

The Odd at Odds: British Spies and US Attorneys versus a Conspiracy of German Junkers, Indian Revolutionaries, and Irish Republicans during WWI

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Just months into World War I, an Indo-Irish-German plot was established to ship American guns to India for a revolt against the Raj with the intention of reducing Britain's ability to wage war on Germany and to hasten Indian and Irish independence. The gun shipment was organised in New York and sent to a ship in San Diego. This ship, the *Annie Larsen*, was supposed to rendezvous with a larger steamship, the *Maverick*, off the Pacific coast of Mexico at Socorro Island. The *Maverick* was then to take the arms first to the neutral Dutch East Indies and then to India. If that plan was aborted, the guns were to be sent to neutral Siam where German and Indian agents were ready to smuggle the guns across the border into Burma and the rest of the Raj. This arms shipment was coordinated through the German consulate in San Francisco and an Indian revolutionary group known as the Hindustan Gadar Party. Irish republican organisations in America provided much of the logistics for the mission. The mission fell apart when the ships failed to rendezvous in the late spring of 1915, and an American investigation was launched to determine whether US neutrality laws were violated. British spies, Irish republicans, private detectives, German operatives, Indian revolutionaries, and the American Bureau of Investigation (BOI) were all locked into a cloak-and-dagger tale that ended in a San Francisco courtroom with US Attorneys who literally had British agents at their side against a large team of Irish-American law firms who defended the dozens of Indo-Irish-German conspirators. The November 1917 to April 1918 trial, which was America's longest and most expensive

trial at the time, ended with shots fired in the courtroom and two of the Indian conspirators lying dead before the bench and jury box.¹ After spending millions of dollars and deploying vast human resources, British and American authorities convicted most of the conspirators and placed them behind bars for the duration of the war.²

The odd alliance of Anglo-American authorities in San Francisco was best characterized by the relationship of US Attorney John W. Preston and British Consul-General A. Carnegie Ross. In 1915, the US Attorney's office prosecuted several of the latter's consular agents for violating US neutrality laws by recruiting for the British Army.³ Despite these convictions, Ross forged an awkward working relationship with Preston in the early months of 1916 in order to convey information from British intelligence on Indo-Irish-German activities while simultaneously financing the appeals of the recruiting case.⁴ The appeals of these consular agents failed in the summer of 1916, so Ross paid the \$2000

¹ *Gadar, Ghadr, or Ghadar* is Urdu for 'rebellion' or 'revolt' and is specifically used for the Hindustani Gadar Association created in America in 1913, but is also used generally for Indian revolutionaries in India. See E. E. Sperry, *German Plots and Intrigues in the United States during the Period of Our Neutrality*, (Washington, DC: Committee on Public Information, July 1918) 42-52, for the official American account of the conspiracy; see F. C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, India Police-Punjab, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy, 1913-1915* (Lahore: India Government Printing Office-Punjab, 1919) 136-138, for an official British account. More detailed secondary accounts include: G. T. Brown, 'The Hindu Conspiracy, 1914-1917', *Pacific Historical Review* (1948) 299-310; D. K. Dignan, 'The Hindu Conspiracy in Anglo-American Relations during World War I', *Pacific Historical Review* (1971), 55-77; and K. D. Hoover, 'The German-Hindu Conspiracy in California, 1913-1918' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 1989).

² See '\$3 Million is Cost of Prosecuting Hindoo Plot Case', *San Francisco Chronicle* (22 April 1918), clipping found in Neutrality Case Files, 'The German-Hindu Conspiracy, 1913-1920', Records of the US Attorney, California Northern District, Southern Division-San Francisco, N[ational] A[rchives]-P[acific] S[ierra] R[egion], San Bruno, California, R[ecord] G[r]oup 118, Box 8, for details on costs and assertion that over two hundred British agents were in the Bay Area during the investigation and trial.

³ See 'Gregory Publishes 71 Indicted in Plots: Four Corporations Also Accused of Neutrality Violations, Says Report to the House', *New York Times* (22 January 1916) 3, for full list of names in the British recruiting case. Ralph Blair and Thomas Addis were convicted in October 1915, others were acquitted or had their cases continued. This same report also names German consular staff such as Wilhelm von Brincken, Charles Crowley, and Margaret Cornell, for their roles in the Seattle Bomb Plot.

⁴ See Register of Correspondence, San Francisco Consulate, 1916-1917. T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], P[ublic] R[ecords] O[ffice], London, F[oreign] O[ffice] 600/6, Despatches 498S[ent], 707S, 891S, 994R[ceived], for communication establishing a relationship between Ross and Preston while Ross was coordinating the appeal of the recruiting case.

fine and \$316 in court fees.⁵ With this awkward phase diminished, Ross flooded the US Attorney's office with information on specific German agents, Irish activities, and Indian revolutionaries. Early information focused on a bombing incident in Seattle and the coaling of German warships in the Pacific via ships from San Francisco. This focus turned more towards the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* gun-running affair as time passed. After paying their own fines for violating US neutrality, the British began work with American authorities to build nearly the entire case against German neutrality violations.

There were some odd realities inside American politics that impacted these investigations and trials. A women's suffrage amendment to the California state constitution failed in 1896 due largely to the Irish and Chinese votes in San Francisco. During the 1912 presidential election, Congressman John Raker, who chaired the Democratic State Central Committee, recruited a young lawyer named Annette Abbott Adams to campaign for Wilson in the image of progressivism and women's suffrage. As president of the Women's State Democratic Club of San Francisco, Adams declared war on the Irish political machine in the city and helped Wilson to carry the state. Raker took Adams to the inauguration and personally convinced Wilson to make her the first female Assistant US Attorney. Adams was then heavily involved in Wilson's 1916 re-election campaign and spoke at several rallies.⁶ She was prominent in the prosecution of all the Indo-Irish-German conspiracy trials and faced the same Irish political machine of the city that now defended the Indo-Irish-German conspirators. Presidential politics and female suffrage were odd backdrops to courtroom battles over war and neutrality.

⁵ Register of Correspondence, San Francisco. TNA-PRO, FO 600/6, Despatches 3541S, 3908R, 3594S, and 3998R.

⁶ See J. M. Jensen, 'Annette Abbott Adams, Politician', *Pacific Historical Review* 35 (May 1966) 185-201, for a description of Adams' political activities and her appointment as assistant district attorney.

The Indo-Irish-German alliance had oddities that were no less interesting. The first was inside the Gadar Party itself. In 1911, former Oxford student Lala Har Dayal arrived in San Francisco to be an adjunct instructor of Indian philosophy at Stanford University. The following year he rented a house at 436 Hill Street that became the first headquarters for a small group of fellow Indian revolutionaries. He then began a newspaper at a printing house on Valencia Street with the help of the editor of the *San Francisco Bulletin* whom he befriended while lecturing at Stanford. Also in 1912, he founded the Nelanda Club at the University of California-Berkeley, which became a recruiting station to obtain Indian writers for his press.⁷ The next year, a revolutionary writer and editor from Peshawar named Ram Chandra arrived with his wife in Seattle. After a short stay with an Indian club at the University of Washington, they made their way to a November 1913 revolutionary gathering hosted by Indian lumber mill workers in Astoria, Oregon.⁸ Lala Har Dayal and his Bay Area radicals met Ram Chandra at this gathering. In fact, Har Dayal saved Ram Chandra who was seriously ill from malnutrition by convincing the latter's wife to secretly add meat to the broth of his vegetarian stew. After political speeches and a financial collection, this combined body of revolutionaries declared

⁷ See Gobind Behari Lal, 'Indian Flag First Flew in San Francisco', newspaper clipping found in the Gadar Party Collection, S[outh]-S[outheast] A[sian] L[ibrary], University of California-Berkeley, n. d, for information on Har Dayal's early contacts and activities in the Bay Area. Lal was a defendant in the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* trial. Also see Darisi Chenchiah, *History of Freedom Movement in India: The Ghadar Movement, 1913-1918*, unpublished 1956 manuscript in the Gadar Party Collection, SSEAL, for information on Har Dayal at Berkeley where Chenchiah was recruited by him into the organization.

⁸ See Padma Chandra, unpublished interview transcript, 18 November 1972, found in Gadar Party Collection, SSEAL, 29-34, for information from Ram Chandra's widow on their first experiences in the United States and Ram Chandra's early contacts; also see Kalyan Kumar Banerjee, *Indian Freedom Movement Revolutionaries in America* (Calcutta: JIJNASA, 1969) 5-6, for the *Komagata Maru* incident in Vancouver.

themselves to be the Hindustan Gadar Party. Har Dayal then returned to San Francisco with his new assistant editor Ram Chandra and money to finance his operations.⁹

The Gadar Party was a group of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. Prior to the war and German funding, the vast majority of resources came from Sikh mill workers in Oregon and farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Most of the workers on the press were Hindu students from Berkeley. Yet there were also many Muslims including Muhammad Barkatullah who arrived in San Francisco in 1914. Barkatullah was a member of a pan-Islamic group in India known as the Muslim Patriotic League, but was also an early voice for Indo-Irish cooperation. At a meeting in Oxnard, California, Barkatullah described the war as a perfect opportunity for Indian, Irish, and other nationalists around the world to expel the British.¹⁰ Barkatullah arrived at a particularly turbulent moment for the Gadar when its leader Har Dayal was arrested. Har Dayal fled the country after being bailed. In order to maintain cohesion, Ram Chandra (a Hindu) became editor, Bhagwan Singh (a Sikh) became president, and Barkatullah (a Muslim) became vice president.¹¹ This tripartite settlement unravelled within a year as Ram Chandra took control over the entire organisation. His coup took place when Bhagwan Singh left to establish contacts across the Pacific while Barkatullah left for a failed venture with German officers to get the emir of Afghanistan to attack the Raj.¹² Ram Chandra's coup fractured the Gadar along religious fault lines that later erupted in court. In 1915, Ram Chandra used money

⁹ See Randhir Singh, *The Ghadar Heroes: Forgotten Story of the Punjab Revolutionaries of 1914-1915* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1945) 8-9, for \$15,000 collection and birth of Gadar at Astoria; see Padma Chandra, 37-38, for Har Dayal's efforts to save Ram Chandra's life.

¹⁰ Mandalay: Proceedings of Commissioners appointed under the Defence of India Act, 1915 (Mandalay, Burma: Government of India, 1916) 35.

¹¹ Mandalay Commission Report, 43.

¹² See P. Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994) for the role of Muhammad Barkatullah, as well as Lala Har Dayal, in the Indo-German attempt to get Afghanistan to attack through the tribal areas of what is now Pakistan.

from his new alliance with the German consulate to buy property at 5 Wood Street for an expanded headquarters.¹³ The *Gadar* continued to publish newspapers, pamphlets, and news releases, documenting alleged British atrocities in India. John Barry, an Indophile and Irish writer at the *San Francisco Bulletin*, acted as a media consultant for Ram Chandra.

This was not the first of such Indo-Irish media cooperation. Before San Francisco, Muhammad Barkatullah worked in New York with George Freeman, the editor of the *Gaelic American*. The *Gaelic American* was the paper of John Devoy's Clan-na-Gael and Irish Republican Brotherhood. Devoy was the most powerful ally of Sinn Féin in America. Barkatullah and Freeman, with the assistance of a Berkeley student named Taraknath Das, published the *Free Hindustan* on the same press as the *Gaelic American*. Thus, Irish newspapermen such as John Barry and George Freeman gave India a voice on both American coasts.¹⁴

John Devoy supplied more than the support of his press to the *Gadar* cause. Devoy's Irish Republican Brotherhood helped to get guns to India on board the ship *Moraitis* before the war.¹⁵ The idea was reborn and enlarged with the war and German funding. When German Embassy Military Attaché Franz von Papen financed the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* arms shipment in New York, he used Devoy's assistant Joseph McGarrity, who was the former room-mate of the famous Irish activist Roger Casement. McGarrity made all of the arrangements for the guns to travel from New York to

¹³ See Ram Chandra, *Hindustan Gadar* (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Party, April 1918) found in NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 8, for Chandra's own brief history of the *Gadar* and the 5 Wood Street headquarters. This leaflet was published during the last days of the trial just before he was shot.

¹⁴ Prabha Chopra and P. N. Chopra, *Secret British Intelligence Reports: Indian Freedom Fighters Abroad* (New Delhi: Criterion, 1988) 15-16.

¹⁵ R. Poplewell, 'The Surveillance of Indian "Seditionists" in North America, 1905-1915', *Intelligence and International Problems, 1900-1945* (1987) 52.

Galveston, Texas, via an Irish-American steamship company, and then by rail to San Diego. Devoy also supplied IRB operative Larry de Lacey who worked with the German consulate in San Francisco to ready the schooner *Annie Larsen* in San Diego that would take the guns to a rendezvous with the steamship *Maverick*. These ships were owned by Frederick Jebsen, a German naval veteran, who also owned ships such as the *Sacramento* and the *Mazatlan* that ran coal from San Francisco out to the German warships *SMS Leipzig* and *SMS Nürnberg*.¹⁶ Prior to the war, Jebsen's schooner *Annie Larsen* had experience running guns and drugs in and out of Mexico.¹⁷ These were perfect ships for De Lacey to outfit for the gun-running mission.

Larry de Lacey had his own network that he used to aid the work of the Gadar and the German consulate. Father Peter Yorke was the most important ally of De Lacey in San Francisco. Father Yorke made speeches and published works calling for Irish independence. Yorke owned the Rincon Building where De Lacey published his own newspaper, the *Irish Leader*, and where the Gadar kept its most important papers in a safe. Yorke also aided De Lacey and the IRB by having Bay Area priests act as couriers with documents being transported to and from New York and Europe. This relationship with Larry de Lacey was so strong that when Bay Area priests wanted to change parishes, they went to De Lacey before going to the bishop.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Consul-General A. Carnegie Ross to FO, 16 December 1916. Register of Correspondence, San Francisco Consulate, 1916-1917. TNA, PRO, FO 600/6, for references to Jebsen's coaling ships. Also see P. Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (London: UCL Press, 1994) for general information on the operation of German ships off San Francisco.

¹⁷ 'F. Jebsen' in Memorandum of Names to be Submitted to the Grand Jury in the Hindu Matter, Office of the United States Attorney, San Francisco, n. d., NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 4. The drugs were mainly cocaine and opium.

¹⁸ Statement by Charles Lamb (British Agent J. S. Hale), B[ureau] O[f] I[n]vestigation Report 'The Indian or Ghadr Movement in San Francisco', San Francisco, 13 February 1917, p. 6, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 8; also see Special Agent in Charge Don S. Rathbun, BOI Report 'Indian Revolutionaries', San Francisco, 10 February 1917, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 8, for additional information on De Lacey's influence on the parish selection of Bay Area priests.

This Indo-Irish-German collusion extended overseas. Roger Casement recruited an 'Irish brigade' in the POW camps near Hamburg, though it amounted to only a few volunteers. Many know about his failed attempt to aid the Easter Rising of 1916 by landing in Ireland with some of these volunteers via a German U-boat. A wrong turn by a car into a British patrol doomed the mission and Roger Casement was hanged.¹⁹ Yet, during Casement's recruiting efforts, Gadar members such as Taraknath Das, the same Berkeley student who helped Barkatullah and Freeman at the *Gaelic American* offices in New York, went through POW camps near Hamburg recruiting Indian volunteers. One BOI report in America said: 'The Indians so selected were to be shipped to Denmark or Norway, and from there to the United States, and then to India by way of China, to some place in the interior of India'.²⁰ Over and over, the Irish provided a paradigm and protocol for Indian revolution.

Central coordination for the Indo-Irish-German activities was attempted in Germany with the Berlin-India Committee chaired by V. Chattopaddya, who was a Hindu Bengali married to an Irish woman. Chattopaddya was in communication with Indian, Irish, and Egyptian nationalists around the world. This committee welcomed Lala Har Dayal in 1914 from America and sent him with Muhammad Barkatullah to Constantinople to begin the failed operation to Afghanistan as described by historian Peter Hopkirk.²¹ This committee also coordinated the recruiting efforts of Taraknath Das in the POW camps. The first person that the Berlin-India Committee sent back to America was Haran Ram Gupta who had been in the regular pay of Franz von Papen in New York. Gupta was

¹⁹ A. J. Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1980) 100.

²⁰ Agent C. Smith, BOI Report, Chicago, 15 March 1917, p. 3, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 8; British Agent J.S. Hale to US Attorney John W. Preston, San Francisco, 27 August 1917, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 7.

²¹ Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire*.

sent to San Francisco to connect the Berlin-Committee with operations there. It was Gupta who introduced Ram Chandra to the German consular staff and presented the plan to get guns to India. Shortly afterwards, German consulate military attaché, Wilhelm von Brincken, visited Ram Chandra with details and funds.²² Despite the personal networks, the actual efficacy of the Berlin-India Committee was minimal. The financial resources of Berlin were more important. The German Foreign Ministry sent funds either through the German Embassy in Washington, DC, or sometimes via Franz von Papen in New York or the consulate in San Francisco. The embassy gave \$200,000 for the *Annie Larsen* arms purchase and its shipment to California.²³ Another \$14,000 and \$27,000 were spent outfitting the *Annie Larsen* and *Maverick* respectively. The total expenses at the German consulate in San Francisco were over \$100,000 for the Seattle bombing, the coaling of German warships, and the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* affair.²⁴ Yet, before we accept the Germans at the helm of this conspiracy, we should remember the role of John Devoy's IRB in managing the details and logistics. Joseph McGarrity took care of nearly all of the arrangements in New York and Larry de Lacey coordinated the outfitting of the ships in southern California.

With such a large consortium, why did the conspiracy fail? The answer is in the consortium itself. All of these organisations were independently compromised by British intelligence, so the network of conspirators allowed British intelligence to use information from one organisation to defeat the activities of another. Historian Richard Popplewell

²² British Agent J. S. Hale, 'Report on German-Indian Activities in America', n.d, pp. 4-5, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 7; Padma Chandra (Ram Chandra's widow), 55-56.

²³ Franz von Papen, *Memoirs* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1952) 40. Note: This is over four million dollars today.

²⁴ '\$100,000 Plot Fund Charged in Bopp trial', *San Francisco Examiner* (6 December 1916), TNA, PRO, FO 115/2138, pp. 134-135; 'Bopp Aid is Quizzed by Preston', *San Francisco Bulletin* (29 December 1916), TNA, PRO, FO 115/2138, pp. 221.

concluded that Vaishno Das Bagai, the chief finance officer of the Gadar was the most important informant. Bagai was a British informant in the Punjab long before he came to San Francisco.²⁵ Also, Charles Crowley was the Irish right hand of the German consulate in San Francisco and planned much of the Seattle bomb plot, the coal-running to German warships, and activities across the border in Canada. One of his men, Louis J. Smith, became an informer first for the British and then for the US Attorneys in prosecuting the cases.²⁶ Yet, the infiltration of MI6 directly into the Gadar and Irish organisations was by far the most devastating to the plot. British agent J. S. Hale worked as an Irishman inside the Gadar and met with BOI Special Agent-in-Charge Don Rathbun and US Attorney John Preston using the cover name 'Charles Lamb' in early 1917. Hale became an *agent provocateur* pushing the Indo-Irish-German conspirators into riskier activities while providing the Americans with evidence. This had been a tactic of the British with the IRB and Clan-na-Gael since the 1880s.²⁷ Once war was declared, Hale dropped his cover name and worked directly with the US Attorney's office. British Consul-General Ross also enlisted the services of the Mundell Detective Agency in San Francisco to provide a steady stream of reports on nearly all Indo-Irish-German conspirators that were sent to the US Attorney and BOI. Interestingly, Ross denied this fact to Ambassador Sir Cecil Spring-Rice and even the Foreign Office. The US Attorney also denied it in court but later

²⁵ R. Popplewell, 'The Surveillance of Indian "Seditionists" in North America, 1905-1915', *Intelligence and International Studies, 1900-1945* (1987) 71.

²⁶ A. Carnegie Ross to Ambassador Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, San Francisco, 14 April 1916. San Francisco Enemy Prosecutions Nos. 21-91 and Seaman's Act Nos. 1-49, 1916. TNA, PRO, FO 115/2138, p. 24.

²⁷ See O. McGee, *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood from the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005) and R. Spence, 'Englishmen in New York: The SIS American Station, 1915-21', *Intelligence and National Security* 19 (Autumn 2004) for the general use of *agents provocateur* in Irish organisations, and see M. Plowman, 'Sinn Féin and the Gadar Party in the Indo-German conspiracy of the First World War', in *Ireland and India: Colonies, Culture and Empire*, eds. T. Foley and M. O'Connor (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005) 237-238, for further details on the identification of 'Charles Lamb' as J. S. Hale.

recanted. Eventually court evidence shown that Mundell's private detectives worked for the British consulate and aided MI6.²⁸

By the fall of 1917, just before the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* trial went to court, British agents took over the investigation. MI6 transferred Robert Nathan from New York to the California to coordinate the efforts of British agents and the BOI.²⁹ In fact, Nathan arrived in San Francisco with a personal letter from Assistant Attorney General Charles Warren that ordered the US Attorney to treat Nathan and the other British operatives as virtual members of the Justice Department.³⁰ Within months, Nathan produced a general synopsis of the case with a list of 'evidence against each proposed defendant'.³¹ George Denham, who was the chief of British intelligence in India, was also sent to San Francisco to aid Preston with the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* case. Denham accompanied BOI agents as they searched apartments, bank records, post office records, and safe deposit boxes across the Bay Area. Denham analysed immigration records as well as all papers seized by the BOI.³² Denham personally took care of the transportation and security of scores of Indian witnesses brought over from the Raj for the trial. One Gadar leader complained that Denham accompanied BOI agents on a search of his apartment without a warrant. Historian Kalyan Kumar Banerjee claimed Denham aided US Attorneys in Chicago and

²⁸ See Ross to Spring-Rice, San Francisco, 1 November 1916, TNA, PRO, FO 115/2138, p. 72 for his denial and p. 73 for enclosed clipping from *San Francisco Examiner* (1 November 1916) that contained defendant Franz Bopp's allegation of Mundell's men being in the service of Ross; see K. K. Bannerjee, *Indian Freedom Movement Revolutionaries in America* (Calcutta: JIJNASA, 1969), 79, for Preston's admission; and 'Plot Laid to Ross at Trial of Bopp', *San Francisco Examiner* (19 December 1916) TNA, PRO, FO 115/2138, p. 183, for information on the British using Mundell detectives to aid *agents provocateur* to trap or sabotage German agents.

²⁹ Special Agent-in-Charge Don S. Rathbun, BOI Report 'Indian Revolutionaries', San Francisco, 27 September 1917, NA-PSR, RG 118, Box 20.

³⁰ Charles Warren to John W. Preston, Justice Department, Washington, DC, 19 April 1917, NA-PSR, RG 118, Box 4.

³¹ US Attorney John W. Preston to Attorney General Thomas Gregory, San Francisco, 8 June 1917, NA-PSR, RG 118, Box 2.

³² Agent E. M. Blanford, BOI Reports 'Indian Revolutionaries', San Francisco, 1 and 12 September 1917, NA-PSR, RG 118, Box 20.

New York investigations as well.³³ Denham and Hale were even used in the interrogation of several witnesses and suspects. In fact, BOI Agent E. Blanford admitted in a report that he sat and did paperwork as the two British agents interrogated a witness.³⁴ Preston reported to the Attorney General just before trial: 'It should be a highly interesting trial. . . . The British Agents have worked very hard in putting the evidence in accessible form, and I have every reason . . . to believe that the case will result favourably'.³⁵ After the trial, Preston told his superior: 'The success of the case . . . was very largely, if not entirely, due to the very able and exhaustive investigations that were conducted by the British agents. . . . They stood at my elbow during the entire trial, and whenever any point of information was desired, it was forthcoming immediately'.³⁶ One hopes for few moments in history when a government lawyer bound by constitutional law attributes the success of a trial to secret foreign agents working inside a justice department.

The *Maverick-Annie Larsen* trial began on 20 November 1917 and did not end until 24 April 1918. US Attorney Preston and his assistant Adams worked through all of the witnesses and evidence using a map and timeline on the courtroom wall that was furnished by British agent J. S. Hale. The most spectacular incident happened on the final day of trial during a five minute recess after closing arguments. Here, the 1914 fractures in the Gadar party came to haunt Ram Chandra as Ram Singh, a member of the Sikh faction of Bhagwan Singh, mysteriously obtained a revolver in the bathroom and shot Ram Chandra dead in the courtroom. A US marshal shot over the heads of the attorneys and killed Ram

³³ See K. K. Banerjee, 79, for the claim of Taraknath Das and information on Denham working in Chicago and New York.

³⁴ Agent E. M. Blanford, BOI Report 'Indian Revolutionaries', San Francisco, 16 November 1917, NA-PSR, RG 118, Box 20.

³⁵ US Attorney John W. Preston to Attorney General Thomas Gregory, San Francisco, n. d., NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 2.

³⁶ Special Assistant to the Attorney General for War Work John W. Preston to Attorney General Thomas Gregory, San Francisco, 6 August 1918, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 3. Note Preston's promotion after the trial.

Singh. Military guards from Alcatraz, who had been guarding some of the defendants, sealed off the courtroom, searched everyone, and cleared the room except for ‘the defendants, the US Marshals, military guards, and two British Secret Service men [along with] the two dead defendants’.³⁷ The courtroom was cleaned and the jury was brought in for final instructions. After ten hours of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict before midnight that same day. Excluding the dead, all but one of the dozens of defendants were convicted. The charge to the jury that contained a synopsis of the evidence was quickly sent to New York for an Indo-Irish-German trial there as the Justice Department shut down the network around the country.³⁸

The legacy of this episode is as odd and rich in connections as the conspiracy itself. Guns did make it to India aboard other vessels, although there is little information on whether these arms aided in any new activities. M. N. Roy, who was the Stanford student assigned to wait for the guns near Calcutta, abandoned such intrigues and later founded the Communist Party of India. Gadar members and German POWs were successful in igniting a mutiny at Singapore in February 1915 but not a general revolution in India.³⁹ In 1919, the director of British intelligence in India, George Denham, concluded: ‘There is little reason to doubt, however, that without the incitements and misrepresentations of the Gadar Party the mutiny would have been most improbable’.⁴⁰ Interestingly, the *HMS Cadmus* which relieved Singapore during the 1915 mutiny was the same ship that took custody of

³⁷ See ‘The “Hindu Conspiracy” Case’, *The Historical Reporter* (Summer 1996) Historical Society of the US District Court for the Northern District of California, 7, for interview of deputy clerk Carl Calbreath on the shooting.

³⁸ Charge to the Jury in *US v. Bopp et al*, San Francisco, as filed in *US v. Chakravarty, Smedly, et al*, US Attorney Records, New York Southern District, National Archives-Northeast Region, New York, Record Group 21.

³⁹ R. W. E. Harper and H. Miller, *Singapore Mutiny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) 221, 234. Lord Kitchener as War Secretary concluded that the 5th Light Infantry was ‘too Mohammedan for service in Egypt’ so it was deployed to East Africa as a consequence of the mutiny.

⁴⁰ Isemonger and Slattery, 132.

the *Maverick* and brought its Gadar members back to Singapore to be shot.⁴¹ In the end, the psychological impact of guns trickling into India was likely greater than their physical impact.

After the trial, John Preston was promoted to assistant attorney general then judge before returning to private practice. With heavy media attention on her career during the trial, Annette Adams became the first female US attorney in 1919 and then the first female assistant attorney general the following year. She even ran for vice-president in 1920, although she received only one vote at the national convention. In 1922, Adams chaired the fledgling Woodrow Wilson Foundation and raised some of its first money. After decades in private practice, she became a district judge and later the first female justice on the California Supreme Court.⁴²

Embassy Military Attaché Franz von Papen, who never really supported the Indo-Irish causes beyond their ability to harass British war efforts, eventually became chancellor of Germany and participated in the rise of Adolf Hitler. Hitler made him ambassador to Turkey and his misfeasance almost single-handedly kept the Turks from aiding the Germans during the Second World War. Wilhelm von Brincken, the consulate military attaché who transported funds to the Gadar, created a career in Hollywood after the war, where he played German spies or U-boat captains in several films. He was also the technical consultant for German equipment and training in the blockbuster film *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

⁴¹ See Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadar 1915: India's First Armed Revolution* (New Delhi: R & K Publishing, 1966) 47, 50, for the *HMS Cadmus* in actions against the Singapore Mutiny and the *Maverick*; also see Banerjee, 32, for the *HMS Cadmus* capturing the *Maverick*.

⁴² See Jensen, 'Annette Abbott Adams', for a description of Adams' career after the trial. Adams was briefly on the California Supreme Court in 1950 before resigning due to health issues.

Muslim Gadar member Muhammad Barkatullah became the self-declared prime minister of a provisional Indian government headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan, although he was never able to ignite a rebellion in the tribal areas of what is today Pakistan.⁴³

Once Larry de Lacey was released from prison, he joined Eamon de Valera's faction in the latter's contest with John Devoy to win over Clan-na-Gael and the IRB. Joseph McGarrity, who organized the guns of the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* affair, raided the office of John Devoy at the *Gaelic American* to obtain a list of Clan-na-Gael members in order to restructure the Irish nationalist voice of America in favour of De Valera. Larry de Lacey was involved in that raid.⁴⁴

In February 1920, Taraknath Das attended a banquet in New York after being released from prison. This banquet was supported by the Friends of Freedom for India as well as the Friends of Irish Freedom, which were fronts for the Gadar and Sinn Féin. Eamon de Valera, who was leader of Sinn Féin's revolutionary Dáil Éirann-in-exile, made a speech quoting a historic message from General George Washington: 'Patriots of Ireland, your cause is identical with mine'. De Valera followed: 'Is it not directly in accord with Washington's thought then that speaking for the patriots of Ireland I should say here: Patriots of India, your cause is identical with ours'.⁴⁵ Taraknath Das followed this speech with his own that fused the causes of Ireland and India. During the summer of 1920, several units of Irish soldiers mutinied in India due to the Irish war of independence.

⁴³ Chopra and Chopra, 16.

⁴⁴ T. Golway, *Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America's Fight for Ireland's Freedom* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1998) 285-287; also S. Cronin, *McGarrity Papers: Revelations of the Irish Revolutionary Movement in Ireland and America, 1900-1940* (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1972) 98, for McGarrity's confession of breaking into Devoy's office with Larry de Lacey.

⁴⁵ 'President De Valera's Message to India', *India News Service*, Friends of Freedom for India (New York, 28 February and 20 March 1920, Combined Issue) US Serial, War Collection, H[over] W[ar] L[ibrary], Stanford University.

More than a dozen were executed and dozens more were imprisoned. Taraknath Das made speeches around the country honouring these fallen martyrs for Irish and Indian independence.⁴⁶

Yet, the most powerful and visible sign of this odd alliance of Indians and Irish was actually when De Valéra visited the Gadar headquarters in San Francisco on 21 July 1919 while still the largely symbolic president of the revolutionary Dáil Éirann. The Gadar leader at the time was Gopal Singh, who had just been released from prison for his role in the *Maverick-Annie Larsen* affair. Gopal Singh presented De Valéra with a green-white-orange tricolour and a sword with the Irish leader's name inscribed upon it.⁴⁷ It is not difficult to imagine why the revolutionary flag of India, which was originally green-red-gold to represent the Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, changed around this time to the green-white-orange of Ireland. Ireland was the paradigm and protocol for Indian nationalism. Few recognise the fact that India and Ireland have the same national flag today due to the alliance of their nationalists during and after the First World War.

These odd alliances are a strange result of an international pragmatism that superseded ideological convictions. The Americans sacrificed their devotion to democracy and republicanism to aid an imperial ally towards a new world order. Indian and Irish nationalists sacrificed Europe and the Mideast to the monarchies of the Kaiser and Sultan for the sake of their own independence. German Junkers engaged socialists, communists, and anarchists for the sake of destabilising Britain. In order to keep India and Ireland in

⁴⁶ *Indian News Service*, (11 September 1920), HWL.

⁴⁷ See *Indian News Service* (28 February and 6 March 1920 Combined Issue), HWL, for De Valéra's visit to San Francisco; also see Extracts from the *Gadar*, 16 June 1917, p. 68, NA-SPR, RG 118, Box 1: 'When the Hindu revolutionist comes up to the standard of the Irish rebel, then the British attacks . . . will be answered. . . . When the Hindu raises his flag of rebellion and is staunch to his principles, that day the British will consider him and will have to leave his country', for an example of specific references to Ireland as a paradigm for national revolution.

the short-term, the British built a trans-Atlantic alliance that became more important to British foreign policy than either India or Ireland. Yet, most of this was due to chance personal encounters. It was due to Lala Har Dayal saving Ram Chandra's life in Astoria, a gun being given to Ram Singh in a courthouse bathroom, or simply two ships missing each other in the Pacific. In the end, historical forces remain determined by both international and individual factors in a context of rational pragmatism and random chance, no matter how odd these forces might be.

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