son of Gopal of Fatehgarh (Hoshiarpur)
12. Arjan Singh alias Sajjan Singh of Khokrana, Moga (Ferozepur)
13. Balwant Singh alias Banta Singh son of Buta Singh of Sangwal, Kartarpur (Jalandhar)
14. Harnam Singh son of Arura of Bhatti, Goraya (Sialkot)
15. Bakshish Singh son of Santa Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar)
16. Jagat Singh alias Jai Singh son of Arur Singh of Sursingh (Amritsar)
17. Kartar Singh Saraba Raikot (Ludhiana) Joined UC Berkley at age 16, hanged to death at 19.
18. Vishnu Ganesh Pingle son of Ganesh Pingle of Talagaon Dhamdhera (Pune)
19. Prem Singh son of Jiwan Singh of Sursingh (Amritsar)
20. Surain Singh son of Bur Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar)
21. Surain Singh son of Ishar Singh of Gilwali (Amritsar)
22. Ragho Singh alias Sewa Singh son of Jita Singh of Hans, Jagraon (Ludhiana)
23. Bir Singh alias Vir Singh son of Buta Singh of Bahawal (Hoshiarpur)
24. Ganda Singh alias Bhagat Singh son of Jawala Singh of Kachar Bhan, Zira (Ferozepur)
25. Ishar Singh alias Puran Singh son of Sajjan Singh of Dhudike (Ferozepur)
26. Ranga Singh alias Roda Singh son of Gurdit Singh of Khurdpur, Kartarpur (Jalandhar)
27. Rur Singh alias Arur Singh son of Pal Singh of Sangwal, Kartarpur (Jalandhar)
28. Rur Singh son of Samand Singh of Talwandi Dosanjh, Moga (Ferozepur)
29. Uttam Singh alias Ragho son of Jita Singh of Hans, Jagraon (Ludhiana)
30. Balwant Singh son of Budh Singh of Khurdpur, Adampur (Jalandhar)
31. Hafiz Abdulla son of Nizam Din of Jagraon (Ludhiana)
32. Mathra Singh alias Shamsher Singh son of Hari Singh of Dhudial, Chakwal (Jhelum)
33. Jawand Singh son of Narain Singh of Nangal Kalan, Mahilpur (Hoshiarpur)
34. Prem Singh son of Jiwan Singh of Sursingh (Amritsar)
35. Inder Singh son of Gurmukh Singh of Padri Kalan, Taran Taran (Amritsar)
36. Kala Singh alias Pritam Singh of Jagatpur, Sirhali (Amritsar)
37. Chanan Singh son of Bal Singh of Bal Chand, Patti (Amritsar)
38. Harnam Singh of Thathi Khara, Taran Taran (Amritsar)
39. Atma Singh of Thathi Khara, Taran Taran (Amritsar)
40. Banta Singh alias Balwant Singh son of Buta Singh of Sangwal, Kartarpur (Jalandhar)
41. Buta Singh son of Sher Singh of Akalgarh Khurd, Raikot (Ludhiana)
42. Harnam Singh alias Ishar Das son of Labh Singh of Sahri (Hoshiarpur)
43. Challia Ram son of Shankar Das of Sahnewal (Ludhiana)
44. Wasawa Singh son of Jhanda Singh of Wara, Nakodar (Jalandhar)
45. Narain Singh alias Ram Singh son of Abalu Singh of Balo, Bhatinda
46. Narinajan Singh son of Jawal Singh of Sangatpur, Jagraon (Ludhiana)
47. Pala Singh son of Jaimal Singh of Sherpur, Jagraon (Ludhiana)
48. Mujtaba Hussain alias Mul Chand son of Sajjad Hussain of Jaunpur (U.P.)

List of Gadarites sentenced to life imprisonment in the Andamans:

1. Bhan Singh
2. Bishan Singh
3. Bishan Singh
4. Chuhar Singh
5. Gurmukh Singh
6. Gurdit Singh
7. Hazara Singh
8. Inder Singh
9. Inder Singh
10. Inder Singh
11. Jawand Singh
12. Jawala Singh
13. Kala Singh
14. Kehar Singh
15. Kharak Singh
16. Kirpal Singh
17. Lal Singh
18. Madan Singh
19. Mangal Singh
20. Piara Singh
21. Puran Singh
22. Roda Singh
23. Shiv Singh
24. Sher Singh
25. Udham Singh
26. Sant Basakha Singh
27. Roor Singh
28. Heera Singh
29. Arjan Singh
30. Attar Singh
31. Bagga Singh
32. Bishan Singh
33. Budha Singh
34. Dalip Singh
35. Ganda Singh
36. Ganda Singh
37. Gujjar Singh
38. Harbhajan Singh
39. Hari Singh
40. Harnam Singh
41. Harnam Singh
42. Harnam Singh
43. Inder Singh
44. Jagat Singh
45. Inder Singh

Note: Property of all the above Gadarites was confiscated by the British Government

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration Photos



Tarak Nath Das
 Revolutionary intellectual.
 Active as a Nationalist in America from 1908.
 Sentenced to two years imprisonment
 in the San Francisco Conspiracy case.



Sohan Singh Bhakn
 Founder president of the Ghadr party.
 Tried in First Lahore conspiracy case & sentenced to death
 Later on commuted to transportation for life.
 Took part in hunger strikes in Andaman Cellular Jail
 Pres of All India Kisan Sabha. Served. 26 yrs in prison in 1940.

The Gadar Centennial Commemoration Photos



Kartar Singh
(Sarabha, Ludhiana)

Leader of Ghadr Party and worked as in charge of the press.
He worked for revolt by Military Soldiers in different cantonments.
He was awarded death sentence in Lahore Conspiracy case.
He was hanged on 16th Nov. 1915 in Lahore Central Jail.



Lala Hardyal

First General Secretary of Ghadr party (1913-14)
and founder editor of 'Ghadr' newspaper



Pandit Kanshi Ram
(Marouli, Ropar)

First Cashier of Ghadr party.
Accused in Ferozeshah Murder Case.
Was hanged on March 27, 1915 in central jail Lahore.

Photos with compliment of Desh Bhagat Memorial Hall gallery and Sikh Pioneers website.



Celebration of Indian American Heritage

90th Anniversary of Gadar Movement

Organized by

National Federation of Indian American Associations In Association with Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin, Federation of Indian American Associations of San Francisco Bay Area & Global Punjabi Diaspora

Come and attend

Seminar and Banquet to Pay Tribute to

Our Pioneers, Patriots & Gadar Heroes

Sunday, June 1, 2003,

Santa Clara Marriott Hotel, San Jose, CA

"The Gadar was the first organized bid for freedom after the rising of 1857. Many hundreds paid the price with their lives." Khushwant Singh, Illustrated Weekly, February 26, 1961

Program:

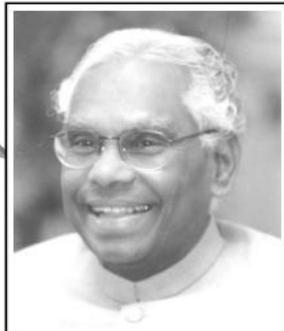
12 - 1 P.M. Registration

1-5:15 P.M. Seminar on the Contributions of Indian American Pioneers; Role of Overseas Patriots and Impact of Gadar Movement in the struggle for freedom for India from British Colonialism, Gadar Memorial Hall.

Admission to seminar is free. Space is limited; prior reservation is necessary.

5:15 P.M. PBS documentary "Roots in the Sand" on Indian American Pioneers

6:00 P.M. Reception/Cocktail Hour and Tribute Dinner



**Valedictory Address by
Dr. K.R. Narayanan
Former President of India**

Inauguration of Indian American Heritage celebrations on May 31 by His Excellency B.K. Agnihotri, Ambassador at Large NRI/PIO

Brochure release & special address by His Excellency Ambassador Sichan Siv, U.S. Mission to the U.N.

Seminar Inauguration by Ujjal Dosanjh, Former Premier of British Columbia, Canada

For more information & reservation Call:

Inder Singh.....	(818) 708-3885
Niraj Baxi.....	(408) 973-9161
K. Pappachan.....	(925) 292-6162
Anil Yadav.....	(510) 714-3377
Biren Chowdhary.....	(510) 794-1975
Jeevan Zutshi.....	(510) 623-9829
Annie Dandavati.....	(408) 282-1447
P.T.Mammen.....	(650) 873-1072
Dr. H. Sahota.....	(562) 867-0242

Banquet

Diamond Table:.....	\$3000
Golden Table:.....	\$2000
Silver Table:.....	\$1000
Regular Table:.....	\$600

**All tables are of 10,
Individual tickets \$65
per person.**



Kartar Singh Sarabha



V.G. Pingle



Lala Har Dayal



Bhagwan Singh Gyani



Sohan Singh Bhakna



Tarak Nath Dass

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin

GOPIO

GOPIO was formed in 1989 at the conclusion of the five-day Global Convention of People of Indian Origin, held in New York from August 28 to Sept. 3, 1989.

Since inception, GOPIO has been at the forefront to network the globally spread overseas Indian community and to advance that objective, GOPIO has been regularly organizing conferences in various parts of the world. These conferences and conventions help bring the Indian Diaspora closer to mother India and strengthen the inherent bond between India and its Diaspora. After all, the destiny of India's Diaspora, in many ways, is intertwined inextricably with India.

An estimated 28 million people of Indian origin (NRIs and PIOs) are living outside India. Many NRIs/PIOs have numerous achievements in their adopted lands and have contributed significantly to the countries of their adoption. They have also collectively contributed to India's transformation into a modern economy. While PIOs and NRIs are domiciled in other countries, they are bound to India by the umbilical cord of history, culture, heritage, and tradition and have added a special glitter to the resurgence of India.

GOPIO provides an active and well recognized platform for dialogue and discussion to the worldwide Indian Diaspora. GOPIO has been fighting for the issues and concerns of the overseas Indians and has been the primary advocacy organization for the people of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

Headquarters:

GOPIO International
PO Box 560117
New York New York 11356
USA

Contacts:

Chairman Inder Singh @ gopio-intl@sbcglobal.net
President Ashook Ramsaran @ gopiopresident@gmail.com
Exec Vice Pres Sunny Kulathakal @ kulathakal@yahoo.com
Senior Vice Pres Dr Piyush Agrawal @ sudhapca@aol.com
Foundation Trustee Dr Thomas Abraham @ gopio@optonline.net



GOPIO INTERNATIONAL

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOPIO's accomplishments are many and wide ranging. Some noteworthy achievements during the last few years include the following:

Dual Citizenship In the first convention in 1989, a resolution was unanimously approved demanding dual citizenship. The demand has been met with the grant of PIO/OCI card. GOPIO also championed the effort to establish a separate ministry for overseas Indians and subsequently the Government of India established the Ministry of Overseas Indians Affairs (MOIA). GOPIO was the first to take up these issues of interest to the global Indian community with Government of India by passing resolutions and relentlessly pursuing with various ministries beginning in 1989.

Fiji Issue In 2000, Fiji's first ethnic Indian prime minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, was illegally ousted from power and replaced by indigenous Fijian Laisenia Qarase as the prime minister. GOPIO internationalized the issue, took up the cause and assured all help to the Indo Fijian activists. GOPIO delegation met the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the Fiji Issue in July 2000. GOPIO became the beacon of hope and chief advocacy group for the PIO issues.

Nomination of Fiji Ambassador In 2004, the Government of Fiji nominated Mr. Sitiveni Rabuka, a former coup leader who later became Prime Minister, to be Fiji's ambassador to the United States. GOPIO appealed to the US President and US Secretary of State for the rejection of the nomination of Mr. Rabuka who was responsible to overthrow the legitimate government of Fiji, violated the human rights of the elected officials and ruthlessly destroyed what people of Fiji had worked so hard to build. That nomination was not accepted and Mr. Rabuka never became ambassador of Fiji to the United States.

Uniform Admission fee for historical monuments The NRI/PIO visitors have been paying higher admission fee for visiting museums and historical monuments in India. GOPIO has been pursuing with Government of India (GOI) to charge NRIs/PIOs the same admission fee as charged from local people in India. In January 2006, GOPIO officials met Minister George Fernandes and Minister Prithviraj Chavan and argued for the establishment of uniform rate for all. GOPIO achieved the goal as GOI decided in February 2006 to charge a uniform admission fee from all visitors, be they Indians, NRIs or foreigners.

Trinity awards The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (TnT) has been giving Trinity awards to their highly accomplished and successful people annually. However, the award insignia contained "cross" symbol, which the Hindu and Muslim nominees were reluctant to accept. GOPIO objected to the "cross" symbol in the award emblem and instituted a parallel award, which received appreciation from the Hindu and Muslim population but criticism from TnT government. A few years, the government formed a committee to design a new insignia without the "cross" symbol.

Protest Rally at UN GOPIO organized and held a huge rally on July 31, 2006 in front of the UNO in New York to protest the arbitrary decision of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (TnT) against Chief Justice Sharma. The effort was to bring attention to illegal steps by the Government to force Justice Sharma out from office without due process and in violation of the constitution of the country. The protest received tremendous local and international coverage and attention, and the TnT Government relented in its illegal pursuit of Chief Justice Sharma. Encouraged by GOPIO's successful protest rally in New York, several groups joined together for subsequent protest marches in Trinidad.

GOPIO INTERNATIONAL

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Peace March GOPIO Berlin held a silent Peace March to protest against the attack on eight Indians who were injured in a racist assault at a community fair in Mügeln near the city of Leipzig in Eastern Germany on the night of 18th/19th of August 2007. A group of about 50 racist Germans chased the Indians who were mostly outdoor market merchants in the region, and shouted slurs such as “foreigners out”. As many as 70 police officers were called to disperse the attackers and restore order. Two of the injured Indians were hospitalized. Four assailants and two policemen were also injured in the incident.

The Peace marchers carried flowers as a symbol of peace, respect, love and harmony instead of posters, banners, drums, or loudspeakers. GOPIO Berlin chapter president Barjinder Sodhi presented a memorandum to the duty officer of German Chancellor Mrs. Dr. Angela Merkel. The memorandum included many demands including, prompt completion of investigation of the race riots by the Government investigating agency, and punishing the guilty as per law of the land; and taking steps to ensure safety of immigrants from India. In February 2009, a German court convicted and gave varying terms of punishment to the guilty.

US-India civil nuclear deal The US-India civil nuclear cooperation deal involved agreement for transfer of nuclear technology and material from the United States to India, initiated during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s visit to the US in July 2005 and re-affirmed during President George Bush’s visit to India in March 2006. The agreement required approval of the US Congress for which the Indian American community played a proactive role in ensuring the passage of the bills in the US Congress.

Some US law makers openly supported the agreement while many prominent US lawmakers conspicuously stayed silent on the issue. It was a major mobilization effort by the Indian American community to convince the US law makers to vote in favor of the passage of the bill. GOPIO, in its part, mobilized the Indian American communities and organized town house meetings with elected officials in many constituencies. GOPIO Vice President for North America, Dr. Piyush Agrawal, worked actively with pro-India members of the US Congress and Indian American community activists to ensure the passage of the landmark civilian nuclear agreement.

NRI Voting Rights In 2004 convention (also in 2005 and 2006), GOPIO passed resolutions asking GOI to allow NRIs to vote in the elections in India through absentee ballot. The bill, seeking to amend the People’s Representation Act was passed in 2010. The new law allows an NRI to enroll in the voter’s list and vote if he/she is present in the constituency on the polling day. There are around 11 million NRIs, 2.1 million from Kerala alone who now have such right. The amendment is partial victory for GOPIO which demanded voting by postal ballot which is a practical solution of a reasonable demand of NRIs. Several countries have found postal ballot as the practical solution. India should also find ways to empower their own citizens abroad.

Diaspora Courses GOPIO Academic Council Chair Dr. Jagat Motwani convinced Prof. Adeshpal Singh of North Gujarat University to organize international conferences on various subjects concerning the Diaspora. He also collaborated with Prof. Neerja Arun who arranged a meeting with the then GOPIO President Inder Singh, Dr. Motwani and the vice chancellor of Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, who now has introduced M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Indian Diaspora and special courses for NRIs.

GOPIO INTERNATIONAL

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Retroactive Enforcement of New Visa Rules On May 23, 2010, GOPIO appealed to the global overseas Indian community through GOPIO Special News Bulletin against the retroactive enforcement of new rules for “surrender” of Indian Passport. GOPIO also initiated an on-line petition addressed to the Prime Minister of India on the same day. On May 28, 2010, GOPIO International sent a letter to Prime Minister of India, together with the first batch of over 19,000 signatures of people supporting the petition. By June 1, the number reached 29,000. The same day, Government of India relented and reduced the fee to \$20 for all Persons of Indian Origin who had acquired foreign citizenship up until May 31, 2010.

NRI's have emotional attachment to their motherland and want India visa without stringent restrictions. They provide huge pool of foreign remittances – \$55 billion in 2010 – and are a vast reservoir of loyalty, patriotism, sought-after knowledge and bankable skills.

Kolkata Memorial For the descendants of the masses of indentured Indian laborers who left India from 1834 thru' 1920 to work in British colonies in remote parts of the world, the Kolkata Memorial is becoming a reality. With the support of Government of India Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) and West Bengal Government, GOPIO Int'l is prominent in this pioneering effort. The goal is to establish a commemorative memorial followed by a museum at a suitable site or sites in Kolkata where Indian indentured laborers were housed and processed while awaiting the ships for emigration to plantations in West Indies, Mauritius, Fiji, Africa and elsewhere from 1834 thru' 1820. Ashook Ramsaran of GOPIO International played lead role and coordinated the entire project.

Foreign Bank Account Reporting (FBAR) GOPIO initiated an awareness campaign about Overseas Voluntary Disclosure Initiative (OVDI) and Foreign Bank Account Reporting (FBAR) requirements in collaboration with other national and community based organizations (including NFIA, AAPI, AAHOA). Letters of appeal for reduction of penalties were sent to the US President, Secretary of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner. Community awareness was initiated for compliance before the IRS deadline and a delegation led by former GOPIO chairman, Dr Thomas Abraham, met with the officials of the Treasury department on this matter. GOPIO chairman Inder Singh met with US Congressman Howard Berman. Thus far, efforts have not resulted in any relief but GOPIO continues its efforts to seek relief from the stringent application of IRS rules which place an undue burden on law abiding taxpayers.

GOPIO continues to take up issues of the NRI/PIO Communities and lobbies for their resolutions. GOPIO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, secular organization. GOPIO's volunteers are committed to building bonds, friendships, alliances, and the camaraderie of NRI's and PIO's alike. GOPIO volunteers believe that when they help network the global Indian community, they facilitate making tomorrow a better world for the Indian Diaspora.

GOPIO's informative monthly newsletter is available free. Please send email to:
gopio-intl@sbcglobal.net or ramsaran@aol.com.



Headquarters:
GOPIO International
PO Box 560117
New York New York 11356
USA